

Approach to Retained Foetal Membranes (RFM)

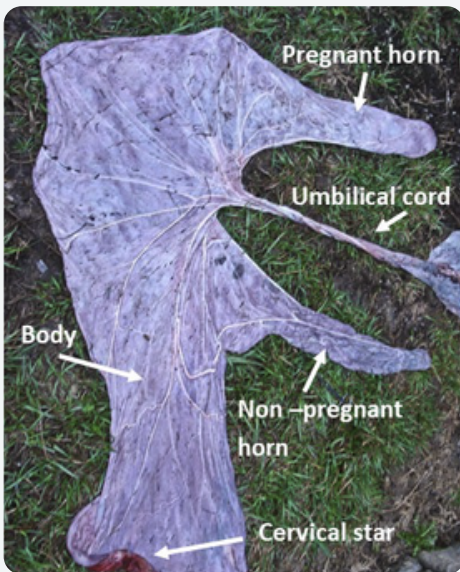
Based on: Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidelines for Horses in Australia, 2025

Foetal Membrane Assessment – Foaling Attendants

ALWAYS inspect foetal membranes, even when mare and foal seems fine.



Lay out chorioallantois:



Can you form an F-shape as pictured?

Is the colour and smell normal?

Can you locate the following anatomical sites:

1. Cervical star at base – where foal was born
2. Uterine body
3. Two uterine horns – non-gravid is smaller
4. Umbilicus will be present at the base of gravid horn, with amnion remnants attached
5. Follow vascular patterns if torn and confirm completeness

image source: Dr Alana King, 'Managing Retained Foetal Membranes in Mares, April 3, 2018, The Horse.com, retrieved from: <https://thehorse.com/156910/managing-retained-fetal-membranes-in-mares/>

Are the Membranes Complete?

COMPLETE

- Normal appearance.
- No fetid odour. No RFM.
- Continue post-partum monitoring of mare and foal as per normal protocols.

UNCERTAIN/INCOMPLETE

Possible partial retention – may not be apparent if membranes not closely examined (especially tip of non-gravid horn).

CONFIRMED RFM

Membranes visible externally
OR incomplete on examination.



COMPLETE BUT ABNORMAL APPEARANCE OR FETID ODOUR

Possible placentitis.



CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN

Prompt veterinary intervention required – delay increases risk of fatal sequelae (toxic metritis, laminitis).