

Pregnancy Testing

Pregnant mares should be managed differently from non-pregnant mares and have further examinations to monitor for the development of the pregnancy, confirm the absence of twin pregnancies, and monitor for early embryonic death

The first scan for pregnancy usually is performed 14 to 16 days after ovulation (when the mare goes off). At this time, twin pregnancies can usually be seen. This is the optimal time to reduce twins to a single pregnancy, while they are still mobile at 16d, the embryo fixes to the wall of the uterus. If the mare is not in foal she can be short cycled (PGd) if necessary to bring her back into season quickly. Horses are not infallible, and even if everything goes well, not every mare will get in foal first time. Another advantage of performing the first scan for pregnancy at 14d is that a short cycle due to uterine infection can be detected. The early pregnancy has a characteristic pattern of growth, and it is important to assess the pregnancy for any indications of early embryonic death, requiring treatment

The 25d scan is important to check for an embryonic heartbeat, and confirm there are no twins. Occasionally a non-viable 25d pregnancy (without a heartbeat) will be found, and early diagnosis of this problem allows us to abort the mare and bring her back into season promptly



Most pregnancy loss occurs between 20 and 30 days, so the 35 day scan confirms the pregnancy has made it through this critical period. Mares that lose their pregnancy after 35 days often will not cycle again that season, or are very difficult to get back in foal

The 42 or 45d scan is traditionally the final scan and the time when service fees are payable. Extra scans might be needed in mares which are prone to twinning, have many cysts, or have lost pregnancies before. The cost is an important consideration. As with many aspects of horse breeding, a compromise must be struck between what is best and what is practical in economic terms.