

### EHV - Avoiding disaster of abortion

Abortion is a devastating loss to you and your horse. However the risk can be reduced by controlling one of the major causes.

Abortion is the expulsion of the foetus before it is capable of life outside the womb and occurs at a rate of 10% after 60 days gestation.

The condition we want to help you with is abortion caused by Equine Herpes Virus (EHV). This can be one of the most distressing causes as the foal will be aborted any time from the 5<sup>th</sup> month but most commonly from 8 months to full term. This means often without warning a fully formed foal is aborted and the mare is less likely to breed the next season.

EHV has 2 strains that are most significant to our horses, EHV 1 and EHV 4. They can cause respiratory disease, abortion and other complications. Most mares of breeding age will have had the respiratory disease and have some short lived natural immunity to it but not to the infection causing abortion. The spread of EHV 1 through a group usually occurs with no sign of disease. This makes it difficult to isolate animals that have had it.

Control measures include management and vaccination.

**Management:** Pregnant mares should be kept separate from other horses. Any new arrivals should be isolated for 21 days. Any abortion cases must be isolated for 56 days. There are more management procedures that can be followed but are too complex to summarise here. Any questions please phone us for advice.

**Vaccination:** The vaccine used is not one that they have with their yearly jabs. It is called Duvaxyn EHV 1,4 and pregnant mares should be given this at approximately 5, 7 and 9 months pregnant. The reason for such regular doses is the difficulty of getting a good immunity even then it is not 100% but not doing it is widely regarded as inviting disaster.