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DVD REVIEW

FOALinMARE: insights inside the foaling mare. J Govaere, K Martens and A de Kruijff. Department of Reproduction, Obstetrics and Herd Health, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ghent University, Ghent, 2010. 45 min. Price €60.

FoalinMare is produced by European animal reproduction specialists from leading universities in Ghent and Utrecht, with contributions from theriogenologists from the US and France. By selecting from the language menu, the DVD caters to many nationalities. The DVD presents over 60 min of excellent three-dimensional animations of normal and abnormal equine parturition. The information is outlined in a logical fashion via a series of headings and drop-down menus. It begins with concise factual information and animation of fetal maturation in late gestation, followed by detailed description of normal parturition. The DVD focuses on a series of beautifully animated and detailed illustrations of various possible fetal malpresentations that can cause dystocia, followed by a visual explanation of how to correct each abnormality per vaginam. It also illustrates other periparturient complications, such as prolapsed uterus and viscera, uterine torsion and provides very detailed descriptions on how to perform a complete and partial fetotomy. The narration is clear, although the English translation is not perfect for some reproductive terms. Real-life video and narration of a normal foaling and behaviour of the newborn foal and mare, as well as the correct surgical approach to performing an uncomplicated caesarean, are also included. Each animation is complimented by a PDF text version in six different languages.

Some theoretical knowledge of equine reproduction and mare dystocia is assumed, as the narration does not provide background to compliment the visual descriptions. The DVD also does not describe basic approaches to examining a mare having difficulty foaling; such as epidural anaesthesia, lubrication, anaesthesia or elevation of the hindlimbs to facilitate assisted vaginal delivery. There is a lack

of any explanation of the tools that a veterinarian may require to perform an assisted vaginal delivery (chains, eye hook) or how to use them appropriately. In contrast, the fetotomy procedure is described in great detail. The DVD does use some reproductive terms that are not widely accepted, such as 'Johnes' position', to describe elbow flexion of the fetus as a cause of dystocia. Furthermore, they state that even normal newborn foals should be fed colostrum milked from the dam via nasogastric intubation soon after standing, rather than being allowed to nurse and ingest colostrum normally. Although this practice is not detrimental to the foal in most situations, it differs from widely accepted practice.

FoalinMare is a valuable educational tool that contributes unique, interesting and beautifully animated visual information about equine parturition, what can go wrong and how to manage dystocia. It is mostly intended for the veterinarian starting out in equine reproduction and veterinary students, but needs to be supported with appropriate background knowledge. I highly recommend this learning tool as a reference for veterinarians wanting to become more familiar with equine parturition, for final-year veterinary students and for stud/breeding farm managers with an established client–veterinarian relationship.

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