

Hormone-Induced Lactation Gives Unwanted Mares A New Opportunity

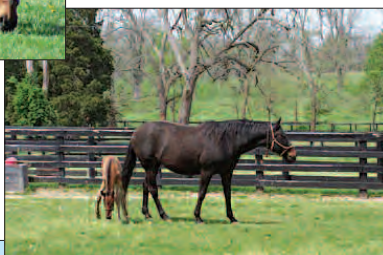
by Dot Morgan

Lexington Standardbred Nursery Walnut Hall Ltd is using hormone-induced lactating mares instead of regular nurse mares to raise the babies of matrons being shipped out of state to be bred.

Walnut Hall President and General Manager Alan Leavitt chooses to foal his mares in Kentucky and keep the foals at Walnut Hall to avoid the sickness and injury often incurred in shipping five day old foals hundreds of miles. Up until this year, the farm routinely used nurse mares but when Leavitt heard about hormone-induced lactation, he saw the potential to give unwanted mares a job and cut down on unwanted foals produced by the nurse mares in the process.



Give Her A Shot with nurse-foal.



Imaging with nurse-foal.



Panpai with nurse-foal.

Walnut Hall adopted the 13 year-old Standardbred mare, "Presidential Wall", from New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program to use in this capacity. The mare had been downsized from a breeding program because her foals were unprofitable at the sales. After only a week of daily oral hormones, Presidential Wall came into milk. When her new charge was five days old it was taken from its mom who was being shipped to New York. At the same time, Presidential Wall was lightly sedated and given a shot of oxytocin and one of luteal. The foal was introduced to her while Dr. Joe Lyman performed a cervical massage for ten minutes. During this time, the mare started nickering to the foal. At the end of ten minutes, Dr. Lyman ceased the massage, and the foal was turned loose. It made no distinction between the new mare and his dam. All he wanted was to nurse which he promptly did. Presidential Wall immediately accepted the foal as her own. They left the mare and foal in the stall together for the next 24 hours and the following day they were turned out together.

Walnut Hall adopted seven mares for hormone-induced lactation and only one failed to come into milk and will be placed in a new home. All the others readily accepted the foals they are raising for other mares. One of the seven is 13-year-old Thoroughbred mare Give Her A Shot that arrived at New Vocations very thin and would have been difficult to place. She came into milk within six days and is a wonderful mom.

These mares will live year around at Walnut Hall as long as they are needed. If they can no longer be used, they will be returned to an adoption program. "I'm thrilled with this option for these mares and greatly appreciate Walnut Hall coming to us for them," said New Vocations Executive

Director Dot Morgan. "They could have any number of mares given to them from multiple sources. The price of feed



and fuel has made it far more difficult to find homes for all but the most attractive, young, sound horses. We've also placed some mares as embryo recipients. These, too, are at farms that will keep them year around."

For more information about hormone-induced lactation call Dr. Joe Lyman (cell 859-509-3465). He's quite willing to discuss it and the remarkable potential for reducing the need for traditional nurse mares who produce unwanted foals.

Dot Morgan will be presented the TCA Industry Service Award at the 19th Annual Select Season and Art Auction December 5th and is the Founder and Executive Director of New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program.

Reprinted with permission of Thoroughbred Charities of America. www.Thoroughbred Charities.org

Update: Walnut Hall has and will adopt mares from KyEHC for this program.