THE
THOROUGHBRED
BREEDERS'
ASSOCIATION

BROODMARE OWNERSHIP GUIDE

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Introduction

There are many reasons why you may have decided to become a thoroughbred breeder, but even more numerous options to achieve this aim. Racehorse breeding can be highly rewarding but it is also a demanding and long-term commitment; this guide has been designed to encourage realistic expectations as well as to help people on the path to enjoying the deep-rooted connection to the wonderful world of racing that only breeding a racehorse can provide.

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BATHWICK
TYRES

Background

The thoroughbred originated in the 17th century when stallions from the Middle East were mated with British mares; both carried influences from many parts of the world but the result of their union was a horse who was considered superior to any of its predecessors. Selective breeding of the progeny of these original matings has created a horse whose racing ability over distances from five furlongs (about 1,000 meters) to four miles and more, exceeds any other breed of horse worldwide.

In addition to its unique qualities as a racehorse, the thoroughbred shows great diversity of talent and has excelled in many other equestrian disciplines – both as a pure bred and when crossed with other breeds.

Much of what is known about the origins of the breed can be attributed to James Weatherby who was a Secretary to the Jockey Club; he produced the first 'General Stud Book' in 1791, identifying around 400 horses as the foundation of the thoroughbred horse. The General Stud Book has been maintained by the Weatherby family ever since and provides the definitive list of all registered thoroughbreds in Britain and Ireland; as a result of their work, the modern thoroughbred can be expected to have a pedigree which can be traced for at least 25 generations. The influence of the thoroughbred spread across the world with many countries developing their own stud books from horses largely descended from Weatherbys' original work.

The breeder of a racehorse is the person who was registered with Weatherbys (now a Limited Company) as the owner of the dam (mother) when it was born. As breeders, they have a particular responsibility for the welfare of their mares and youngstock as well as for the breed – maintaining the welfare and reputation of the thoroughbred and continuing the work which has created this very special horse.

The three primary components to being a breeder are acquiring a mare, selecting a stallion to cover (mate) the mare and providing the essential care for the mare and her progeny; help is available at every stage and this guide will highlight options and considerations.

This guide is designed to provide an insight into the considerations which need to be taken when breeding bloodstock. Whilst every care is taken to keep this guide up-to-date, we cannot guarantee that additional changes in practice or internet links will be amended instantly within this guide. In cases where you require further clarification or advice, please contact the TBA office or relevant quoted organisation.

Some links may have limited access – in some cases requiring that you are logged in as a member of the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, a subscriber to a specific facility (e.g. TB-Ed) or registered with the website operator.

SETTING UP

Commercial or recreational

Before you start, it is worth considering some initial options, identifying your targets and deciding how you want to structure your new interest.

For some people, horse breeding is a recreation that, in line with most social and sporting activities, carries a cost; the money which they invest is justified by the pleasure which they derive from it. Recreational breeders often set high standards, achieve excellent results and, whilst it is not the primary aim, can enjoy financial returns in addition to their enjoyment. Recreational breeders may choose to retain some or all of their progeny to race (as owner-breeders).

For most breeders, there is considerably more financial pressure on their breeding activities and their primary aim is normally to produce horses which can be sold un-proven (i.e. before they race and normally before they are even ridden) for profit. It must be noted that it is not advisable to expect a regular financial return from mare ownership in isolation. In practice, breeders can hope to achieve an occasional high return to offset the years when their mares fail to produce a foal or the progeny fails to achieve their expected value. The chances of achieving a more consistent return can be increased by spreading the investment over multiple mares, although the standard advice is that it is better to own one good mare than two or more bad ones.

Commercial breeders may also decide to retain a horse which they have bred – typically a filly that they want to bring back to their broodmare band but it could be an individual which they expect to enhance its value through racing or an individual which cannot race because of an injury. If it can race, they can run it in their own colours (as an owner breeder) or lease it to an individual or a syndicate for its racing career. Further details of leasing can be found on the **TBA website**.

It is worth noting that Racing interests are treated differently to Breeding interests by HMRC and, similarly, commercial breeding operations are treated differently to hobby breeding operations; the fiscal implications require consideration (see **page 12** 'Accounting and tax efficiency').

Flat or National Hunt

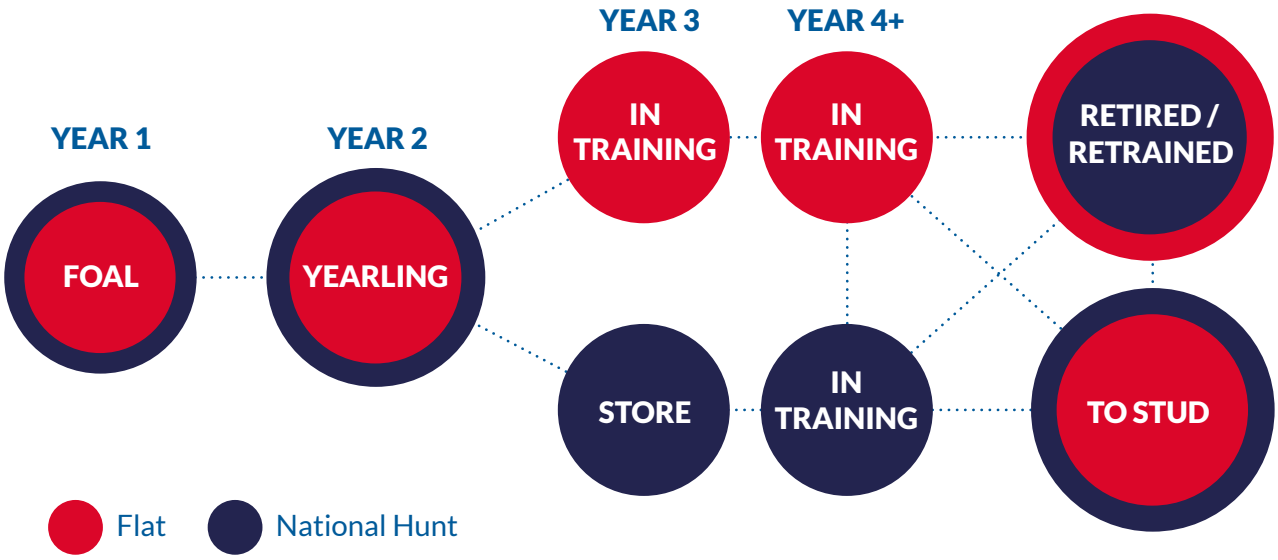
Breeding can be targeted at producing horses for Flat racing, Jump racing (over hurdles or steeplechase fences) or dual purpose.

The primary differences which are of significance to the breeder are that Flat racing is run over shorter distances, a horse can start racing as a two-year-old and most Flat horses with breeding potential will only race for two or three seasons; Jump racing is a test of stamina, with the youngest horses being three-year-olds that are expected to stay in training for much longer and often achieve their best form much later in life (typically as seven to ten year olds). As a result, the rearing stage of a Flat horse (before entering training) tends to be shorter (around 18 months) and more intensive with broodmares having a greater opportunity to prove their value as producers.

National Hunt breeders can give their stock longer to mature and can expect a much longer racing career to enjoy. Many people will have a pre-established preference for one code or the other; in any event, it is worth taking time to investigate the significant differences between the markets before starting a breeding programme. Sales House websites (**see page 35**) provide a good starting point for research.

All thoroughbred horses in the UK (and the rest of the Northern Hemisphere) have their official birthday on 1st January; a foal becomes a yearling (and a yearling becomes a 2-year-old etc.) on January 1st irrespective of its date of birth. Whilst an early foaling date creates additional management challenges, it can benefit horses who run as 2-year-olds; equally, it is less critical if a mare fails to conceive as quickly as hoped after an early foaling date. The difference between a January and a June foal carries less significance for a National Hunt horse.

Typical life cycle of a thoroughbred racehorse



Flat or National Hunt

There are numerous options for buying or selling stock at public auction; the major sales houses in the UK and Ireland are listed in the Appendix on **page 35**. Further options exist for those who are prepared to travel; as examples, Flat breeders will often use auctions in France, Germany and the USA, whilst France has been a popular source of National Hunt horses.

There are many options for breeders who are seeking to buy or sell:

Older horses will generally be classed as;

- horses in training (suggesting that their racing careers can continue)
- horses out of training (suggesting that their racing careers have finished)
- broodmares (which could be in-foal, foal at foot, barren or maiden mares)
- horses (potential stallions)
- stallions (male horses who have already retired to stud)

N.B. Under cataloguing/industry classifications:

- Colts become horses from 5 years old onwards
- Fillies become mares from 5 years old onwards
- Male horses are called geldings after they have been castrated.

For youngstock, the common options are;

- foals (normally late in the year)
- yearlings – subdivided into
  – 'short yearling' for sales early in the calender year
  – 'long yearlings' for sales later in the calender year
- breeze-ups (spring – Flat bred two-year-olds)
- stores (National Hunt horses at two and three years old)

Youngstock can be described as fillies (female), colts (male) or geldings (castrated males); with the exception of breeze-ups (where they have been backed and can be seen in faster work prior to the sale) youngstock are normally sold before they are backed and ridden away.

Pin-hooking is a term used for short-term investments (e.g. buying a foal to sell as a yearling or a store).

In most cases, horses are put through a 'sales preparation' period prior to sale which can involve extra exercise, feed, rugging and grooming to present them in the best possible condition. The most intensive programmes are likely to be used for Flat-bred yearlings in preparation for the late summer and autumn sales; for many consignors, this will be completed over a period of six to eight weeks.

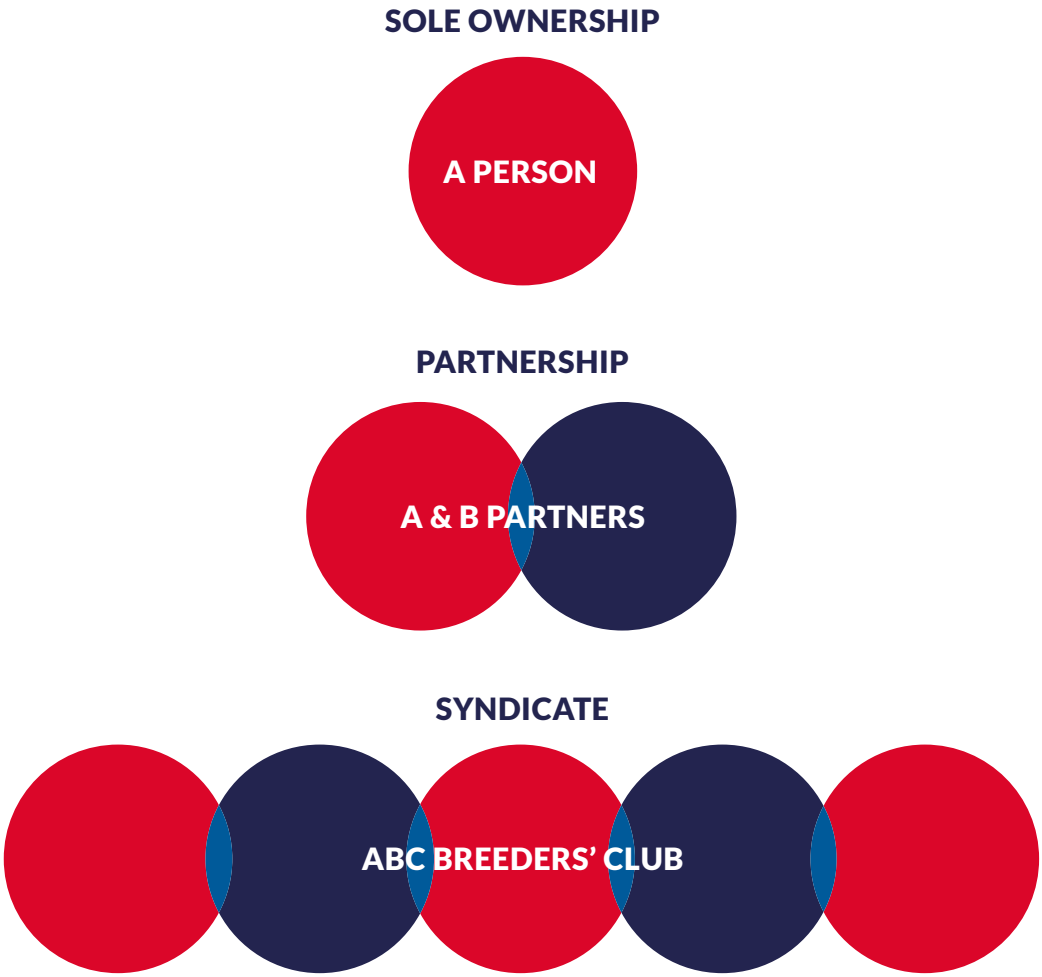
Ownership options

Sole ownership is not the only option for owning mares; breeders can be in partnerships (with two or more people), syndicates or clubs.

Whilst the breeder's title and changes of ownership need to be registered (see **page 19** – Registrations), there is no approval process for the owner's or breeder's title; it can be a name (e.g. Mr A Person or Andrew Person), a partnership (e.g. Mr and Mrs A Couple or Andrew Person and Alice Couple), a business name (e.g. Prospective Stud) or a syndicate/club name (e.g. ABC Breeders' Club).

Weatherbys handle all bloodstock registrations and you will need to register the title that you select as the owner of the mare. You should note that if Andrew Person registers one mare's ownership as Mr A Person and another as Andrew Person, Weatherbys will not recognise them as being in the same ownership.

Whatever the circumstances, breeders who enter into any partnership or group ownership are strongly advised to have a contract to clearly define the responsibilities, liabilities and benefits for all parties involved.



Boarding options

A key decision to make early in the process is who will look after the mare and her progeny – known as boarding or providing keep.

You may be wanting to start your own stud farm (covered in the 'Starting a Stud Farm' guide) or you may want another party to provide the care for your stock (with many studs offering this service). In some cases, breeders will do both – for example caring for their stock for the majority of the time, but using other studs for key periods like foaling, covering (mating) and sales preparation. For many breeders who have the resources, having a direct involvement in the care of their stock is a significant part of the appeal of their breeding operation but looking after mares and youngstock requires considerable skill and knowledge and is not recommended unless a good level of horsemanship can be provided. More information about selecting a boarding farm is provided on **page 28**.

Irrespective of the boarding arrangements, breeders will have legal obligations including:

- Ensuring the welfare of their horses (download the Equine Welfare Guidelines from **thetba.co.uk**)
- Keeping appropriate financial records (see **page 12** – Accounting and Tax Efficiency)
- Completing registrations (see **page 19** – Registrations).

Owners (including breeders) also have potential liability for damage or injury which their horses may cause (see **page 18** – Insurance) and a moral responsibility for the welfare of their own horses and the thoroughbred in general. Whilst it is a challenging subject, welfare considerations must include retirement and 'end of life' options (see **pages 29–30**).

Accounting and tax efficiency

Operating a breeding operation to achieve tax efficiency and creating accounts to meet legal requirements can both be complex subjects.

As mentioned on **page 7**, it is worth noting that racing interests are treated differently to breeding interests by HMRC and, similarly, commercial breeding operations are treated differently to hobby breeding operations; the fiscal implications are significant and require careful consideration.

VAT can significantly increase costs (especially if you pay a stud to board your bloodstock) and breeders are advised to consider registering for VAT so they can look for ways to recover VAT from their breeding costs.

Breeders (or professionals advising breeders on accounting matters) can find extensive information in the TBA's Bloodstock Tax Guide on **thetba.co.uk**.

The guide covers:

- Bloodstock breeding – including mare ownership, stallions and syndicates
- Racehorse ownership
- Employee issues
- VAT – including European and International Trade
- Capital Allowances and Inheritance Tax

If you are starting a new breeding business, there are a number of courses and resources on TB-Ed which you may find helpful (**tb-ed.co.uk/courses**).

Setting up and operating your breeding interests to achieve tax efficiency is a complex matter often dependent on personal circumstances. The TBA strongly recommends that you seek advice from an accountant (or other suitable professional) with specific experience of bloodstock to ensure that you set up and operate your breeding interests legally and efficiently.

ACQUIRING A BROODMARE

Acquiring a broodmare

(Cost range = less than £1,000 to over £5,000,000)

It is not necessarily the starting point of the process, but the selection of a suitable foundation mare, or mares, is obviously key to the process; reflecting the relative potential values of their progeny, National Hunt mares will tend to be less expensive than Flat mares. In some cases, people will start their breeding enterprise with a filly or mare which they have raced. As a general rule, the more that you can afford to spend, the greater your chances of success, but part of the attraction of breeding is the glorious uncertainty. You can spend relatively modest sums to secure a mare whose value escalates through the racing performance of her progeny, her siblings or her wider family; unfortunately values can go down as well as up!

Status options

There are several potential options for your first broodmare purchase.

- A filly in training which you could choose to cover in the next breeding season and keep in training for up to 120 days after the service date; she may be able to enhance her value before she is completely retired to stud – but there is also the danger that neither process will benefit the other.
- A filly or mare out of training or a maiden mare – who, by implication, has finished her racing career or never raced and will be covered in the next breeding season.
- A barren mare (i.e. a mare who was not covered, failed to conceive or conceived and lost a pregnancy from the previous breeding season); even fertile mares can be expected to be barren occasionally and, for people who are prepared to take the risk of sub-fertility and to miss out on a foal in the following year, barren mares can offer value.
- An in-foal mare – who is likely to carry a premium because the nomination fee (i.e. the fee paid for the stallion's service) has normally been paid by the Vendor and she should produce a foal in the following year.

Seeking value

Few people have a realistic chance of buying a filly or mare at the top of the market. For most breeders, the challenge is to find value – in essence, finding the features which will limit the mare's value but are least likely to devalue her offspring or having knowledge of factors which are likely to enhance her value. A common example of the former is a filly who has not raced for reasons which are unlikely to be heritable (e.g. an injury in training). For the latter, an example is having knowledge of a 'likely improver' in a pedigree that may give you an advantage. As a general rule, it is preferable to buy 'active' families with plenty of young relatives who have the chance to improve the pedigree with their own racing performance or through their offspring. Part of the fun and challenge of breeding is the opportunity to develop your own ideas for obtaining value – both in acquiring mares and selecting suitable matings; it is a case where knowledge and thorough homework can greatly improve the chances of success.

Don't miss out on the resources on TB-Ed including 'Selecting the National Hunt Broodmare'.

TB Ed

View video catalogue

Valuation

There are three main factors that determine the value of broodmares or stallions: racing performance; pedigree; and conformation (or physical features). Temperament can also be an important consideration for many purchasers.

Racing performance

Being a winner adds value to an individual and its close relations but the real value lies in '**Black Type Races**' which, as the name suggests, are shown in pedigree pages in bold print. These are races (also called Pattern Races) that are awarded International Status as having particular quality and relevance when assessing form. There are four levels of Black Type Races starting with Listed Races and working up through Group 3 and Group 2 to Group 1 – which is the highest level of racing and includes the five Classics (1,000 Gns., 2,000 Gns., Derby, Oaks and St Leger). In Pattern Races, a winner is referred to as a Black Type Winner (BTW) and a horse which finishes 2nd or 3rd is referred to as a Black Type Performer (BTP). Whilst Black type form, form in other races and earnings can give an indication of ability, many breeders find benefit in using a rating system (e.g. Timeform) to provide a more quantifiable analysis of racing ability.

Pedigree

One of the amazing features of the thoroughbred is the amount of information that is readily available about its pedigree – often going back 25 or more generations. The pedigree information provided in sales catalogues will normally be headed by a three generation 'tabulated pedigree' followed by the individual's racing record (and breeding record if applicable) and an edited record of the racecourse achievements (and, for mares, breeding successes) of the progeny of the first three dams (i.e. the mother, the mother's mother and the mothers maternal grand-mother) – known as the dam line. Except in the weakest pedigrees, the information has to be edited to fit on a catalogue page; unedited pedigrees can be obtained from several sources and will include information about the less successful progeny of the immediate dam line.

More information on the subject of pedigrees is available on TB-Ed (**tb-ed.co.uk/courses**).

Conformation

There are complex principles which can be applied when looking at the physical structure (conformation) of the horse to allow judgement both of their ability to withstand the rigours of training as well as their potential to race or breed effectively. It is an essential feature of the market that, even when applied by the most experienced people, they carry no guarantees; inexpensive purchases can have brilliant racing careers and expensive yearlings can prove to have no racing ability. To the commercial breeder in particular, good conformation is important because horses will tend to inherit the good and bad points of their parents' conformation. For instance, if you buy a mare with weak knees, you should expect that the value of at least some of her progeny will be limited by having weak knees.

It is also worth considering why the vendor is selling; most breeding operations need to sell mares at some stage (for instance to accommodate fillies coming out of training or to allow them to bring in new bloodlines) – but, if their breeding targets are similar to yours, it might not offer the best value to you as the purchaser.

Buying and selling

With the notable exception of colts with significant potential to become stallions, the vast majority of sales are completed at public auction with online auctions becoming increasingly popular for lower value stock; horse valuations tend to be fairly speculative and most buyers (and sellers) take comfort in a price established by the highest bid.

Whilst auction houses provide protections for buyers and sellers, there is a principle of 'caveat emptor' or 'buyer beware' at horse auctions and, as with any auction, it is worth understanding the practices – used by buyers and sellers – which are allowed. Auction houses should be able to provide details as well as guidance but, for those with limited experience, there is likely to be value in seeking the help of a friend or a recommended professional (e.g. a bloodstock agent or a consignor) before selling or buying at public auction. A list of agents can be found on the **Federation of Bloodstock Agents website**.

A list of the major sales houses in the UK and Ireland, along with other internet selling sites, is supplied under Appendix 1 on **page 35**.

Online auctions can reduce the cost of a sale considerably. Whilst the individual will normally be presented and filmed prior to sale, the costs of transport and care of the horse at the sale are eliminated and entry fees are lower. Traditional auctions have the huge advantage that buyers can examine each horse within the sales area.

Breeders who decide to sell at public auction can consign their horses themselves or can use the services of a 'consignor' who will look after the horse at the sales and, in some cases, provide sales preparation. A good consignor can maximise the horse's exposure at the sales, encourage potential buyers to bid and assist vendors through the whole sales process. Using a consignor may be particularly helpful for those who are not familiar with practices at the sales or for those who find it difficult to release suitable staff for the sales period.

If you can agree a valuation, there is no reason why you cannot buy or sell privately – dealing either directly with an owner or through an agent or trainer. Whilst it would be unusual, you can also acquire a filly from 'Selling' or 'Claiming' races but this is unlikely to offer the opportunity for a veterinary examination prior to purchase.

Pre and post sale veterinary examination

Breeders purchasing any filly, mare or broodmare are advised to arrange a veterinary examination – in particular to provide an opinion on a maiden's ability to breed, to identify factors which could limit future fertility in broodmares and to confirm the presence of a pregnancy if applicable.

At public auction, it is important to be familiar with the particular requirements placed on the vendor to provide veterinary certificates prior to sale, as well as the options for a purchaser to return a horse after 'fall of hammer'; these will vary between auction houses, from sale to sale and, in some cases, between the types of horses being sold. As examples, terms may include a right to return a horse who is a box walker or wind-sucker (if it was not declared prior to the sale) or if a mare is sold as 'in-foal' but is found to be barren immediately after fall of hammer; different time limits will also be attached to different clauses which allow a return.

Private deals will not offer these protections unless they are specified beforehand; whilst a verbal contract is recognised in law, it is difficult to uphold and it is sensible to have any agreed terms of a private sale confirmed in writing.

Insurance

It is also good practice to have insurance cover (if required) in place before making any purchase; ownership is transferred as soon as the hammer falls even if the sale is subject to further examination. Insurance brokers will often offer a blanket cover to provide a level of protection as soon as you have made a purchase.

There are multiple options for ongoing insurance – including death (often called All Risk Mortality or ARM), losing an unborn foal, loss of use etc. but it is likely to be prohibitively expensive to obtain cover for all of the potential mishaps. A good bloodstock insurance broker can explain the options and try to provide a safety net against losses which might create significant financial difficulties for any breeder.

The TBA provides a level of third-party liability insurance for their members' breeding stock at home and away. A list of FAQs and a summary of the policy is available to view in the members' areas of the **TBA website** or if you would like a printed copy please email **info@thetba.co.uk** or call the TBA office on **01638 661321**.

Whilst some level of protection may be provided through membership of the TBA, breeders must recognise their legal responsibilities and liabilities (in line with other livestock and pet owners); they are strongly advised to ensure that suitable insurance is in place. If you are paying a stud to board your bloodstock or a haulier to transport them, it is worth checking if they carry insurance against liabilities (normally called a Care, Custody and Control policy) which might reduce your own liabilities.

Popular insurers include Brown & Brown (formerly Weatherbys Hamilton), Gallagher, Howdens and Lycetts; an internet search for Bloodstock Insurance Companies will provide additional options.

Registrations

WEATHERBYS

Breeders will find that Weatherbys – and the Stud Book Department in particular – can help with any enquiries about registering broodmares and youngstock.

There are key moments that need to be registered with Weatherbys including;

- when there is a change of ownership – this is a legal obligation
- when a filly retires from racing (this can be delayed if there is a chance that she will return to racing but should be completed before she foals)
- when a foal is born requiring registration[1] and notification[2]
- when a mare has visited a stallion (completed by the Stallion Manager at the end of each season)
- when a horse dies or a pregnancy is lost.

Further information is available at **weatherbys.co.uk**.

A course on Stud Administration is available on TB-Ed (**tb-ed.co.uk/courses**).

Don't forget that there may be deadlines for incentive scheme registrations (see **page 20** – Incentive Schemes).

[1] All foals should be registered with Weatherbys before 31 July; this can be done either online by using their registration service or by a paper application. Foals registered after 31 July will incur a higher registration fee. Further information is available at **weatherbys.co.uk**.

A foal needs to be DNA sampled and microchipped by a veterinary surgeon (ideally within four weeks of birth) before it can be registered with Weatherbys. Sampling kits are sent directly to the vets who will also need to record the foal's markings for inclusion in its passport.

[2] Breeders are also required to notify The General Stud Book (GB) within 30 days of the birth of a foal born in Great Britain and bred for racing; further information and a link to the notification page is available at **www.weatherbys.co.uk/30day**. This is separate to the registration process, but both can be done at the same time.

Notification is free of charge if carried out within the 30-day window; however an ascending fee structure will be in place for any notifications made after the 30 days have elapsed.

Incentive schemes

There are a number of schemes and initiatives which can help the breeder – either directly with financial rewards or indirectly by stimulating the market for their youngstock.

The Great British Bonus (GBB) and GBBPlus are an industry wide prize scheme that encourages and incentivises the breeding, buying and racing of British-bred fillies. GBB supports all fillies and mares, whilst GBBPlus provides additional rewards and incentives for 'chase mares and staying fillies. Owners, breeders and winning connections of each registered horse can win up to £100,000 per filly. By offering these bonuses, GBB boosts both the demand and the market value of British-bred fillies at the sales, encourages more of them to be tested on the track to strengthen the future broodmare band, and provides a vital lifeline for breeders.

The Elite NH Mares' Scheme rewards the owners of National Hunt mares who are proven on the racecourse or at stud, by providing subsidised, and in some cases free, nominations to eligible British-based stallions.

The British European Breeders' Fund – largely funded by stallion owners – is the longest standing voluntary scheme and makes a significant contribution to the prize-money pool as well as funding other initiatives. Stallion owners contribute to the scheme and this should be confirmed in a nomination agreement.

Full details of the schemes can be found online at **thetba.co.uk**, **greatbritishbonus.co.uk** and **ebfstallions.com**.

Breeders who are planning to sell their youngstock can also familiarise themselves with sales races sponsored by various auction houses. In each case, it is worth noting any qualification requirements and deadlines for registration or entries.

Costs of broodmare and youngstock ownership

It is difficult to put a cost on keeping a broodmare. National Hunt mares and their youngstock tend to be managed less intensively and their breeding season is better aligned with the natural breeding season; as a result, National Hunt studs will often be less expensive than Flat studs.

There are considerable savings for breeders who look after their own stock and elect not to charge for their time or facilities. The majority of studs will charge £20 to £50 per day for keep (i.e. board and lodging) with possible discounts for permanent boarders (i.e. horses who will be living on the stud for the majority of the year). Rates are often dependant on status (e.g. a higher rate for a foaling mare than for a barren mare) and foals are not normally charged as individuals until they are weaned (i.e. separated from the mare).

Veterinary, farrier and worming charges are normally in addition to keep fees and are likely to be in the region of £2,000 to £4,000 per year for routine work (excluding illness and injury). Problems in general (e.g. colic) or sub-fertility can increase veterinary costs considerably. Other costs which may be incurred by breeders include foaling fees (around £500 to cover the cost of additional supervision and work before and during the foaling process), registration fees, (see Stud Book Fees (GB) – **weatherbys.co.uk**) nomination fees (see **page 24** – Purchasing a nomination), sales entry fees, other sales costs, transport and insurance (if applicable). The majority of the costs are likely to attract VAT.

Choosing a stallion

Choosing a stallion

There are plenty of stallions to choose from – especially if you extend your search to Ireland and mainland Europe or beyond – but, as you apply your own selection criteria, you will often find that you can narrow them down considerably.

Criteria

The normal criteria which mare owners will apply when choosing a stallion are:

Cost

Primarily the nomination fee, but it is also worth considering the associated costs of transport, boarding fees etc. Most breeders will seek to find a balance between the value of the mare and the nomination fee for her mating. Each parent will set a cap on the potential value of their offspring and, through research, breeders can often establish realistic expectations of the potential value of the progeny of any mating.

Race performance and distance

The selection process which the market places on potential stallions means that the majority have been top class performers; it is unusual for National Hunt stallions to have raced over fences but most have proved their ability, soundness and stamina on the Flat. For breeders who are targeting Flat racing, there is a tendency to focus on speed and precocity (the potential to mature early), especially at the lower end of the commercial market, because training costs are high and many racehorse owners will want to see their purchases on the racecourse as soon as possible. However, there is also a need and demand for quality stayers who have serious racing targets like the Goodwood Cup and the Ascot Gold Cup; they have the potential to develop into dual purpose or National Hunt horses and are also needed by the breeding industry to produce the middle distance, staying and National Hunt horses of the future.

In addition to ability, optimum distance, soundness and temperament can be important considerations for breeders who are assessing a stallion's racecourse performance (or that of his progeny).

Progeny performance – sales and racing

There is an abundance of data which is freely available to allow breeders to assess the performance of a stallion's progeny; the **Racing Post**, and auction house websites (see **page 35**), are a good starting point. One long standing feature of the commercial market is that there has often been particularly strong demand for the first crop of a stallion. Whilst his ability to pass on quality is unproven, many believe that it provides the best opportunity to buy his stock before their value is enhanced by his successes to come. Commercial breeders should consider this, but can also hope to gain value by using a stallion in his second, third and fourth season (before his first runners appear) to be well placed if his stud value escalates (whilst carrying the risk should he prove disappointing). Using a proven horse is a safer option – especially for people who want to retain their progeny to race.

Physical compatibility

Whenever judgement can be based on the progeny rather than the individual, it is highly preferable; for the breeder, it does not matter if the stallion has, for example, weak hocks, if he doesn't pass it on to his progeny. Finding a horse who is physically compatible with your mare is about trying to match and retain the good parts of their conformation, whilst ensuring that specific conformation faults are not a feature of both parents or their progeny.

Pedigree compatibility

Dam lines (mother/mother's mother etc.) can show a particular affinity for specific sires or sire lines (father/father's father etc.) For stallions who are further into their careers, there is also considerable data on the successes of a stallion with a particular maternal grand-sire (i.e. sire of the dam). Where these affinities are particularly strong, they are known as 'Nicks' and provide a proven formula for breeders to consider. In-breeding (when a horse appears twice or more in the first few generations of a pedigree) is a technique used by many successful breeders but is generally avoided, especially in commercial breeding, in the first three generations. Many theories exist on the components of a good pedigree which can be used or adapted by breeders as they see fit; professional advisors are available to give recommendations and can provide fascinating insights into pedigrees and mating plans.

Stallion fertility is also an important consideration but finding clear markers for it is difficult. If a first season stallion is infertile or sub fertile, this may only become evident when their first mares are scanned; be aware that you might be obliged to send the mare on three heats by the terms of your nomination agreement even if the stallion struggles to get his mares in foal. For proven sires, the available fertility figures could reflect the fertility of the mares more than the sire; fertility is a question you can ask the stallion manager, or you can speak to other breeders who have used the horse to get a guide.

Look for the courses and resources about pedigrees on TB-Ed (**tb-ed.co.uk/courses**).

TB Ed

View the Understanding Pedigrees course on TB-Ed here

Searching for a stallion?

TBA members are provided with a free digital copy of the Thoroughbred Stallion Guide as part of their membership which contains details of stallions based across Europe. To request a copy, contact the TBA office on **01638 661321** or **view here**.

Weatherbys also offer a free App, which can be downloaded on Android or iPhone operating systems; go to **globalstallionsapp.com**.

Purchasing a nomination

(Cost range = less than £1,000 to over £200,000)

A common 'book' (mares covered in a breeding season) for a stallion is now 140 mares (and could be many more), National Hunt stallions tend to cover over a longer breeding season and can take even larger books. Whilst some breeders feel that the resultant progeny could be devalued by over-supply, the most popular stallions tend to be fully booked long before the start of the covering season. In most cases, the process of securing the services of a stallion to cover your mare involves purchasing a 'nomination'. The Stallion Manager will normally issue a nomination agreement (a contract requiring signatures), details of their requirements for visiting mares (which normally follows the **HBLB 'International Codes of Practice'**) and a 'details of mare form' which is likely to include information which the stallion manager requires before deciding if the nominated mare can be accepted. The nomination agreement should detail the terms including the stallion, the mare, the fee, the breeding season etc. and, if using the TBA template, is carefully designed to provide protection for both parties; this requires a fair amount of 'small print' but it is worth understanding the detail of the terms before signing an agreement.

There are a variety of standard terms for nomination fees ranging from 'Straight' (where the fee is payable irrespective of result), through variations of Oct 1st NFNF (which would normally place an onus on the mare owner to arrange a pregnancy examination towards the end of September with the fee being payable unless a certificate of barrenness is provided by 1st October), to variations of 'Live Foal' agreements (where the fee is not payable or will be returned if the mare does not produce a live foal). Other terms that may be offered or incorporated include a free return if the pregnancy is lost or a reduced fee for a filly foal. Whatever the terms offered, mare owners are fully entitled to attempt to negotiate preferable terms with the person selling the nomination. Through all the variations except 'Straight fees', the stallion owner is effectively providing a level of insurance; breeders can arrange insurance independently if the stallion manager is not offering the required protection.

There are occasions when breeders (or other investors) are given the opportunity to purchase a share or a breeding right in a stallion. The former provides a proportion of ownership but both can be expected to entitle the holder to one or more free nominations in each year that the stallion covers – normally with the option to sell, or to use on their own mare.

Some Stallion Managers may offer a 'foal share' which, in principle, means that no nomination fee is payable but the stallion owner has a 50% interest in the resultant progeny – normally with the intention of selling as a foal. TBA guidance is provided in the members area on **thetba.co.uk**.

For all the above – detailed terms should be clarified in writing and understood before proceeding.

NLFFR	No Live Foal Free Return
SLF	Special Live Foal
1st October	Fee payable on 1st October unless mare has been certified barren before 1st October
LFSN	Live Foal Stands and Nurses
NFNF	No Foal No Fee

Boarding or walking-in

Whatever your arrangements are for boarding your mare for the majority of the year, there are two main options when she needs to be covered – either the mare can be boarded on the stallion's stud or the mare can be 'walked-in' for service when the time is right.

Some, but not all stallion studs can offer the facility to board visiting mares; those that do not board can normally recommend local studs who will walk mares in.

The advantages of boarding at the stallion's stud include:

- Giving the stud more flexibility to arrange the cover at the optimum time.
- The process can be supervised by staff (and veterinary surgeons) who specialise in achieving the best possible fertility.
- The stud will normally have specific facilities to help the process including a teaser (i.e. a horse who is used to stimulate and detect the mare's reproductive cycle).
- It reduces the requirement to transport mares and young foals.

The advantages of walking-in include:

- Cost – subject to transport costs.
- Better bio-security – grouping with horses from other studs will pose a level of disease risk.
- Continuity of environment and management for the mare (and foal if applicable).

It should be a priority to ensure that the boarding stud has the ability to check that any pre-testing requirements are completed, certificates/details are provided when required and the mare is presented to the stallion when she is most likely to conceive. One possible frustration for breeders who elect to walk-in is that coverings for popular stallions often need to be planned well in advance to ensure that the horse is available when required; regular communication with the stallion stud to give updates on the mare's progress is essential. Equally, it is a frustration for Stallion Managers (and a danger to their staff) if the mare is not presented to the stallion at the optimum time and in the optimum condition to give her the best chance to conceive; walking-in can fail to provide the expected benefits if gynaecological examinations are being completed by a veterinary surgeon with inadequate experience of stud work routines to maximise fertility.

For breeders who decide to pay for this service, there are numerous stud farms that offer this facility. Whilst there may be additional expense, there are often advantages in leaving this aspect of bloodstock breeding in the hands of people with experience.

Breeding cycle of the mare

One of the keys to success for breeders is optimising fertility. Mares will not always conceive to the first cover and will be barren from time to time; as they get older, nature dictates that their fertility will often decline.

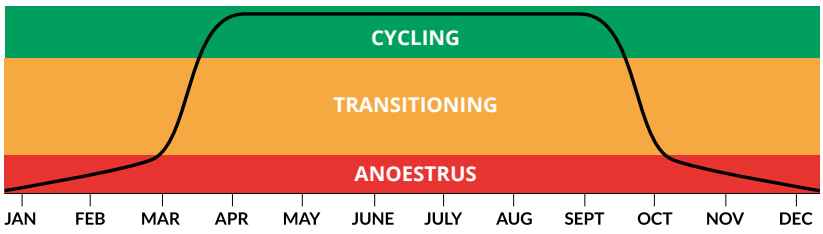
Maximising fertility will minimise years with no income, maximise the opportunity for the mare to produce winners and keeps her foaling date early in the year. As a guide, if 50% of your mares conceive to each heat, you are likely to be at the lower end of the scale and if 80% of your mares conceive to each heat, you are likely to be at the upper end of the scale.

Breeders can play their part by having their mares in the best possible physical condition. Of equal, if not greater importance, is securing the services of a specialist veterinary surgeon to complete the gynaecological work. The process involves screening for specific diseases, ensuring that the mare's genital tract is in optimum condition to conceive and carry a pregnancy, covering the mare when she is most fertile and monitoring the progress of the pregnancy – especially in the first two months. This will involve taking bloods to screen for specific diseases, swabbing for uterine infections, treating uterine infections, stitching the vulva (sometimes called a caslicks operation) or other surgical operations to minimise the risk of uterine infection, monitoring the development of follicles on the ovary with an ultra-sound scanner to time the covering (normally just before ovulation) and confirm ovulation as well as monitoring the early development of the pregnancy with an ultra–sound scanner – normally up to around 60 days when it might be possible to detect the sex of the foetus; blood samples – in particular to test hormone levels – can also provide valuable information before and after covering. Uterine infections are the most common cause of infertility and natural service (which is an absolute requirement of breeding thoroughbreds) will inevitably result in a degree of contamination of the uterus at covering. Uterine treatments can continue for three or four days after covering to help the mare whilst the conceptus is held in her fallopian tubes.

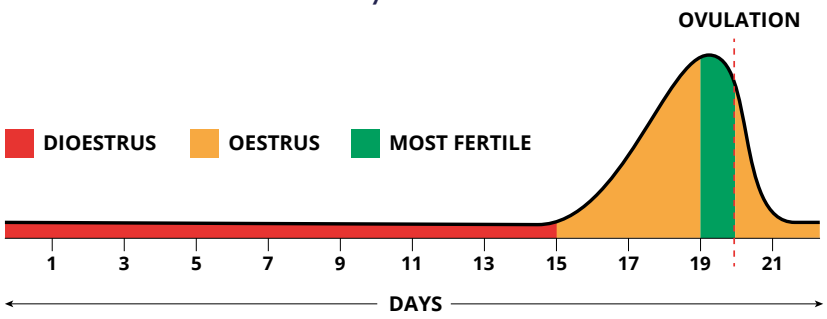
TB Ed

View the Getting the Mare in Foal course on TB-Ed here

Reproductive phases of the mare*



Oestrus cycle of the mare*



*considerable variations can occur.

Providing care for the mare and her progeny

Providing care for the mare and her progeny

Looking after horses requires experience and knowledge as well as a considerable and ongoing commitment of time but for many breeders it is an intrinsic part of the pleasure which they derive from their breeding stock.

Boarding

For breeders who decide to pay for this service, there are numerous stud farms which offer this facility. Whilst there may be additional expense, there is often advantage in leaving this aspect of bloodstock breeding in the hands of people with experience – at least while you are learning about the industry.

Points to consider when choosing a stud to board your breeding stock can include:

- Will they supply the access and feedback which you require to enjoy your breeding interests?
- Do they offer the services and have the facilities to meet your specific requirements? These could include foaling, walking-out for service, sales preparation, spelling (i.e. resting horses from the trainer's yard), pre-training and backing (i.e. preparing horses to enter training).
- Will they achieve the standards that you require?
- Are they providing value?
- Do they provide clarity of responsibilities and costs?
- Do they have care, custody and control insurance?
- Might they consider a joint interest in broodmares and youngstock?

Selecting a boarding stud is likely to be a key decision with considerable potential to impact on how much you can enjoy your horse-breeding interests. Before making a selection, take time to identify the options and talk to other clients if you can; most importantly, visit the stud to meet their team and see how they operate whilst viewing their facilities and stock.

Whatever stud you choose, it is an intrinsic part of breeding that they will have to give you bad news from time to time. Having confidence that they are trying their best to minimise problems and maximise your enjoyment of breeding horses is often the foundation of a long and rewarding relationship.

A boarding stud should be able to provide you with their 'Terms of Trading' (often as a boarding agreement), and should maintain high biosecurity standards; for the latter, they are likely to ask clients to complete a 'Details of Mare Form' as well as asking for evidence that the horse meets 'Codes of Practice' recommendations and individual stud requirements.

Mares who have been abroad (i.e. racing, boarding or visiting a stallion) or with a history of infections may be categorised as high risk and could require temporary isolation with additional testing to meet biosecurity regulations.

The HBLB Codes of Practice can be found by **clicking this link**.

A copy of the TBA Boarding Stud Agreement can be downloaded from **thetba.co.uk**.

More information on biosecurity can be found on TB-Ed – **Equine Biosecurity Essentials**.

Note: For those who want to provide keep for breeding stock, useful information is available in the TBA's *Starting a Stud Farm Guide*.

Welfare

Breeders have a particular responsibility for the welfare of their mares and youngstock as well as for the breed – maintaining the welfare and reputation of the thoroughbred and continuing the work which has created this very special horse. Horseracing has a fantastic following and is the second most attended sport in the UK but it is important to recognise that the use of animals for any purpose is coming under increasing public scrutiny. This criticism, when educated, can be used to provide a useful aid to ongoing improvement.

The vast majority of breeders set high standards in protecting the welfare of the horses in their ownership or care. Many breeders are actively involved in caring for their horses – often finding the contact a significant part of their enjoyment and frequently forming bonds that override any commercial considerations. Irrespective of their involvement in the day-to-day care, many breeders also show long standing commitment to the broodmares in their ownership – often breeding through numerous generations from a foundation mare or mares.

The bloodstock industry can be proud of its contribution with TBA initiatives outlined in **Equine Health** and wider initiatives outlined in **Horse PWR – Safety and Welfare in Horseracing**. Despite its high standards – and the benefit of many of its initiatives spreading far beyond the bloodstock industry – the racing and breeding industry also recognises that it is not only important to have high welfare standards but also to be able to communicate this outside of the breeding community; every participant can play a role in achieving both.

In addition to the normal responsibility of ownership to ensure the wellbeing of their horses, breeders have an additional responsibility to produce horses that can fulfil a role – fundamentally determined by soundness, ability and, in many instances, temperament. No breeding operation or mating plan can guarantee success but breeding horses with little prospect of being sound and athletic does no favours for the breeder, the industry or, most importantly, the horse.

Experiencing the highs and lows is intrinsic to the ownership of mares and their youngstock; faced with the fact that they may have stock (young or old) which has limited or no value to the racing or breeding industries, breeders have a responsibility to consider their options carefully. For adult horses, key questions in this process will be if they are sound enough to continue an active life or continue to breed whilst for youngsters, the key questions become if they have the potential for an active life or to breed. In both cases, it is worth considering if their temperament restricts their options for new roles.

In many cases there is some residual market within the bloodstock industry – often in countries where the standard or demands of racing are lower than the domestic market. Taking a horse to auction can be expensive and the sale price might not cover the immediate costs, but it is often the best place to find the buyers and secure a future for individuals with limited ability. Internet auctions now provide a low-cost alternative to test the market.

Retirement options

If there is no demand within the bloodstock market, there may be opportunity in other equestrian sectors; age, soundness, and temperament, remain important factors but numerous thoroughbreds with limited or no racing ability or potential have useful lives as ridden leisure horses, and some excel in eventing, show-jumping, polo, endurance riding, showing and a host of other equestrian activities. Their appeal has been enhanced by the initiatives of Retraining of Racehorses (RoR) which is an industry-funded charity created to support former racehorses by, among other activities, providing competitive opportunities for them as well as training opportunities for their owners.

Retraining of Racehorses (RoR) is an industry funded charity focussed on supporting and encouraging people who care for racehorses after their racing careers. Their **website (ror.org.uk)** includes:

- details on training and competitions
- advice for racehorse owners and trainers including how to safeguard your horse
- change of ownership advice along with template agreements.

The website also has a 'Source a Horse website' where horses can be advertised, details of their 'retrainer approval scheme' and a contact number for further advice and information.

Potential homes may also be found with a few targeted telephone calls to local veterinary practices, Pony Club DC's or Chief Instructors, Riding Club Committees, feed merchants, farriers or other equestrian organisations.

Logically, values will be limited by the time it will take before they are ready to participate in their new roles which, in many cases, will not be until they are four or five; it is important to be pragmatic about youngsters – especially foals and yearlings – and accept that they are unlikely to have any value; the benefit is finding an appropriate home where the individual has a future.

Gelding colts, whilst an additional expense, is a sensible procedure to assist with re-homing whilst reducing potential stress and additional management requirements for individuals with no realistic prospect of entering stud. Whilst they are even harder to place, a broodmare who is fertile but has failed to produce stock with any racing ability may still have appeal to breeders for other disciplines (sometimes as a recipient for an embryo transfer) but the demand is very limited.

Many breeders have the facilities to provide a home and a good quality of care for horses who are retired but remain fit and healthy. For breeders without the land or capacity to care for retired stock, there are professional establishments specialising in retirement / grass livery but it should be noted that they may not be able to cater for horses with health conditions requiring specific management; the contacts above may help to find suitable options.

End of life considerations

Euthanasia forms a part of any welfare policy and it is an important principle that, when completed carefully and sympathetically to end incurable suffering, it provides the best option for any horse, young or old. The old saying 'better a week too early than a day too late' carries an important message. For those who are not familiar or are uncomfortable with the process, several websites provide good information on the options and considerations including **World Horse Welfare**.

Whilst providing ongoing care for their horse or horses should always be the aim of any owner and remains their responsibility, in practice it has to be accepted that their personal circumstances may dictate that it is neither practical nor, in some cases, in the best interests of the horse. A responsible policy will aim to ensure that every avenue is considered in preference to euthanasia but euthanasia remains preferable to a decline in the care that the horse receives, or asking it to fulfil a role for which it is clearly unsuitable.

The TBA is committed to the protection and promotion of the health and welfare of the British thoroughbred and to support breeders by providing educational materials and opportunities to guide on best practice. The publication of Equine Welfare Guidelines for the Thoroughbred Breeding Sector aims to build on the basic principles of horse care detailed in the UK Government's Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Horses with information and benchmarking of practices that are relevant to the breeding and raising of thoroughbreds as future athletes.

Pitched at an introductory level to assist industry entrants – whether first time broodmare owners, or stud staff initiating their careers in the sector – the Guidelines aim to support and encourage all participants in achieving the highest standards of health and welfare amongst their breeding and youngstock. These high standards also serve to demonstrate the Association's expectations as part of the Horse Welfare Board's wider strategy for racing of 'A life well lived'.

Conclusion

For those who are just entering the breeding industry, this might all sound a bit daunting but the rewards can more than match the level of the challenge; it is worth speaking to other breeders to share their experience as well as to find the best sources of the assistance that you may require.

One thing is for certain – no matter how much you learn about the intricacies of breeding racehorses, luck will play a part in any success. Uncertainty is intrinsic to the process and essential to the market. Whilst this is accepted by those with experience, it offers considerable hope to those who are just starting. Get out there – and get your new interest on the road; you will increase your chances of success with experience but you may also breed a wonderful racehorse before you even start to understand how you did it.

Glossary and Appendices

Glossary

Barren mare
A mare who has previously produced a foal, but is not in foal (i.e. rested, failed to conceive or had an early pregnancy loss).

Blacksmith
A person who works metal and might make horseshoes.

Bloodstock
Collective name for all thoroughbreds.

Boarders
Collective name for horses which board at a stud which is not owned by the horse's registered owner.

Broodmare
A mare used for breeding.

By
Used when referring to the sire.

Colt
A male, entire horse, no more than four years of age.

Consignor
Person or business which looks after and promotes horses whilst stabled at the sales complex.

Covering
The mating of a mare and stallion.

Cycle
Collective name for the stages of a mare's reproductive pattern.

Dam
The maternal parent of a horse.

Ex
or 'Out of' – used when referring to the dam.

Farrier
A person qualified to shoe/trim horses feet.

Filly
A female horse, no more than four years of age.

Foal
A horse born in the current calendar year (1 Jan to 31 Dec).

Free return
Guarantee of a nomination to a stallion the following breeding season (subject to the terms of the stallion's stud).

Horse-walker
Mechanical walker used to exercise multiple horses.

Isolation unit
Self contained unit (stabling, paddocks etc.) away from other facilities used for the avoidance or containment of disease.

Lunging ring
Area designed for the safe exercise and lunging of horses.

Maiden mare
A mare who has not produced a foal.

Maternal grand-sire
The sire of the dam of a horse.

Nomination
A breeding right to a stallion for one season.

Out of
See Ex

Pedigree
The parentage of a horse.

Pin-hooking
Buying a horse with the view to selling later for a profit (normally short term; for instance, from foal to yearling).

Quarantine
Isolation of a horse to detect disease or prevent further spread of infection; normally at time of export/import.

Service
Another term used to describe covering (see covering).

Sire
The paternal parent of a horse.

Speller
A horse out of training for a short period.

Stallion
A (male) horse who is registered to cover mares.

Store horse
A Jumps bred horse (normally two or three years old) who is maturing before going into training.

Stud farm
A farm used for the purposes of breeding horses.

Vet
A qualified professional who is licenced with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to treat and medicate animals for their health and wellbeing.

Walk-In
A mare visiting a stallion from an external farm.

Weanling
A foal which has been separated from its mother.

Weatherbys
An administrative body of racing.

Yearling
A horse born in the previous calendar year (1 Jan to 31 Dec).

TOTEPOOL
Tattersalls
5

Appendix 1: Sales houses

Head office and complex: Goffs, Kildare Paddocks, Kill, Co. Kildare, W91 K197
T: + 353 (0)45 886600 **E:** winners@goffs.ie **goffs.com**

Head office: Goffs UK Ltd, Auction Mart Offices, Hawick, Roxburghshire, TD9 9NW
Complex: Goffs UK Sales Complex, Sandall Beat Road, Leger Way, Doncaster, DN2 6JP
T: 01450 372222 **E:** winners@goffsuk.com **goffs.com**

Head office: Tattersalls Ltd, Terrace House, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 9BY
Complex: Tattersalls Park Paddocks, The Avenue, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 9AU
T: 01638 665931 **E:** sales@tattersalls.com **tattersalls.com**

Head office: Terrace House, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 9BT
T: 01638 665931 **E:** ascot@tattersalls.com – Ascot **tattersallsascot.com**
E: cheltenham@tattersalls.com – Cheltenham **tattersallscheltenham.com**

Head office and complex: Tattersalls Ireland, Fairyhouse Road, Ratoath, Co Meath, A85 VY48 **T:** +353 (0)1 8864 3001 **E:** info@tattersalls.ie **tattersalls.ie**

In addition to the sales houses, other internet sites offer opportunities to buy and sell bloodstock, including **Thoroughbid**, **Horsemart** and the **Equine Auction**.

Appendix II: The breeders' calendar

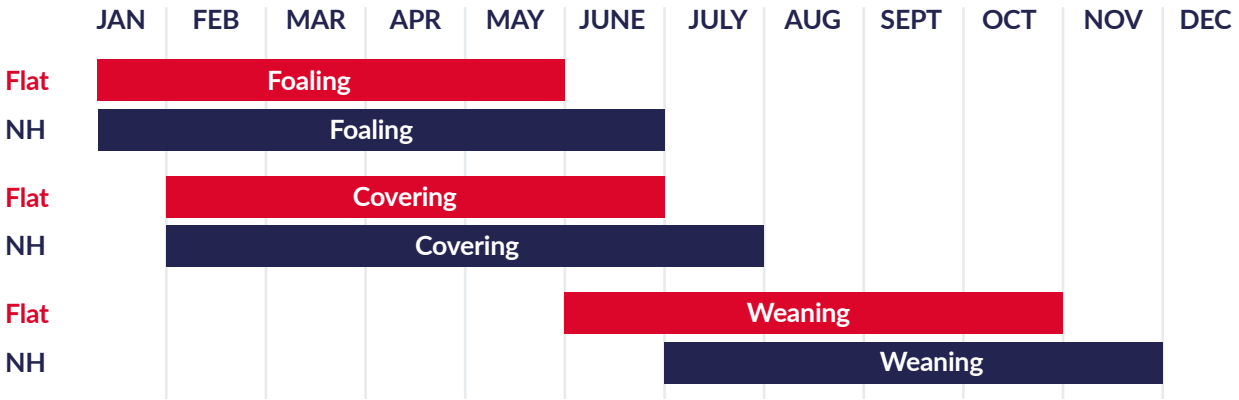
It is difficult to give an impression of what you can expect from your broodmare in terms of foal production; some can breed well into their twenties whilst others can prove highly sub-fertile from the start. Flat mares tend to retire to stud earlier in their lives than National Hunt mares and immaturity can be a factor in fertility.

In theory, the mare is pregnant for about 11 months and conceives a month after foaling which keeps her foaling date static from year to year. In practice, very few will take to their first service on a regular basis and, as a result, their foaling date tends to get progressively later in each subsequent year until they are rested or barren. Mares tend to form a pattern of foaling early (320 to 334 days), on time (335 to 345 days) or late (346 to 360 days) with those who have relatively short pregnancies being at an immediate advantage.

The mare's first natural heat ('foal heat') is about one week after foaling; whilst this provides the option to gain an earlier foal in the following year, specific veterinary advice about potential fertility is strongly advised before a mare is covered on her 'foal heat'.

'Short-cycling' is a term which is used for hormone treatment to bring the mare back in to season (oestrus) before her natural cycle.

Yearly breeding calendar of the mare



January

1 January is the official birthday for all thoroughbreds in the Northern Hemisphere. Breeders often want their foals to be born as near to, but critically after, 1 January – especially if they are breeding for Flat racing. The majority of Flat foals will be born from January until May; National Hunt foals have longer to mature and their foaling season can extend into July. Breeders need to remember the notification and registration requirements for newborn foals (**see page 19**). January is also the time when routine tests to meet the requirements of stallion studs can start; many studs will ask their vets to take clitoral swabs to check for venereal disease and blood samples to check for EVA and EIA early in the year; if there are problems, they are best found early.

February

There is no restriction on when a mare can be covered (mated) but, historically, the breeding season runs from 15 February to 15 July. The normal range of gestation (pregnancy) for a mare is 320 to 360 days; if you cover your mare close to or before the 15 February, you run the risk of the foal being born before the 1 January and being classed as a yearling when it is only a few days old.

March

On busy studs, the routine veterinary work – caring for new-born foals and ensuring that mares are given the best possible chance to conceive – is rapidly increasing. The breeding season is likely to peak in March/April for Flat breeders and April/May for National Hunt breeders. Entries will need to be made shortly for many of the late summer and autumn yearling auctions.

April

Whilst it is affected by soil types and rainfall levels, paddocks are often dry enough to start paddock management routines in April (if not before) – repairing damage from winter grazing and getting the paddocks in top order for grazing. Working on land which is wet is likely to be counter-productive but paddock work can sometimes continue until October and beyond.

May

As the foaling and covering draws towards a conclusion, May can be a good time to assess your stock; decide which mares you want to retain and which you need to sell; there isn't any hurry to complete entries for the end of year sales – but there will be imminent entry deadlines for the summer auctions. There are significant sales for National Hunt breeders in May and June.

June

Most breeders wean their foals (i.e. separate them from their mothers) at around six months old with the process starting in late June or July for the early foals. On many studs, these will be the months when there is least horse work to complete; the majority of

horses are likely to be living out (i.e. in the paddocks day and night) and it offers a chance to catch up on maintenance and development projects, as well as a good time to take holidays. Entries will need to be made shortly for the early winter bloodstock sales.

July

For mares covered in February, vaccinations against viral abortion (which are generally recommended) normally commence in July. The beginning of July, when most mares have been covered, is a good time to plan vaccination programmes for the next 12 months; veterinary surgeons can advise on the options. Flu and Tetanus vaccination dates can occur at any time of year and need to be monitored and included in the programme.

August

For Flat horses, August often sees the start of the preparation period for the yearling sales.

September

For nominations purchased on October 1st terms, don't forget to complete pregnancy checks towards and before the end of the month. Consider combining this with an annual check of teeth (if your vet completes your dentistry) and checking barren mares to see if they need treatment to set them up for the following year.

October

Early foalers will be entering the last trimester of their pregnancy when their diet may have to be adjusted to meet rising nutritional demands.

November

There are sales for Flat and National Hunt foals in November and December. Foals tend to have a shorter preparation period than yearlings.

December

There are a variety of options and opinions but breeders who hope to achieve early pregnancies in the following season, will often have their maiden and barren mares stabled by night from early December and under artificial lights to encourage them to 'cycle' (i.e. to activate the Oestrus Cycle which will include periods when they can conceive). December is also a good time to start preparing for the following season – planning worming programmes, checking sales entry dates for the following year and making sure that everything is in place for the following season. Stud activity doesn't stop for Christmas – so make sure that you have sufficient staff – and appreciate those who are working over the festive period.

Notes

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Every care has been taken in producing this publication and the information contained within; no responsibility is accepted for any error or omission.

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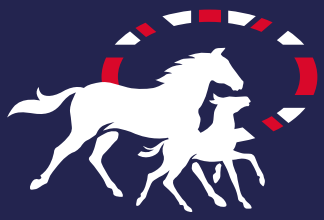

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