

# University of Pennsylvania To Do Horse Research

PHILADELPHIA (Bucks Co.) — Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine received funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for a three-year study to identify the

causes of abortion and pregnancy wastage in horses in Pennsylvania.

Dr. Patricia Sertich, assistant professor of reproduction at the school, is the chief investigator. Early in 1999, horse breeders in

the state will be sent a survey to determine the preventative management of broodmares and to solicit their participation in this project. Veterinarians who provide reproductive care for these breeding farms will be

solicited to participate in the project and receive information and materials to properly submit diagnostic specimens for determination of the cause of pregnancy loss and in any aborting mares. Owners who are willing to complete a management survey and provide properly submitted specimens will receive a complete necropsy of any aborted fetuses. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture grant will underwrite the cost of necropsy and diagnostic tests.

Horse breeding is a viable industry in Pennsylvania. A large amount of money, time, and effort is invested in preparing mares for breeding, getting them bred, and maintaining them throughout pregnancy and

delivery. In the mare, twin pregnancy is the most common documented cause of abortion. The introduction of ultrasonography in the 1980s to examine early pregnancy in mares has permitted the development of methods to manage twins early in gestation before abortion or neonatal loss occurs. Little has changed over the last 15 years with regard to management recommendations of the late pregnant broodmare. Insufficient information is available about the control of other causes of abortion in horses.

Interested veterinarians and horse breeders in Pennsylvania are encouraged to contact Dr. Patricia Sertich at New Bolton Center, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, 382 West Street Road, Kennett Square, PA 19348-1692, Tel.: 610-444-5800.

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