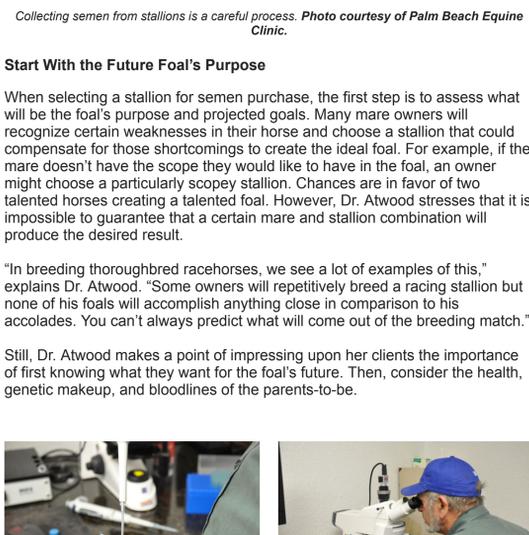


What's in This Newsletter:
 - Breeding Considerations for Stallions and Mares
 - Meet Dr. Caitlin Hosea
 - Join the PBEC Team

Stallion Considerations Before Breeding Your Mare

While the traditional breeding process needs no explanation, there are multiple avenues available when it comes to producing a foal. It is important to understand your horse's reproductive options before starting the breeding process, such as the different conception rates between fresh-cooled and frozen semen or how to guarantee a live foal out of your breeding contract. Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarian [Dr. Katie Atwood](#) previously guided us through what to expect regarding the mare's side of this equation, and below she explains several considerations for the stallion's side.



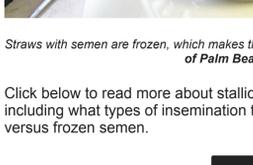
Collecting semen from stallions is a careful process. *Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic.*

Start With the Future Foal's Purpose

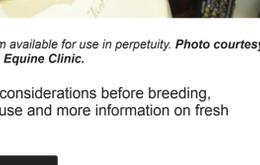
When selecting a stallion for semen purchase, the first step is to assess what will be the foal's purpose and projected goals. Many mare owners will recognize certain weaknesses in their horse and choose a stallion that could compensate for those shortcomings to create the ideal foal. For example, if the mare doesn't have the scope they would like to have in the foal, an owner might choose a particularly scopey stallion. Chances are in favor of two talented horses creating a talented foal. However, Dr. Atwood stresses that it is impossible to guarantee that a certain mare and stallion combination will produce the desired result.

"In breeding thoroughbred racehorses, we see a lot of examples of this," explains Dr. Atwood. "Some owners will repetitively breed a racing stallion but none of his foals will accomplish anything close in comparison to his accolades. You can't always predict what will come out of the breeding match."

Still, Dr. Atwood makes a point of impressing upon her clients the importance of first knowing what they want for the foal's future. Then, consider the health, genetic makeup, and bloodlines of the parents-to-be.



The stallion's sperm and fertility is analyzed prior to being packaged for cooling and freezing. *Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic.*



Dr. Bob Smith (pictured above) has provided equine reproductive and fertility services with PBEC for more than 30 years. *Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic.*

Minimizing Risk Through a Breeding Contract

"It is important to have a solid breeding contract in place," Dr. Atwood recommends. "A detailed agreement gives the owner of the mare specific guidelines as to what they are entitled to receive."

Every breeding contract is slightly different, so you need to read yours carefully and ask questions. The breeding contract should outline the fees, rebreeding rights, the method of breeding, and the number of doses of semen. Some contracts include a live foal guarantee, which means that you will receive doses of semen until your mare produces a foal that stands and nurses.



Straws with semen are frozen, which makes them available for use in perpetuity. *Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic.*

Click below to read more about stallion considerations before breeding, including what types of insemination to use and more information on fresh versus frozen semen.

[Learn More](#)

What To Expect Before Your Mare Is Expecting

Breeding is not typically on the forefront of owners' minds when it comes to their high-performance sport horse mare. The focus is mostly on keeping those mares at their best in terms of health, athleticism, and performance. Prospects for them being bred are usually reserved for well after their competition schedule winds down.

Often when sport horse mares are injured and their careers are either put on hold or cut short altogether, breeding may become the next best option for the owner to consider. Depending on the injury sustained and their overall health and age, breeding can be a great alternative for the out-of-work mare. However, modern reproduction techniques have made breeding the sport horse mare not only an option reserved for after their careers have come to a close. Through [embryo transfer](#), mares can produce multiple foals during the same season all while continuing their training and competition schedules.

With the possibility of breeding comes a significant number of unknowns, so we asked Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarian [Dr. Katie Atwood](#) to guide us through the process of examining a mares' reproductive health and the different options for creating a foal.

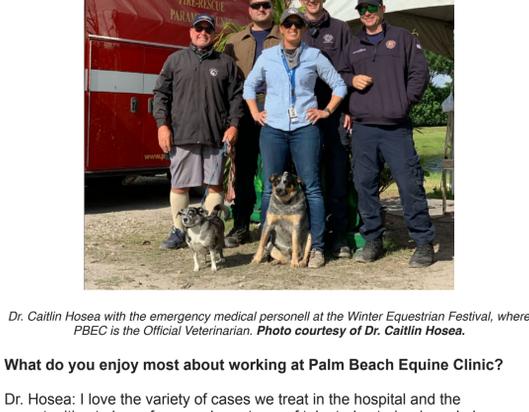


Newborn foal Felix Hope out of Becky Blue, owned by Meg McDermott and bred by Dr. Katie Atwood. *Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic.*

Evaluating the Mare's Reproductive Soundness

After assessing the mare's overall health and taking into account her breeding history, Dr. Atwood will begin with the reproductive soundness exam. This usually includes a rectal ultrasound and palpation of the uterus, ovaries, and cervix. Dr. Atwood also typically performs a vaginal speculum exam to examine the quality of the mare's cervix. All the information that Dr. Atwood gathers during this step helps to determine what stage the mare is in her estrous cycle, identify any potential issues, and establish the next steps.

"When performing that first ultrasound, I look for endometrial cysts, fluid or air, and mucus in the uterus," said Dr. Atwood. "I examine both ovaries to make sure they appear normal and are cycling normally. There are a lot of elements that can change depending on the time of year and where the mare may be in her cycle. But if we are examining her during breeding season, then I can evaluate whether or not there are any abnormalities."



An ultrasound image used during a mare's evaluation. *Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic.*

Click below to read more about stallion considerations before breeding, including a vision for the future foal, how to get the timing right, what the surrogate mare process entails, and other options.

[Learn More](#)

Meet the PBEC Team: Dr. Caitlin Hosea

Where are you from originally, and where did you complete your undergraduate degree?

Dr. Hosea: I was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California. I received my bachelor's in animal science at the University of Kentucky with an emphasis on equine studies.

What is your background with horses?

Dr. Hosea: I started riding at a very young age. Through junior high and high school, I was a working student at a hunter/jumper barn. I groomed and worked summer camps to pay for my lessons and shows. During undergrad, I worked as a groom and rider for a few different barns in Lexington and continued to show my horse. I have a new horse now – one of my favorites from the racetrack that was given to me. He's shown some talent over fences. Hopefully you'll see us in the jumper ring soon!



Dr. Caitlin Hosea of Palm Beach Equine Clinic. *Photo courtesy of Caitlin Hosea.*



Dr. Caitlin Hosea of Palm Beach Equine Clinic has an interest in equine podiatry and completed a farrier certification program. *Photo courtesy of Caitlin Hosea.*

What inspired you to become an equine veterinarian?

Dr. Hosea: My interest in veterinary medicine developed after moving to Kentucky. My goal had always been to ride professionally. That all changed when I got a job as a veterinary technician. I spent four years working at a large equine hospital. I also had a second job as a technician for a racetrack veterinarian. During that time, I gained a wealth of knowledge and exposure to a wide variety of interesting cases and eventually decided that I wanted to go to vet school.



Dr. Caitlin Hosea with the emergency medical personnel at the Winter Equestrian Festival, where PBEC is the Official Veterinarian. *Photo courtesy of Dr. Caitlin Hosea.*

What do you enjoy most about working at Palm Beach Equine Clinic?

Dr. Hosea: I love the variety of cases we treat in the hospital and the opportunities to learn from our large team of talented veterinarians. I always enjoy spending time at WEF as well. I feel very lucky to be able to watch some of the best riders and horses in the world compete at one of the best venues in the country. As a junior, I idolized riders such as Beezie Madden, Margie Engle, and Eric Lamaze to name a few. While on-site at WEF, I am able to watch those riders (as well as a long list of other talented equestrians) compete at the highest levels in person. It's like having floor seats at a Lakers game.

Dr. Caitlin Hosea in a presentation at the 2021 Winter Equestrian Festival with show jumper Karen Polle. *Photo by Sportfit.*

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