

Central Kentucky Colostrum Bank Benefits More Than Just Foals

By Ashley Hartsough



“Happy New Year!” That greeting will be said and heard for at least the first couple weeks as a new year gets under way. After all, with the new year comes spring, the season of rebirth, of planting new crops, and hope that great things lie ahead. But for most of us in the horse industry, the ringing of those new year bells means one thing, foaling season has arrived, and with it, the promise of new talent. Perhaps a Triple Crown winner? Or an Olympic jumping hopeful? After about 343 days in the making, our new prospects are about to be welcomed, and we have to be prepared. Making our lists and checking them twice takes on an entirely different meaning: towels, ‘√’; cotton, ‘√’; iodine, ‘√’; colostrum bottles ‘?’.

Colostrum is the sticky, high-protein first milk secreted by the mare, the first 24 hours following birth. Colostrum’s, high content of antibodies arm the foal against potential infection. If a foal is unable to nurse, or the mare does not produce adequate colostrum, the foal's health could be at risk. If this is the case, a foal might require supplemental colostrum or a commercial substitute.

For more than 10 years, Hagyard Pharmacy has been helping the Kentucky Thoroughbred Farm Managers' Club operate a Colostrum Bank, with proceeds benefiting the Central Kentucky Riding for Hope (CKRH). Colostrum, which is donated by farms, tested and then frozen for storage until needed. The colostrum is available to anyone who has a foal in need.

While the colostrum helps needy foals, the greater benefit goes to individuals that depend on CKRH each week to help with their physical and mental well-being. In 2011, Hagyard Pharmacy, contributed nearly \$26,000 to CKRH from the proceeds of the colostrum bank. As CKRH is completely dependent upon community support, those annual donations are needed to help fund at least nine different Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) the organization provides the community. One of the newest programs is the “Horses for Heroes” Veterans Program. This unique program utilizes the healing power of the horse to help military veterans who return from combat with physical and/or mental conditions that can lead to depression, anxiety, substance abuse and other serious issues, affecting their relationships with family and friends.

“The proceeds from the Colostrum Bank are a cornerstone in the budget at CKRH. The funds received directly support our therapy herd and our programming.” explains Pat Klein, Executive Director, at CKRH. She adds that, “Since the completion of our new facility, program services have continued to grow and diversify. Without contributions from programs like the Colostrum Bank donations, our ability to continue to provide these great programs to members in our community would be cut short.”

If you’re not currently utilizing the Colostrum Bank, we urge you to add it to your foaling season prep list for 2012. Members of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Farm Managers' Club may contribute colostrum to the bank and then withdraw from the bank as needed. Non-members may purchase colostrum for \$125 per pint from the bank or may donate colostrum to the bank. When the colostrum is tested and approved, the donor will receive a credit. If, at a later date during the same foaling season, colostrum is needed, the credit is applied towards the purchase. The objective is to have enough colostrum in the bank for anyone in need.

The Colostrum Bank supplies (free of charge to members and as part of the fee for nonmembers) pint containers, with a 6cc syringe attached for the test sample. As colostrum must be collected and stored properly please refer to the guidelines at www.hagyardpharmacy.com for helpful tips on collection. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us. Your donation or purchase of colostrum is greatly appreciated!

Please visit www.ckrh.org for more information on the Central Kentucky Riding for the Hope or to make a donation.