

# Artificial Insemination Information and Price List 2012



There are many advantages to using artificial insemination to breed your mare instead of traditional natural service. There is considerably more choice of stallions without the mare requiring to travel and for both stallions and mares, there is a hugely reduced risk of injury. However, artificial insemination does require much more veterinary input compared with natural service and this input is maximal where frozen semen is to be used.

With chilled semen, it is necessary to inseminate the mare within 48 hours of the semen being collected and within the 24 hours leading up to her ovulating. This means that once the mare comes into season, it is necessary for us to examine her rectally with the ultrasound scanner every day to monitor her cycle and determine when she is likely to ovulate. Usually, once the mare has a soft follicle which is larger than 35mm and has good uterine oedema, we can give her hormonal drugs (Ovuplant) to induce ovulation at a more predictable time. 24 hours following the administration of Ovuplant, the mare can be inseminated with chilled semen. Again, 24 hours following insemination, the mare must be examined by ultrasound once more to confirm that she has indeed ovulated and that there is not an excessive amount of fluid within the uterus. A large amount of fluid usually indicates an infection within the uterus and it is very important that this is treated rapidly so that when the embryo comes down into the uterus a few days after fertilisation, the environment is suitable for it to implant. If left untreated, the mare is unlikely to continue the pregnancy.

For frozen semen, the mare has to be inseminated within 6 hours of ovulation as thawed semen only has a lifespan of 6-12 hours. Therefore, it is necessary for us to try to pinpoint exactly when she will ovulate. For the first few days of the mare being in season, she will be scanned once daily as per chilled semen protocol above. Once there is a large soft follicle and uterine oedema, there are two options as to how we can proceed. One option is to treat her in a similar way to when using chilled semen, and administer Ovuplant and then inseminate at a fixed time following this. Please be aware that while Ovuplant makes ovulation more predictable, mares' cycles' are not an exact science and there are of course likely to be individual variations. The second option is to begin scanning the mare every six hours around the clock until she is seen to ovulate and at this time inseminate her. As with chilled semen insemination, we have to examine the mare 24 hours post-insemination to check there is no uterine fluid.

Conception rates for AI with chilled semen are comparable with natural service- usually around 75-80%. Frozen semen has a 30-50% pregnancy rate with one cycle and on average 2.5 cycles are required to achieve maximal conception rates with frozen semen. It is recommended that mare owners or individuals using frozen semen enquire regarding the stallion's "first cycle pregnancy rate with frozen semen". We would suggest that you budget for two cycles of chilled semen AI and three for frozen semen. However, as ever, this is very individual and many mares will become pregnant sooner and some may not become pregnant after many more cycles.

## **Before Beginning an AI Programme and Health Testing**

- Choose a stallion- this may limit you to only frozen or only chilled semen. Contact the stud and inform them of your intention to use that stallion.
- Prebreeding check including tests for venereal diseases. This will allow us to identify possible problems with the mare and if necessary we can administer drugs to bring her into season.

The tests for venereal diseases include a swab from the clitoris for Contagious Equine Metritis and a blood sample for Equine Viral Arteritis.

If you are taking your mare to stud, they are likely to require the above tests. CEM swabs must be taken following the 1<sup>st</sup> of January of the year you are wishing to breed your mare. The test takes seven working days once the swab has reached the lab, but for an additional £10 + VAT the lab can perform a different but quicker and equally sensitive test on these swabs.

EVA is an infectious viral disease which is relatively common in continental Europe and other parts of the world but rare in the UK at present. It causes fever, abortion in pregnant mares, lethargy, depression, swelling of the lower legs, conjunctiva and eyes, as well as nasal discharge, 'nettle rash' and swelling of the scrotum or mammary glands. In some cases it can be fatal. EVA can be spread by horses which look clinically normal as well as those showing the signs described above.

Spread is

- By the respiratory route i.e. in nasal (nose) discharges
- During breeding, at natural cover and also in fresh, chilled and frozen semen.
- During teasing
- Via contact with aborted foetuses and the placenta/foetal fluids

The Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB) produce comprehensive codes of practice for control measures and prevention of EVA and many other infectious diseases.

To summarise the Codes, the EVA status of ALL breeding stock (mares and stallions) should be established before breeding begins each year i.e. after January 1st. as follows:

- All stallions should be blood tested to prove that they are not infected with EVA. In the event of the test coming back positive without proof that the positive result is due to vaccination, the semen must be tested to prove that it does not contain EVA.
- All mares should have a blood test taken after January 1st and within 28 days of them entering a stud/AI Centre to prove that they are not currently infected with EVA and thus do not pose a threat to other mares/stallions. Special rules apply to imported mares and these are detailed in the Codes of Practice.

**PLEASE NOTE: WE WILL NOT INSEMINATE ANY MARE WITH SEMEN WHICH DOES NOT COME WITH THE APPROPRIATE HEALTH CERTIFICATION**

Semen must arrive with certification to state that the stallion has been tested clear of CEM in the current breeding season (since January 1<sup>st</sup>) and that he has been blood tested to show he not infected with EVA, or proof that he was not infected prior to vaccination, as well as certification of his vaccinations against EVA.

## Price List 2012

There are several packages for AI and reproduction services as detailed below. Prices are based on insemination carried out at Avondale Equine Surgery and exclude livery and visit charges.

### **Pre-breeding Examination**

- Clitoral Swab for CEM
- Blood Test for EVA
- Vaginal Examination
- Ultrasound scan of uterus and Ovaries

Total cost for the above is £95.00 + VAT

### **Artificial Insemination with Chilled Semen**

- Including bringing mare into season if necessary
- Scanning on daily basis to monitor ovulation
- Administration of drugs to induce ovulation
- Insemination
- Post-insemination check
- Pregnancy scans at 14-17 days, 28-30 days and 40-42 days

Total cost for the above is £165.00 + VAT per cycle

### **Artificial Insemination with Frozen Semen (Fixed time insemination)**

- As above

Total cost is £250.00 + VAT per cycle

### **Artificial Insemination with Frozen Semen (Frequent scanning)**

- As above but from approx day 3-4 of mare being in season, scanning of her ovaries and uterus at 6 hourly intervals and insemination when ovulation is detected.

Total cost for the above is £525.00 + VAT per cycle

The above packages do not include any treatment for endometritis including lavage of the uterus post-insemination, treatment of twins, Caslicks procedure. We will keep you informed if any additional treatment outwith the packages prior to it being performed.