



## The 2010 foals will soon be arriving.

We are still taking reservations for our foaling facility. We have an on line form to reserve your 2010 space. Our newly constructed foaling facility is exceptional in every way and we could not be more pleased with its design and construction.

Go to [www.gumzfarms.com](http://www.gumzfarms.com) to reserve your space today!

KyQHA Deadlines Are Approaching!

Following are the steps necessary to enroll your 2009 foal:

- 1) **KyQHA Registration Form - Part 1** Should have been completed, sent in at the time of foaling, signed by attending veterinarian. If your mare was foaled at Gumz Farms our office submitted this form on your behalf.
- 2) **KyQHA Registration Form - Part 2** due into KyQHA office 12/31/09. [www.kyqha.com](http://www.kyqha.com)
- 3) **Registration Fee** - For members \$50 due into KyQHA office 12/31/09 (non-members \$100) membership form attached.
- 4) **AQHA registration papers**- send copy of your foal's registration certificate along with the above. If no official AQHA name or registration number has been issued at the time Part 2 is submitted, under "horse information" indicate sex of foal and dam's registered name. The file on this horse will be considered "pending" until a copy of the registration certificate is received by the KyQHA office.



Join our Fan Club on facebook.com



We are excited about our new Facebook Page! Keep up with news and information easily by becoming a FAN of Gumz Farms.

### VS Code Red is enrolled in the APHA Breeders Trust



Due to so many requests from paint mare owners, VS Code Red has been nominated to the Paint Breeders Trust. We have limited number of breedings available to him as he is standing to a small group of mares for his first season. Visit his new website at <http://www.vscodered.com/>

### NSBA Deadlines



If you are enrolling your 2009 foal into the NSBA Breeders

Championship Futurity or Licensing Program the deadline for entry is 12/15/09. See the NSBA website for forms and more information. <http://www.nsba.com/>

### Come Visit No Doubt Im Lazy In Florida!



We just released No Doubt Im Lazy's "aka Ace" video clip. It is on his site at [www.nodoubtmlazy.net](http://www.nodoubtmlazy.net) and [www.gumzfarms.com](http://www.gumzfarms.com). Frank and Lin Berris have decided to qualify Ace for the 2010 Junior Western Pleasure championship Show. Be sure to stop by and meet Ace at Mitch and Jennifer Leckey's stalls! Ace will be headed up to Kentucky after showing on January 2<sup>nd</sup> to get ready for a busy season!

### Welcome visitors to the West Kentucky Legacy (12/12/09) dispersal sale.

We are only 40 miles from the auction site of the West Kentucky Legacy Breeding farm. If you are coming to our area for the auction, please feel welcome to come visit the stallions and tour the facility. We would love to have you.

### The Audrey Grace will be taking bids from December 7 - December 13<sup>th</sup>.

This is a great cause and Gumz Farms along with many stallion owners have made generous donations. Check out the online bidding at [www.pleasurehorse.com](http://www.pleasurehorse.com) for a list of items, stud fees and broodmares donated. This is a great opportunity to plan for your 2010 breeding season and help a worthwhile cause as well.

**Attention Texas Mare Owners:** Kentucky has state entry guidelines for Texas residents due to the outbreak of Piroplasmiasis. In summary, a negative test for piroplasmiasis and an entry permit is required for horses residing in Texas for more than 30 days. Here is a link to the requirements for your and your vet's review. [CLICK HERE>>>](#)

## Optimal Body Condition Scores for Breeding Mares

A publication of Kentucky Equine Research, Inc. o 3910 Delaney Ferry Road o Versailles, KY 40383 USA o 859-873-1988, Fax 859-879-1163 o [www.ker.co](http://www.ker.co)

- QUIZ TIME!** Which of the following statements concerning broodmares and body condition is true?
- A. Broodmares should enter the breeding season ribby and be fed to steadily gain weight until pregnancy is achieved.
  - B. Broodmares should enter the breeding season fleshy but not fat and be maintained at this weight until confirmed in foal.
  - C. Broodmares should enter the breeding season slightly pudgy and be allowed to drop weight until pronounced in foal.
  - D. Broodmares should enter breeding season chubby and stay that way until pregnancy is documented.

*If you chose D, you're right!*

Descriptions such as "ribby" and "pudgy" are vague. One horseman may characterize a mare as "heavy," while another would describe her as "fatter than a county fair hog." By these descriptions, however, neither horseman may know just how fat that mare truly is!

Since the mid-1980s, nutritionists, farm managers, veterinarians, and animal-welfare workers have employed a universal method of measuring weight and fat distribution. This process, called body condition scoring, has become a valuable management tool on breeding farms worldwide. By visually and manually evaluating certain anatomical regions (namely the neck, shoulder, withers, ribcage, backbone, and tailhead), horsemen assign horses and ponies a score between 1 and 9, with 1 designating extreme emaciation and 9 indicating out-and-out obesity. Broodmares are typically maintained in the condition score range of 5-7, with some individuals obviously falling below or above that range.

Descriptions of these three body condition scores are given below.

### SCORE DESCRIPTION

5 - Moderate Back is flat (no crease or ridge); ribs not visually distinguishable, but are easily felt; fat around tailhead beginning to feel spongy; withers are rounded; shoulders and neck blend smoothly into the body

6 - Moderately Might have slight crease down back; some fat cover over the ribs, along the sides of the withers, Fleshy behind shoulders, and along the side of the neck; fat around tailhead is soft

7 - Fleshy Might have crease down back; individual ribs can be felt but noticeable fat deposition between the ribs; fat deposited along withers, behind shoulders, and along neck

*Excerpted from Henneke, D.R., G.D. Potter, J.L. Kreider, and B.F. Yeates. 1983. Relationship between condition score, physical measurement and body fat percentage in mares. Equine Vet. J. 15:371-372.*

## NUTRITION

Numerous scientific trials have demonstrated the relationship between body condition and fertility. One field trial followed 927 mares from the beginning of the breeding season through pregnancy confirmation. Mares were given a body condition score at the onset of the season, and based on that assessment, they were divided into three subsets: mares with a body condition score of less than 5 (158); mares with a body condition score of 5, 6, or 7 (667 mares); and mares with a body condition score greater than 7 (102 mares).

Mares with a low body condition score were least likely to conceive. Of these 158 mares, only 71% achieved pregnancy. In the two remaining groups, pregnancy rates were markedly higher, 92% in mares with a body condition score of 5, 6, or 7, and 96% in mares with a body condition score greater than 7.

In addition to pregnancy rates, mares with low body condition scores required nearly 2.8 heat cycles per conception, while more well-conditioned mares required only 1.4 heat cycles per conception. If mares are in low body weight at the onset of breeding season, first ovulation may lag three to four weeks behind that of mares carrying more weight. This is meaningful because breeding managers bank on getting open or maiden mares in foal early in the season prior to the influx of foaling mares.

Early fetal survival is also affected by body condition of the mare. Losses are significantly greater in mares with body condition scores of 4 or less.

Environmental and physiological stresses will affect the body condition of mares as breeding season nears. Competition for food by herdmates or scarcity of feed in winter may lead to thinness. Moreover, lactation can easily deplete energy stores of mares, leaving them with reduced body condition and breeding efficiency.

Some horsemen feel that mares maintained at condition scores of 6 or higher will experience foaling complications. Extensive research has shown that mares in moderately fleshy condition or heavier (a score of 7 or higher) did not encounter problems often associated with obesity including prolonged pregnancy and decreased foal size or vitality at birth.

Though every mare should be managed individually with her best interests in mind, a few general recommendations can be made. will ensure a degree of consistency.

- o Maintain open or maiden mares at a body condition score of 6 or 7 leading up to the breeding season. For pregnant mares that will be lactating in late winter or spring, a condition score of 7 or 7.5 is ideal. Keeping mares at condition scores higher than 7.5 does not enhance fertility and is not wise from an economic standpoint.
- o Evaluating the body condition of pregnant mares may become more difficult during late gestation, as the combined weight of the fetus and amniotic fluid may pull the skin tightly over the vertebral column and ribcage. Therefore, it's best to place emphasis on other key areas: along the withers, behind the shoulder, and around the tailhead.
- o Do not rely completely on visual appraisal to assess body condition. By palpating certain areas, evaluators can more accurately judge body condition. For example, ribs that are not visible may or may not be felt easily. Palpation is particularly important in winter when mares likely have winter coats. If possible, have the same person evaluate condition on a monthly schedule, as this

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