

Photo of PMU mares and foals still in Canada.



Spring Hill Horse Rescue's

Congratulations on your decision to open your home and heart to a PMU foal! We want all of adopters to have a positive experience with their foal so we developed this packet to help prepare you for when your new foal arrives. We encourage you to further educate yourself on the proper care and handling of raising a foal. In this packet we will cover some of aspects of what to expect from the adoption process as well as some handling and care tips. However, you can never learn enough about horses. While you are waiting for your foal to arrive, take the time to learn as much as you can. One of the most important aspects of being around horses is to understand their behaviors and how they communicate. There are a lot of wonderful books and videos on the market today to help with training techniques and care. If this is your first time raising a foal, we recommend soliciting others who have successfully raised foals to be available to you for help if needed. Of course, we are always available to get advice from.
Good luck!

1. Introduction
 - a. What is a PMU/Premarin foal?
 - b. The PMU Cycle
 - c. Where does Spring Hill Horse Rescue get their foals?
 - d. Why adopt a PMU foal?
 - e. Who can adopt a PMU foal?
2. What to Expect
 - a. The adoption process
 - b. Picking up your foal
 - c. Health certificates
 - d. Condition and Health of foal
3. How to Prepare **Before** Your Foal Arrives
 - a. Quarantine
 - b. Fencing
 - c. Vaccination of other horses
 - d. Boarding
 - e. Supplies
 - f. Transportation
4. Gentling and Halter Training Tips
5. Equine Behavior and Communication
6. Feeding, Deworming, Hoof Trimming, and Vaccination

INTRODUCTION

What is a PMU/Premarin Foal?

PMU stands for Pregnant Mare's Urine. Premarin® is a hormone replacement therapy drug (HRTD) given to women during menopause. It is made by extracting estrogen from the urine of pregnant mares. Other HRTDs are made from PMU as well, such as Prempro and Premphase. Approximately 40,000 – 60,000 foals are born each year to this industry.

Considered mere byproducts, the majority of them are slaughtered for their meat and shipped overseas for human consumption. Most of the PMU farms are located in Canada. The breeds of the horses range from (but not limited to) vivid Paints and Appaloosa's to beautiful Quarter Horses and robust drafts and draft crosses. They come in all colors imaginable – buckskins; duns; palominos; red & white, black & white, palomino & white, buckskin & white, and tri colored Paints; red & blue roans; bays; sorrels; chestnuts; blonde and chocolate drafts; blacks and grays.

There is much controversy about the PMU farming industry. The slaughter of tens of thousands of foals is one. Another issue is the care of the mares that are hooked up to the 'pee lines' for urine collection. Horses are roaming animals and many believe that keeping them tied in a small stall for 6 - 8 months is inhumane and cruel. It's also been said that many of the mares are kept dehydrated so their urine is more concentrated. Over population of horses is a big problem in this world. Over 60,000 horses U.S. horses were slaughter in 1999 alone. PMU farming has a huge effect on the horse market as mass production drives the price of horses down therefore small breeding farms suffer. There are just not enough homes for all of these horses.

The PMU cycle.

Mares are put out to pasture to foal in the early spring. They spend most of the summer with their foals in huge pastures. The foals get adequate colostrum (first milk) and spend their first few months of their lives romping and playing with their herd mates. The mares are re-impregnated soon after foaling. By the first of September the foals are separated from their mothers and are sold or shipped to auctions. The mares are put back on the 'pee lines' until the next spring and the cycle starts over.

Where does Spring Hill Horse Rescue get their rescued foals?

We either go to the PMU foal slaughter sales in Canada or contract directly with a farmer. Contracting with a farmer is favorable as we pay them extra to wean them onto grain for two weeks and deworm them once. This process also saves the foals the trauma of being shipped to the sales. The majority of the PMU farms are located in Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskuaqawn, Canada. We hire a tractor-trailer to truck them from the farm to Quebec where we pick them up and bring them across the U.S/Canadian border. It generally takes 5 days for them to travel the 2,500 miles get to our facility from the time they leave the farm.

Some draftX foals and mares in community pasture in Canada.



Moms and babies in Canada.

Why adopt a PMU foal?

There are several reasons why adopting a PMU foal is advantageous. However, the true reason is to save a foal from being slaughtered. Getting the breed, color and gender of your choice is only icing on the cake. Although their adoption fee is affordable this is not a means to buy a 'cheap' horse. All horses require lots of care, good nutrition, adequate shelter and frequent vet and farrier visits. The cheapest part of owning a horse is the initial purchase fee.

PMU foals are renown for their even temperaments and calm dispositions. Why? Most farmers do not tolerate ill behaved or nervous mares in the barn. If a mare is hard to handle or aggressive, she is generally shipped for meat. When the foals first

come home they are frightened and scared but will soon bond with their new family. A foal can be gentled and haltered within hours of arrival once they understand you mean them no harm. PMU foals are no different than other foals. They have no long-term health conditions or physical limitations. Many foals go on to be great pleasure horses or find careers in dressage, hunter/jumper, eventing, driving, showing, endurance, 4-H, etc.

The bond you will have with your PMU foal is like no other. They depend on you for their care and socialism. If you feel you've accomplish nothing in the day you can always pay a visit to your foal and know that you were part of a miracle in saving one more PMU foal from the brutality of horse slaughter. PMU foals will carry their story with them throughout their lives, educating people along the way. Each foal is special not because of their pedigree or lineage but because they are a symbol of life, a symbol of hope for a more compassionate world, and a tribute to the tens of thousands of foals that are slaughtered every year...they are survivors of the PMU industry.

~"Ask not what a horse can do for you but what you can do for a horse."

Who can adopt a PMU foal?

The requirements for adopting a foal are simple – you must provide good quality food, water and shelter with proper medical and farrier attention, a safe living environment free of abusive training tactics as well as plenty of TLC, time and patience. We do ask for a veterinarian reference and an annual statement of health and photos. You must agree to the terms of the contract for adopting as well. If you find that you cannot care for the foal appropriately or if the adoption just isn't working out, you can always return the foal. You will receive a refund of the adoption fee minus a \$100 relinquish fee or you may choose to donate the foal back. If you find another home for the foal at any time in it's life you are allowed to adopt it out for whatever fee you'd like as long as the new owners agree to the original terms of adoption. You must make every effort to ensure the foal is going to a good, safe home and environment.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The adoption process

Throughout the year Spring Hill Horse Rescue accepts pre-registered adopters. Meaning, you would send your adoption form in prior to September 1st along with the adoption fee's to be paid no later than September 1st. The form will allow you to choose the breed style, gender, and color you would like. There is a place for special notes to include special markings request and the intended use of the horse so we can make the best possible match for adopter and foal.

We currently buy the foals directly from a farmer where we pay them extra to wean the foals onto grain for 2 weeks and deworm them once. We hire a tractor-trailer to pick them up and



Angie, pictured with her adopted PMU foals.

deliver them to Quebec where we feed them and allow them to rest for one night before bringing them across the U.S./Canadian border to our facilities in Vermont. The foals will be unloaded and allowed to re-hydrate and rest after the stress of traveling over 2500 miles. We put electrolytes in their water and provide plenty of good hay. We do not give them grain because it's stressful on their digestive systems to change grain abruptly as they will be put on your feed when they get home. We generally start the sorting process of which foal goes to which adopter by the specifications listed on the adoption forms within the next 2 days. The foals are usually ready to go to their new homes around 3 – 4 days after they get to our facilities. The adoption contract must be signed before any foals leave. We ask each adopter to make a 5 – 10 hay bale donation per foal to help alleviate the costs of feeding them while they are here.

After all of the pre-registered foals are assigned to their owners, the remaining foals will be available for those that have chosen the Pick Foal Option. Keep in mind, we will not know how many or what kinds of foals will be available for this option. So, if you are looking for a specific breed style or color your chances of getting what you want are higher if you make selections and have one assigned rather than opting for the Pick Foal Option.

Picking up your foal

These foals are not halter trained and will be loaded and traveling loose in your trailer. **Do not** expect to put halters on them nor should you have anything in your trailer that could be unsafe for your foal. **Do not** hang hay nets as they can easily get their feet caught in them – they do best with hay scattered around the trailer floor which will provide padding as well as a snack for the trip. Two-horse trailers should have the divider and any partition bars removed so they have room to move around and won't get caught under anything. If the front partition bars are not removable then stuff bales of hay under them to deter the foal from going underneath. The middle divider bar must be removed or moved to the side and tied off. The back of the trailer must be enclosed as the foal will be loose and could try to jump out. If you don't have upper doors to enclose the back then attach some sort of canvas or tarp with a board so the foal can't put his head out. The trailer must be in safe condition – no severe rust holes; tag along (or bumper pull) trailers must be hooked up to a towing device, not the vehicle's bumper. All foals must be picked up in a horse or stock trailer specific to transporting large livestock – no U-hauls, vans, motorcycle wagons, etc (yes, we've had people ask!). If you are hiring someone to transport your foal be sure they are aware of these conditions.



Adopters must call or email Spring Hill Horse Rescue to schedule a day and time to pick up their foal. Foals must be picked up within 7 days after the announced date that they are ready to go. It is to their benefit to get to their new homes and given the proper attention they need. If you cannot pick your foal up within this time we can keep it for you but you will be charged a \$5 per day board fee. Foals that are still with us longer than the 7 day period will be introduced onto grain which is included in the boarding fee. However, any dewormings or medical needs the foal may have are the responsibility of the adopter and they will be billed appropriately. The contract states that a veterinarian must examine your foal within 3 – 5 days of being home. Schedule an appointment with your vet prior to the foals' arrival.

Health Certificates

Your foal will have a health certificate issued to the state of Vermont before it leaves Canada. Your foal will also have a current negative Coggin's test, which is required by law. Any foals leaving Vermont should have a new health certificate issued to the state it's going in which we provide a vet to do so. If your foal is being shipped out of state and you decline the health

certificate we are not responsible for any fines or violations if you should get caught without them. A health certificate is required for any horse being imported into a new state.

Health and Condition of Foal

The foals will be in good physical weight as they have been nursing and then weaned onto grain before their trip to Vermont. Your foal will most likely drop some weight during the transition – good nutritional feed is essential for proper growth and immunity development. There may be some superficial scrapes and cuts from the long journey; any wounds that need treatment will be done so at our facility by our vet.



Epona, tobiano Paint foal.

Almost always the foals do come down with some sort of virus due to the stress of traveling. For the most part it is just a flu-like virus with snotty noses and coughing otherwise know as shipping fever. However we did have foals come down with strangles one year. The symptoms of strangles are the same as shipping fever but the horse will usually get enlarged lymph nodes under their jaw that will eventually burst and drain. Having a proper quarantine facility is **essential** to prevent the spread of any viruses to other horses (see *Quarantine* for more details).

Your contract will state that you must have a vet examine your foal within 3 – 5 days of his arrival home. The vet will recommend treatment if any is needed. However, it has been our experience that unless a foal is not eating or drinking we do not administer any antibiotics. We have found that the best treatment is plenty of good nutrition and fresh water, exercise and good ventilation. Antibiotics can sometimes prolong the sickness or can actually make it worse. If a foal comes down with strangles, antibiotics can drive the virus deep into his system causing bastard strangles, which can be deadly. Letting viruses run their course is sometimes best. If your foal is not eating or drinking or is breathing fast or has a temperature then antibiotics may be necessary.

HOW TO PREPARE BEFORE YOUR FOAL ARRIVES

Quarantine

Quarantine means more than keeping the foal separate from other horses. There should be no nose-to-nose contact over fences or stalls. If your foal does come down with a virus, it can easily spread to other horses on the property. You must take serious precautions in keeping all water and feed buckets separate as well as stall cleaning devices, hands, clothes and boots, halter, leads, brushes and blankets. Make sure visitors are careful about not touching other horses on the property after visiting your foal. Clean all equipment and facilities that the foal is in contact with a bleach dilution both during and after the quarantine period. Foals should be kept in quarantine for at least 4 – 8 weeks after the last symptoms of the virus have dispersed. We recommend keeping foals separate from other adult horses until they are at least a year old. Young horses are low on the social pecking order and it wouldn't take but one kick from an adult horse to break a tiny leg or neck or chase a baby through the fence. The period of quarantine is the perfect opportunity for



Sarah's adopted PMU foal in a safe quarantine facility.

you to form a strong bond with your foal as they are very social animals and will look to you for companionship.

The facility should ideally be a stall, at least 10'X10', with access to a small paddock for exercise. The walls should be made of solid materials and the door should be solid as well – no stall guards. It should be well ventilated but windows should be high enough so the foal cannot jump out. It should be free of any sharp objects or items that your foal could get tangled in or go under. Free access to fresh water and good hay is a must for good growth and health.

Fencing

Although the foals will have been out to pasture with their mothers, do not assume they understand fencing. We recommend foals be kept in small paddocks for the first few months, ideally wood or panel fencing. The fencing should be high enough so the foal can't jump out, as they will not know their limitations yet. We do not recommend barbed wire fencing and if you have electric fence make sure it is very visible. Several strands of thick tape wires are ideal. If you have regular wire fence, tie something along the fence line so the foal can see it easily. Plastic grocery bags or strips of bed sheets work well. Always introduce your foal to the fence under supervision. We recommend your foal be gentled and halter broke before he is allowed outside.

Vaccination of other horses

Because there is a high chance your foal will come down with a virus, it would be wise to revaccinate other horses on the property within 2 – 4 weeks **before** your foal arrives. This will boost their immunity in the event that cross contamination should occur. Check with your vet as to which boosters to administer.

Boarding

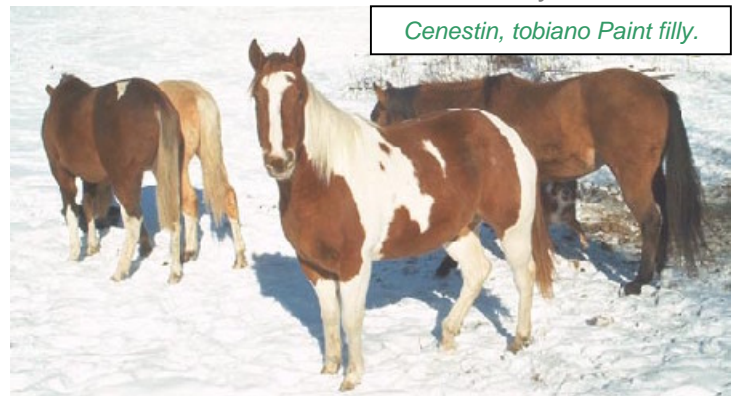
We strongly suggest you allow your boarding facility owner/manager read this information packet as well. This is to ensure they are aware of the proper facilities needed and the proper precautions taken to protect the other horses on the property.

Supplies

Your foal should have its very own supplies – everything from feed and water buckets to brushes, blankets, halters and leads. This doesn't mean you have to go out and buy new items just make sure you sanitize and clean the equipment beforehand and after. The halter size will depend on the breed style of foal you select. Of course drafts and draft crosses will have a larger head. We recommend having either a yearling, pony or cobb size halter that is adjustable under the chin and crown piece. Foals grow very quickly and weanling size usually doesn't last for more than a few weeks if it will even fit at all. Cowboy rope halters work great as they adjust to almost every size.

Transportation

As noted before, proper transportation must be arranged to pick up foals. The trailer must be for large animal transportation and must be safe. If you hire someone to pick up your foal then make sure they know the foal will be traveling loose, etc. (see Picking Up Your Foal). We do offer horsey-pool networking among foal adopters. If you do not have the means to transport your foal we can try to set you up with another adopter in your area. All agreements and arrangements will be made between the two parties as we only provide the contact information. We will deliver foals within a reasonable distance if you cannot find alternative transportation. However, we do charge by the 'loaded' mile. We can also make recommendations of other transportation services. Finding a friend or neighbor with a truck and trailer who is willing to transport will be less expensive. Make



Cenestin, tobiano Paint filly.

sure you clean and sanitize the trailer after the foal has been in it. Commercial horse haulers should be well aware of sanitization and be responsible for their own trailers.

GENTLING AND HALTER TRAINING TIPS

Although your PMU foal may appear 'wild' upon first sight – this is only due to fear and the training it's received so far. When the foals are herded in from the pastures and loaded on and off the trailers they learn to go in the opposite direction from humans. They also are very herd oriented animals and tend to ban together. If you should adopt more than one foal they can be in the same quarantine area but you should separate them so you can work with them individually. Otherwise they will bond with each other rather than you, which can lead to aggressive behavior. When your foal is settled in his stall you can start the gentling process almost immediately. Some



Jewell, pictured with her family only a couple of days after being in her new home.

people like to wait a day or so while others take a more progressive approach. Because your foal should be gentled and handled before your vet arrives we recommend starting as soon as possible. Your foal doesn't necessarily have to be halter trained to lead before your vet arrives but you should definitely be able to handle and touch him all over. Desensitize every spot on your foal from head to hoof. This includes under his belly and under his tail so the vet can take an adequate temperature and listen to his heart and lungs without much fuss. You'll want to desensitize his genital area and between the back legs as well so you can check for testicle dissention on colts for

castration. Work on both sides of the foal as horses have 2 separate sides to their brains – what you teach on one side has to be taught again to the other side. Here are some tips for starting the gentling process: First, get into the stall with the foal but do not approach him. Just let the foal get use to you being there for a few minutes. When he settles down and accepts you in the stall you can then start your initial approach. While some foals may approach you first others will not. Try to start with just one side. Approaching from the direct front is more overwhelming to them, as both sides of the brain have to work. Most likely your foal will put his hind end to you, putting his head towards a wall or corner. This is only a natural defense for them. Although they are not likely to kick out this is potentially an unsafe position. You will want to get him to face you by taking their hind end away from you. This can be accomplished by using a thick, soft cotton rope (at least 10' long) to throw over the foal's neck. He will be spooked the first few times by this but will get use to it if you need to make several attempts. To do this coil 5 or more foot of rope up on one end and toss it over the foal's neck so there are several feet hanging loosely over his neck. When you've done this hold your end and reach around and grab the other so you have both sides in your hands. **DO NOT TIE THE ROPE IN A KNOT.** You want to be able to release the rope if necessary. When you have both sides of the rope and it is positioned around his neck, stand around 3 – 4 feet away and pull the foal's head around to you so you are positioned at his shoulder. Your foal may try to turn around away from you or struggled. Take up the slack in the rope on both sides and make sure the remaining rope is behind you so you or the foal won't get tangled in it. Put pressure on the rope until his head is toward you then release the pressure immediately. When your foal accepts this position he will soon understand to give to the pressure of the rope. You can then try to ease your way closer and closer to the foal. Again, approaching from either side, not the front unless it is more comfortable for the foal. When the foal lets you close enough to touch him, reach out to the shoulder or withers first. He will most likely want to keep his head the farthest from your hand so don't try to touch his face first. Your foal will probably jump or struggle the first time he feels your touch, just keep both ends of the rope in one hand available to pull the foals head back towards you while the other hand pets him. Once you have a

hand on your foal he will quickly settle into your touch. They just don't know if you are going to hurt them and most likely haven't had a human hand on them other than the vet drawing blood for the Coggin's test. Gently stroke and scratch the foals withers, shoulders and neck area. You will start to see the foal's body slowly relax and become less tense. It's very important to watch the foals' body language. If he quickly becomes tense and tight then that's a signal he will make a move. If he starts licking and chewing with his mouth that means he is thinking of submitting and accepting. If his ears go all of the way back or pinned then he is thinking of being aggressive. When the foal calmly allows you to touch and pet him, back away so he'll have time to take it all in. When you go to approach your foal again, his initial reaction may be to turn away again. Just pull his head around toward you with the neck rope. Keep the rope on his neck until you are ready to stop working with the foal. Believe it or not this process should only take a few minutes to an hour. When you reach a point where the foal is accepting your touch and is calm and relaxed this is a good stopping point. You can work with your foal several times a day but short periods at a time are suggested, as their attention spans are only so big. Work on touching the foal all over on both sides. You may want to put the halter on before attempting to work with the other side. Pay special attention to the head and face area in preparation of putting the halter on. Hand feeding grain may help your foal relax, just be careful not to make treats the main objective. Horses can get nippy and muggy if treats are expected with every visit. The next few times you approach your foal he may turn away from you. The more he gets use to your touch the further you go on his body. Do not stop touching an area until he is completely relaxed and accepting of your touch otherwise you can reinforce their nervousness if you pull away or stop too soon. Have the rope handy in case you need it. Soon your foal will anticipate your arrival and come to appreciate your company.



Rory, overo Paint filly.

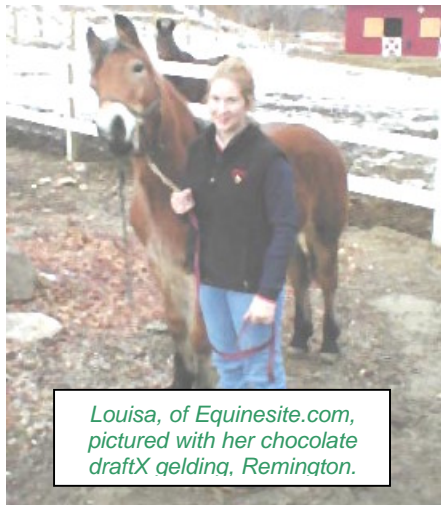
Haltering

It's important to touch your foals face all over including around the ears, poll, forehead, and under the chin and around the mouth in preparation of putting the halter on. Before attempting to put it on, let the foal get use to the halter by smelling it and rub it all around his face and neck. If you are right handed you will most likely be more comfortable on his left side. Backing the foal up into a corner (with his butt toward the corner) is an ideal position for the foal to be in so he can't back away. When the foal is no longer afraid of the halter, position yourself on his left side, just in front of the shoulder while holding the halter in your left hand. Put your right hand over top of the foal's poll, between his ears. With your left hand raise the halter to the foals face holding the top of the crown piece. The foal may raise his head at the sight of the halter, just do it over and over until he accepts it. Pull the nosepiece over the foals muzzle and with your right hand still between his ears reach down and grab the crown piece and pull it gently over one ear at a time. Fasten the throatlatch and make any adjustments necessary so the halter will fit well. A halter should **not** be left on the foal unattended as they can easily catch their hooves in it or get caught on something. Such accidents could cause breakage or injury to the spine, neck or leg bones, and paralysis or nerve damage.

Leading

Teaching a foal to lead is fairly easy. Remember throughout any training you do it is important to avoid getting in a tug-o-war with the foal. A horse's natural instinct is 'you pull me, I'll pull back' – the same as a human's instinct. A horse must be taught to give to pressure, meaning follow the direction of the pressure. You will be more successful in leading by first teaching your

foal to give to lateral pressure (i.e. side to side or left and right). By starting with lateral movement your foal will lose a lot of its strength and balance by being asked to move sideways. Put a halter on the foal and attach a thick cotton lead rope to it. Starting in a small area such as a stall is ideal. Start by using consistent pressure to one side and keep in a tight circle, positioning your self toward the foal's hip. Your foal will most likely resist but keep the pressure there until you feel the slightest give in the desired direction and then release the pressure like with the neck rope. Some foals react more than others so be patient and keep trying until you are successful. Soon your foal should be walking in almost a circle with you. Do this to the other side as well. Teaching your foal to give to lateral pressure will come in handy later. If your foal should try to run away or bolt you can deter his forward movement by asking for a lateral give. When your foal is giving to pressure laterally on both sides you can start to ask for forward movement.



Louisa, of Equinesite.com, pictured with her chocolate draftX gelding, Remington.

Forward movement can be accomplished simply by enlarging the lateral circle a little at a time until the foal starts to take forward steps. If you find he is locking up his legs and not moving encourage him to move by tapping his hip with your hand or a rope. Another technique for getting forward movement is using a butt rope, which is a long thick cotton rope (like the neck rope) that is placed around the foal's rump, above the hocks. Both ends should be held – do not tie. It is easier to have two people when using a butt rope – one person to operate the halter lead and the other the butt rope. Apply pressure on the halter lead while also pulling forward on the butt rope. The instant the foal takes a step forward release the halter lead pressure and the butt rope pressure. Soon your foal will go forward with just the halter lead pressure.

EQUINE BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATION

Raising a foal is a wonderful experience. However, they are horses and have their own way to communicate and socialize. Before you bring a horse into your family you must understand their nature so you can properly address their behaviors. Horses, like many people, learn by first making mistakes so you must go into horse ownership expecting no less. Horses, by nature, are herd-oriented animals. They desire companionship and socialization of others as well as leadership. The leader (otherwise known as an Alpha horse) is looked upon for guidance and survival. The Alpha horse is also responsible for keeping herd members in check, correcting unwanted behaviors and has the most respect in the herd. Even though domestic horses are taken care of by their humans, they still have the need to have an Alpha horse. When horses meet for the first time they will instantly establish who Alpha horse is of that relationship. They will most likely make nose-to-nose contact, maybe do some kicking, striking and squealing and before long, one will prevail over the other. As your foal recovers from his long journey and gets settled into his new home he will begin to bond with you and consider you his herd mate. He will welcome you with a nicker at every feeding and love to be brushed, scratched and rubbed at any given moment. Being a herd mate he will also treat you as he would another horse and, as youngsters, this treatment includes rough play and the start of herd placement and social pecking order. It is imperative to give your foal structure and boundaries at this age so he is a well behaved adult.



Joan with adopted PMU foal, Bonzo.

When your foal is more comfortable with you, he will most likely try to play with you whether that means nibbling your clothes or bucking and running around you like he would another horse. Playing is a way for horses to prepare for adulthood. They learn what behaviors they will be allowed to get away with as well as establishing Alpha horse positioning among herd mates. This is a crucial time in your relationship as you must act as Alpha horse and establish what behaviors will not be tolerated. The job of Alpha horse is to not only discipline but to give your foal structure, boundaries and guidance. The more structure you give your foal the calmer and more trusting he will be with you. If you allow your foal to put his mouth on you, even if it's a cute, innocent nibble then you are communicating to him that it is okay for him to put his mouth on you even to bite. Nibbling will ALWAYS lead to biting later on if allowed. Like most babies, foals are very oral – almost everything goes in their mouth. When your foal starts to nibble on your clothes, hair, shoes, etc, push his nose away and give him a firm 'NO'. Another form of discipline is to make him go away from you when he does something undesirable. Alpha horses will often drive another horse away when they are misbehaving. Having a natural herd instinct, horses need to be part of the herd and will quickly learn which behaviors is not acceptable and got him driven away. However, if you have a foal that is vying for Alpha horse position with you, he may be more aggressive in his attempts. If he continues the undesirable behavior then a good hard swat anywhere past the withers may be in line. Physical discipline is part of horse-to-horse communication but there is a fine line. The horse must know what it is he is being disciplined for therefore you should only discipline within 3 seconds after the undesired behavior took place. For instance, if your foal bites you and then runs away; do not chase him down, catch him and then punish him. He will only think he's being punished for being caught not the undesired behavior. NEVER strike a horse in the face, this will only cause head shyness. If you do decide to go with this form of discipline than make sure your swats are hard enough so he knows you mean business. Little taps or slaps are only play and he'll just get more calculating to become better at the game.



Pluto, 2001 PMU foal.

Other behaviors that shouldn't be accepted are turning their hind ends to you, pinning ears back or disrespect for your personal space. These are all either signs of aggression or disrespect and should not be allowed. If your foal turns his butt to you, immediately drive him away and let him back with you when he is facing you. If he pins his ears or crowds you when you are bringing grain to him, don't allow him to have it until he backs out of your space and his ears are forward.

Horses learn from you every second you are with them whether you are training them for a specific thing or just hanging out with them. It's essential that you are consistent with your boundaries. It's not fair to allow your horse to rub and push on you when you're just hanging out and then discipline him when you are trying to teach him something and he rubs on you. If he's allowed to do it sometimes he will be confused and won't know what he's been disciplined for.

Communicating with horses requires mere commonsense. When you raise a foal you are basically working with a clean slate and how they are allowed to behave as youngsters will reflect their demeanor as adults. Working with your foal should be fun, progressive and calm for you and the foal. If you feel like you are in over your head then find someone that will help you through the issues instead of letting things get out of hand. Responsible horse ownership is recognizing when a problem exists and fixing it as soon as possible whether that problem is health or behavioral related. A horse's behavior is an image of its owner. If the horse is unmanageable, aggressive, and ill behaved that's because it was allowed to be by its owner.

FEEDING, DEWORMING, HOOF TRIMMING, AND VACCINATION

Feeding

Your foal should be put on a good nutritional diet as soon as possible. Good quality hay is essential right away and grain should be introduced slowly. Grass hay mixes are preferable over straight alpha hay. The best grain to feed is one that is made especially for young horses, as it will have the correct vitamin and mineral ratios for growth and development. Never feed your horse a grain intended for other animals. Some cattle, goat and chicken grains are highly toxic and deadly to horses.

Deworming

Foals, by nature, are extremely susceptible to parasites (i.e. worms). They are often seen eating manure where they can pick up and digest parasite larvae. A good deworming schedule is imperative to your foals growth and development, as parasites will deprive your foal of the valuable nutrition required during his growing years. If a foal is not dewormed regularly, parasites can cause heart, lung, liver and stomach damage and even death. Many foals are lost to parasite infestation mainly due to colic. If a foal hasn't been dewormed in a while and parasites are allowed to accumulate in his system when he is finally dewormed he may colic due to the large quantity of worms dying in his system and impacting his intestines.

Your foal will have been dewormed once with Ivermectrin before you receive him. We recommend deworming him two days in a row giving him a half dose each day the first deworming you do. Always check with your vet as to when to deworm him for the first time as this will cause extra stress to his already stressed immune system. We recommend deworming foals once a month until they are a year old. You can then put them on an every 2 – 3 month schedule. From birth through the first two years, young horses have an especially low resistance to parasites and can quickly acquire massive worm burdens. However, damage inflicted by these worms can be gradual and subtle, so you may not notice any signs of illness at the onset. Meanwhile, your foal's growth and development become impaired, its performance ability reduced, and its resistance to disease lowered - problems that can have long-term consequences.

A carefully planned and strictly followed deworming schedule is the only way to protect your foal from parasite damage. There are many dewormers on the market today. Be sure to read product labels carefully and avoid using drugs not approved for use in foals because some can be highly toxic. High potency dewormers such as Quest, with the active ingredient moxidectin, should NOT be used. This dewormer is extremely strong and if the foal has a large concentration of parasites, the parasites may die off in mass and may cause an impaction resulting in colic. This dewormer is designed for the mature horse and for horses on a routine deworming program. If the label indications are confusing, ask your veterinarian for advice. Deworming dosage is determined by the foal's weight, so you should weight your foal each time a deworming is scheduled. Inexpensive height-weight tapes can be purchased to help estimate weight accurately if you don't have access to a scale. It's important not to overlook any changes in weight, because under dosing can be as ineffective as not worming at all, and overdosing can cause uncomfortable side effects (for example, toxicity). Be sure to rotate your dewormer every month so the parasites can't build a resistance to the active ingredient. A rigorous deworming program will keep parasite damage to a minimum and help to ensure your foal matures into a beautiful, healthy horse.



Hoof Trimming

Good hoof trimming is essential for proper hoof, bone, joint, and tendon and ligament development in a young horse. Most foals are born with some form of angular limb deformity (toed-in/out, cow hocked, etc) but they are easily fixed with proper trimming (that's why we don't see a lot of adult horses with these problems). Your foal will need his hooves trimmed soon after he comes home, as he will not have had them trimmed prior. Practice picking up your foals hooves and tapping the bottoms as much as possible before your farrier comes. Make sure your foal will tolerate his entire underside to be touched so he won't be surprised if the farrier's head or hand should touch him on the belly. **It is not the job of your farrier to be the first one to handle their hooves and legs.** You want your foal comfortable with this beforehand so the farrier can concentrate on the proper trim needed to ensure good balance and growth specific to your foal. Some farriers are now charging by the hour due to a lot of ill behaved horses taking longer to work on. Your farrier should recommend a trimming schedule; most likely every 4 – 6 weeks.

Spring Hill Horse Rescue uses and advocates natural hoof trimming techniques and bare-footedness. We strongly believe that shoes cause more damage to a horse than it does good. Not only hoof damage but bone, joint, back and soft tissue damage. Metal shoes do not allow the hoof to function as nature intended. Natural hoof trimming is known to both prevent and treat such hoof diseases as navicular, ringbone, founder, etc. For more information, search the internet using keywords NATURAL HOOF TRIMMING or BAREFOOT TRIMMING.

Vaccination

In general, foals are not vaccinated until they are at least 6 months of age. Your foal will be only 3 – 5 months when you pick him up and will not have received any vaccinations. Because your foal will mostly likely come down with some sort of virus, his immune system will be in full force fighting off the sickness. We do not recommend vaccinating foals until they are healthy and it's been several weeks before the last symptom has disappeared. Vaccinations can tax their system more and potentially bring them into a sickness. Waiting until the foal is well rested and gaining weight before vaccinating is ideal. As always, follow your vets' recommendation for a vaccination schedule. Be sure to let the vet know about the stressful situation your foal has undergone during this transition.

A Mare s Prayer

With every birth I pray to God that this will be one
To go to that special place where she ll be dotted on with love.
As another life is born to me I nuzzle her with care,
Let me introduce myself, I am a PMU mare.

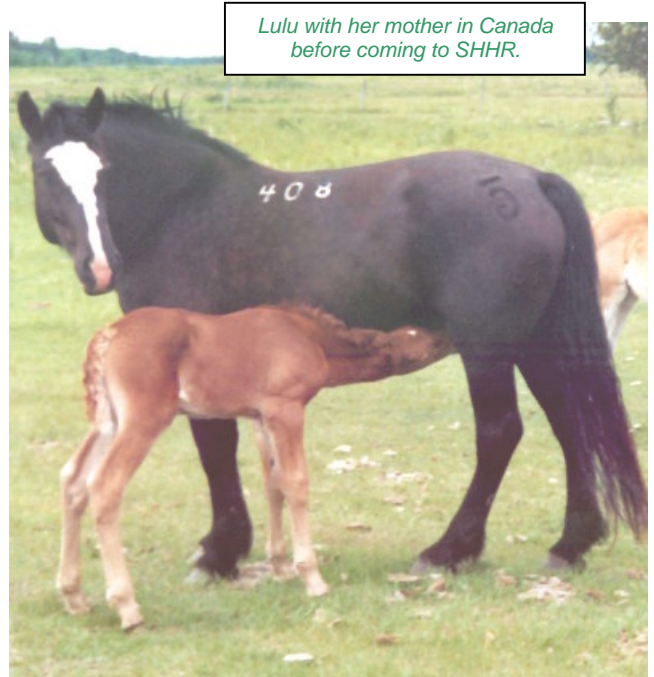
Each moment is so precious; I try not to get attached
But her innocence is refreshing, her beauty is unmatched.
She frolics with the others; they don t know what lies ahead
All the mares are uneasy for back to the barns we are led.

The foals cry out in panic they don t know what s in store
Some will go to feedlots and others to the East shore.
I breathe a sigh of relief, as she s loaded on the truck
For she will go to Vermont being chosen is mere luck.

With her goes a piece of myself hiding in her heart
Finally the freedom from this life I will too depart.
She will never be alone, never be abused
Her flesh will never make a profit for those that misuse.

Hidden in the green mountains, there s a special place they say
Where foals are always welcome to live and romp and play.

I pray she finds that place, so she does not go to kill
They find the foals good homes; this place is called Spring Hill



This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.