

Advanced Equine Reproduction Course

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Terminating pregnancy in the mare is safer and easier the earlier it is done. No reliable method is effective in the first 5 days following ovulation (1). The time period between day 5 and before the endometrial cup formation and secretion of equine chorionic gonadotropin (eCG), a one or two shots of Prostaglandin or Prostaglandin analogue is effective in terminating the early pregnancy. (2) The products available are Lutalyse and Equimate. There are side effects that can occur such as sweating and mild colic symptoms. After endometrial cups develop between day 38-40 and eCG is secreted until day 110-120 aborting the mare becomes more difficult. (3) Multiple injections of prostaglandins or prostaglandin analogues are required. The time interval between giving the prostaglandin and the abortion occurring is variable. There are several protocols in the literature. Twice daily injections of PGF₂ alpha (12 hr intervals) of 2.50mg resulted in 13 out of 13 mares aborting with an average of 3.7 injections. (5) The mean interval from the first injection to abortion was 39 hours. (5) The prostaglandins have reported no effect on the function of the endometrial cups and secretion of eCG and because of this estrus and ovulation will be delayed. (6)

Another way to induce abortions after endometrial cups are functional (day 40-120) is by intrauterine infusion of a large amount of saline (1-2 liters). This is not the preferred method, but if the mares have not aborted after 3-4 injections this may be an option and provided the foal is not too big to be easily passed. The cervix is penetrated and manually dilated and saline is infused. If the abortion has not occurred in 24 hours repeat the procedures. Pretreatment with 10mg of estradiol may aid in cervical relaxation and hasten the abortion. (4) The endometrial cups and production of eCG will remain active and the mare's return to estrus is still delayed.

A relatively new procedure in pregnancy reduction is transvaginal ultrasonographic guided allantocentesis, aspiration of allantoic fluid and followed by an injection of potassium penicillin. Two separate studies indicated this successful in pregnancies between 40-65 days. (7) This has great potential in dealing with twinning and termination of one of the fetuses. However, this method does not alter the endometrial cups and eCG secretion. Therefore the mare will not start to cycle again for 100-120 days.

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