

TOWNSVILLE SUCCESS IN EQUINE EMBRYO TRANSFER



The 2008 breeding season saw the arrival of three embryo transfer foals born to recipient mares.



Three embryo transfer foals born this breeding season.

Townsville Veterinary Clinic offers a wide range of equine reproduction services, including pre-breeding examinations of mares and stallions, semen collection, artificial insemination and North Queensland's only equine embryo transfer service.

Embryo transfer

Embryo transfer is a useful procedure if you have a mare that you want a foal out of years before you want to retire her to the brood mare paddock. Embryo transfer (ET) involves the donor mare being inseminated with fresh, chilled or frozen semen and becoming pregnant. Seven or eight days later the embryo is retrieved from the mare and placed in a recipient mare, who will act as a surrogate mother.

The recipient mare will carry the pregnancy and raise the foal as if her own. This allows the donor mare to continue competing or working with minimal down time but using her genetics to start on the next generation of good horses.

With all reproductive work, pregnancy rates are greater with good quality fresh or chilled semen compared to frozen. If this procedure interests you, please don't hesitate to call the clinic and discuss your options with Dr Ben Ledez.



TOWNSVILLE VET CLINIC SERVICES



Mare services

- Artificial insemination (AI) with chilled or frozen semen gives you access to stallions from overseas as well as Australia-wide. An added benefit is breeding your mare close to home in a safe, well-managed environment.
- Pre-breeding or fertility examinations should be carried out on any mare with a history of reproductive problems. Identifying the cause of poor fertility allows you to make an informed decision about breeding your mare.
- Embryo transfer offers you the option to continue competing a young mare while rearing her foal. Embryos can be chilled and transported for short periods in a similar manner to chilled semen. They can also be frozen for longer term storage or till a suitable donor becomes available.
- With hysteroscopic and low-dose insemination, small doses of semen, usually frozen, can be inseminated directly onto the oviductal papilla, potentially increasing the number of pregnancies from a single dose of semen. Hysteroscopic examination is also used to assess uterine adhesions, scarring and masses affecting the mare's fertility.
- Uterine biopsy and cytology allow evaluation of the health of the endometrium, the uterine lining and identification of changes affecting the mare's fertility.
- For pregnant mare management, mares with a history of aborting or delivering a sick, immature foal are candidates for intensive management. A series of regular ultrasound examinations and hormonal tests are carried out to monitor the health of the uterus, placenta and unborn foal. If necessary, treatment can be carried out to increase the chances of delivering a healthy foal.

Stallion services

- Semen collection and evaluation: Semen may be collected for evaluation of fertility and for artificial insemination either on site or for transport as chilled semen.
- Stallion training for collection: The clinic offers services with an artificial vagina and on a phantom mount. Many stallions can be collected safely on a teaser mare but a phantom mount allows increased safety and versatility, as an on-heat mare isn't necessary.
- Semen freezing: Stallion semen can be collected and frozen for storage, transport and future use. Sperm survival after freezing and thawing varies considerably between stallions so a collection and test freeze is carried out first to assess 'freezability'.

Reproduction facilities

- 'Raintrees' – our equine reproduction facility – is located just south of Townsville on the Bruce Highway. Mares are agisted in paddocks while being bred and stable facilities are available for stallions. Our recipient mares are located here and embryo transfers, semen collection and freezing are carried out on site.

Townsville Vet Clinic

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(24 hour service)

Call **07 4779 0233** and talk
to Dr Ben Ledez about how
we can help you.

