

# MARE & FOAL



## **Pregnancy**

The major growth of the foetal foal takes place during the last trimester of pregnancy lasting 3 to 4 months. Up until the eighth month of pregnancy the energy requirement only increases by around 10% and protein by 20%, over the maintenance level of a dry mare. Between month eight and birth, energy requirement rises a further 16% and protein 18% and these increases are paralleled by similar increases in demand for other nutrients such as calcium, phosphorous and trace elements. Providing adequate supplies all the essential nutrients during the phase of rapid foetal growth is critical in avoiding problems such as low birth weight, poorly developed immunity and Developmental Orthopaedic Disease ( D.O.D.) which has been shown to be present even before birth.

The mare will sacrifice her own nutritional status to provide for the foal, both before and after birth, so her health is also at risk if her nutritional needs are not fully met. Studies have shown that mineral supplementation of the mare following birth impacts positively on fertility and conception rate for the first two oestrus cycles after birth, so her ability to breed again after foaling is also impacted by good nutrition (SARWAR, A., H. ENBERGS, E. KLUG. Vet. arhiv 68, 11-17, 1998.)

Striking a balance is key and mares in late pregnancy should not be allowed to become over fat. Protein intake should be adequate at between 800g and 900 g per day for a 500 Kg mare in the last trimester, but overfeeding protein is detrimental because there is a metabolic cost in dealing with the excess.

## **Lactation**

Nutritionally, lactation is the most demanding phase of a horse's life. Energy demand for a wet mare at peak lactation around three months is similar to that of a race horse in full work, and her protein requirement is around 50% higher. Producing up to 18Kg of milk per day is very hard work, especially if the mare's nutritional reserves were depleted by poor nutrition during late pregnancy. As well as protein and energy she is pouring out minerals, vitamins and trace elements in her

*Correct feeding of the broodmare and her foal during its first few months of life is critical in determining healthy outcomes for both of them. Poor nutrition during pregnancy, lactation and early development of the foal can have long term or even permanent negative consequences. Horsepower Mare & Foal has been designed to provide optimal levels of nutritional support including macro and micro minerals to ensure safe passage through these nutritionally demanding phases of their lives.*

