

Equine – Teasing the mare

Recommended instructor to student ratio: (Instructor – student ratio 1 :< 16)

Category

Teaching: 3

Research: 4 Choose an item.

Objective

Describe the standard operating procedure for teasing the mare.

Teasing the mare means exposing her to a stallion or androgenised gelding to determine her sexual behaviour. It is used to assist in assessing the significance of structures on the ovaries. Ideally, mares should be teased daily to determine when they first show signs of heat. At the very least, they should be teased every second day. Teasers can be small, entire pony stallions; quiet, well-handled horse stallions; or geldings treated with weekly, intramuscular injections of approximately 700mg-testosterone enanthate. A mare in heat will usually put her **T**ail in the air, **U**rinate and **W**ink (the repeated everting of the vulval lips) when in the presence of a stallion. This can be coded as TUW. A mare not in heat will often lay her **E**ars back, **S**queal and **K**ick in the presence of a stallion and can be coded as ESK. Mares just coming into heat or ones that have recently ovulated often form a third category described as **passive**.

Note: A routine should be established to ensure teasing is performed effectively. Good records are essential.

Alternatives to animal use

Videos may be used for teaching however live animals need to be used to ensure professional standards are met.

Drugs, chemicals or biological agents

- None

Procedure

1. Lead the teaser to the mare or vice versa. Ideally there should be a fence in-between the two animals to prevent excessive contact between the mare and teaser. Throw the lead rope of the mare over the fence rail and stand clear of the mare to avoid injury if she is not in heat and reacts violently to the stallion's presence. Once the horses have been introduced head-to-head, turn the mare so that the teaser has access to her perineal region. Allow the teaser time to nuzzle the mare, but avoid letting him bite her.



The teaser and mare are introduced head to head with a fence in between. Note the lead rope of the mare looped over the rail allowing the handler to stand clear while still maintaining control of the mare.

2. Examine the mare for signs of heat and use a standard system to record the behaviour.



This mare is displaying typical signs of heat. Note she has her tail in the air and is urinating. Winking was also vigorously displayed. The behaviour of the mare can be coded to assist in recording. For example record TUW for a mare displaying these signs, ESK if she is not in heat, or record "Passive" if no definitive signs were noted.

3. As soon as signs are noted, separate the two animals to reduce the chance of injury to horses or handlers. Ensure the mare's name, date and behaviour signs are recorded. Move on to tease the next mare.

Impact on wellbeing of animals

If carried out properly in a good facility, this procedure causes minimal, or nil impact on animal wellbeing.

Animal Care

The mare and stallion should be observed for signs of discomfort for up to 30 minutes after teasing especially if there was any unexpected behaviour noticed leading to any kicking, biting etc.

Pain Relief

Pain relief is not required for this procedure.

Reuse and repeated use

In a teaching/clinical/research context, this procedure, if required, may be repeated multiple times a day but generally not required more than 2 or 3 times.

Qualification, experience or training necessary to perform procedure

Demonstrator: Veterinarian OR it can be carried out by a Theriogenology technician / Equine Science graduate having experience with this procedure.

Thorough knowledge of the physiology, endocrinology and anatomy involved.

Students: Veterinary Science; Equine Science. Prior experience with handling horses and background knowledge of anatomy, physiology and endocrinology is desirable