

Ask the VMD



Leon Riegel Tim Trayer Edgar Sheaffer

Mares eat oats...!!!
A reader asks: Will feeding green oats cause abortions in mares?
Dr. Sheaffer comments: Feeding green oats certainly could cause an abortion since green oats will foster the growth of molds (fungi). However, I would like to point out the more common causes of abortions in mares. Rhinopneumonitis or equine virus abortion probably causes greater losses than any one other disease.

There are vaccines available from your veterinarian that will prevent this disease.

Other virus infections include: viral arteritis, nearly always causes an abortion or death of the foal; equine infectious anemia, in its active stage may kill the foal resulting in an abortion; equine influenza, may cause a mare to abort.

Leptospirosis is a spirochete which infects the genito-urinary tract causing systemic disease and abortion. Tell-tale signs of this disease include fever, depression, loss of appetite and eye infection. Your vet can provide a "Lepto" vaccine that will provide protection against five types of leptospira diseases.

Bacterial infections which may cause abortions include: streptococcus, salmonella, listeria, and brucella.

Fungal infections are common where stables are damp and poorly ventilated. Lack of fresh air and sunshine can lead to an environment predisposed to fungal infections.

Feedstuffs that are green and not properly cured or stored are good mediums for fungal growth.

Toxic substances, such as chemical poisons, poisonous plants, fungal toxins, and bacterial toxins can also cause abortions to occur.

In over 90 percent of all equine twinning, one foal is either aborted or still born. Frequently both foals are aborted.

Starvation or less than

adequate calories in a mare's diet will terminate a pregnancy. Nutritional deficiencies, along with parasite infestations, usually cause abortions or the birth of a weak, sickly foal.

Specifically, the following nutrients are necessary in proper amounts for the birth of a live, healthy foal: vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin E, calcium, phosphorus, iron, protein, and iodine.

A mare subjected to trauma may be a prime candidate for an abortion. The trauma can be related to a kick, fall, gunshot wound, cervical laceration, or an abdominal hernia.

And, for the fetus, a torsion of the umbilical cord may be fatal. One to four twists is normal. However if

the cord is twisted over eight to ten times, the blood supply to the foal could be reduced so much that the foal would die and be aborted.

The mare in question probably aborted from fungal toxins present in the green oats. However, the other causes should be considered and ruled out by your veterinarian in the diagnosis.

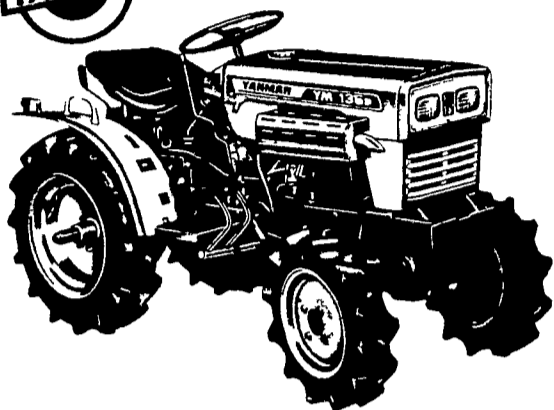
Remember, a good equine breeding program includes proper nutrition, good housing and management, and a thorough up-to-date vaccination and worming program.

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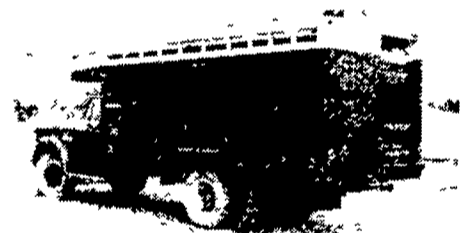
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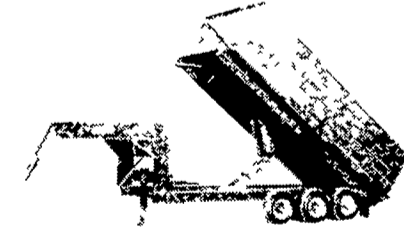
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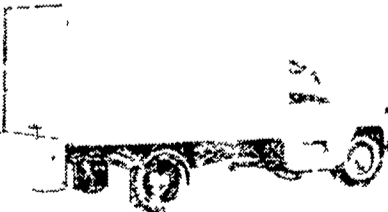
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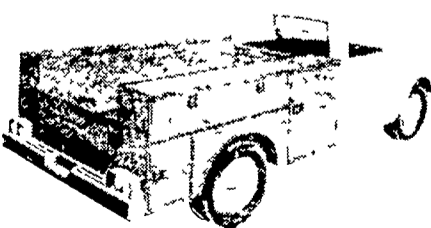
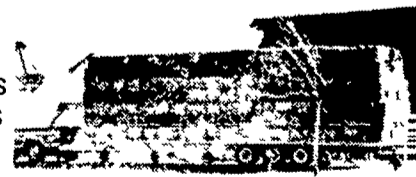


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