STAGE ONE: LABOR

Labor is characterized by an increase in active contractions of the uterus and dilation of the cervix.
STAGE 1 AND BEGINNING STAGE 2:

This is characterized by increasing restlessness of the mare; lying down and getting up, tail switching, stretching as if to urinate, looking at her flanks and even passing small amounts of manure may be witnessed. Some sweating may also be observed.
STAGE 2:

This stage will begin abruptly with the rupture of the chorioallantic membrane or simply (water breaking). A dark fluid will pass and then the transparent, bluish, white amnion appears at the vulva.

Powerful contractions occur in groups of 3-4 followed by a rest period of 2-3 minutes.
It is normal for one foreleg to precede the other just slightly. Pictured here is an intact amniotic sac with both forefeet and the nose visible.
Here is a closer look at both forefeet and the nose visible still inside the intact amniotic sac. This is a normal presentation.
Delivery of the shoulders, nose and forefeet has broken through the sac. The hips and part of the hind legs have been delivered with the foal partially in the sac.

The duration of the second stage of labor averages between 17 to 20 minutes, but can be completed in less than 10 minutes. If, within 20 minutes the mare has not completed delivery, call a veterinarian immediately.
The umbilical cord remains intact after delivery. Allow the mare to rest quietly. During this time significant amounts of blood are transferred from the placenta to the foal as the uterus still contracts.
The cord should normally break as the mare gets to her feet or as the foal struggles to stand.
The mare should then begin cleaning the newborn foal which allows the imprinting of the foal and fosters a healthy relationship between the mare and the newborn.
STAGE 3:

This is the final stage and this is the passing of the placenta.

The mare may show some signs of cramping. Shown above is the placenta before final passage. We recommend placing the placenta, after it has passed in a bucket of water so the veterinarian can inspect it to insure its complete passage. If the placenta has not passed within 2-3 hours please contact your veterinarian immediately.
Pictured is the foal attempting to rise. The foal may have several attempts before successfully standing.
Shown above, the foal has risen and the mare and foal continue to bond. The foal should be nursing within 2-3 hours. It is imperative the foal nurses within this time frame so the foal receives adequate colostrum from the mare. The colostrum is vital in adequate passive transfer immunity. It is recommended that you contact your veterinarian within the first twelve hours to have a foaling exam done to evaluate the foal for possible abnormalities and IGG testing.
Neonatal Emergency Situations

- The foal is unable to stand 2 hours after birth
- The foal lacks or has a weak suckle reflex
- The foal appears weak, not interested in dam, nursing or surroundings
- The foal appears painful (colic) rolling on back, or straining
- The foal is straining to urinate, frequently with little or no urine being voided
- The foal is showing signs of lameness in 1 or more limbs
- Deformity in any of the limbs
- The foal is hemorrhaging from the umbilicus for prolonged periods of time
- The physical parameters are abnormal (temperature, pulse, and respiration)
- Mucous membrane color is pale, yellow, blue-pink, or dark red-purple
- Capillary refill time is greater than 2 seconds
- Milk comes out from foals nostrils while nursing
- Signs of injury-lacerations, broken bones, etc
- Labored breathing, abnormal breath pattern
- Urine seen in umbilicus
- Enlarged, swollen, or wet umbilicus
- Evidence of prematurity
FOAL EMERGENCY KIT

Here is a list of suggested material to keep on hand for foaling. Materials may be added or removed dependant on your farms individual needs.

- Contact information of your veterinarian
- Dry towels
- Navel dip solution
- Enema
- Thermometer
- Bucket of water to place placenta in
- Stethoscope
- Pen and paper to document birthing intervals
NORMAL PARAMETERS FOR THE NEWBORN FOAL

- Gestation length on the average is 340 days
- Suckle reflex should occur by 20 minutes
- Foal should stand within 60 minutes
- Foal should nurse by 30 to 420 minutes
- Heart rate:
  - 1-5 minutes of life – 70 bpm
  - 6-60 minutes of life - 130-150 bpm
- Respiratory rate 30 breaths/minute
- Body temperature 99-101.5 F
- Mucous membranes - pink
- Capillary refill time 1-2 seconds