

# All IN A Day

The result of Carol Rose's thorough breeding program is healthy foals.

*Carol Rose's breeding shed runs like clockwork.*

**Story and photos by  
Tonya Ratliff-Garrison**

IF YOU'RE AT CAROL ROSE'S PLACE DURING BREEDING SEASON, be careful not to get in the way.

Rose and her staff have every detail of their day scheduled down to the last second. Days start way before sunrise, and during breeding season, there's no such thing as a day off.

"It's very systematic," Rose said. "Every day, we can palpate 100 mares, collect several stallions, breed and do three or four embryo transfers, not to mention several cultures and treatments, all by noon or 1 o'clock."

Rose has been in the breeding business since the late 1960s, but she said it was not nearly as sophisticated as it is today.

"We really started breeding seriously in 1976 with Zan Parr Bar, but it still wasn't as regimented and disciplined as it could be," she said.

In 1979, Rose asked for the help of Charles W. Graham, D.V.M., in restructuring her breeding operation. Graham had a highly structured breeding facility in Elgin, Texas, that Rose admired.

"So I based my whole program on what he does at Southwest Stallion Station," she said. "Everything I learned, I learned from Dr. Graham."

One of the first things Graham and his partner, Bobby Lewis, D.V.M., insisted Rose do was put identification neckbands on each of her mares.

"They were horrified to find out we didn't use neckbands, but I have a terrific memory, and I can remember every horse," Rose said with a smile. "So we ordered numbers and neckbands, and I, Dr. Lewis and his wife, Nancy, spent one whole night in my kitchen and living room floor assigning numbers to mares.

"So then instead of a mare's name, she became a number. I don't know why we hadn't done it before, because it was certainly easier."

Another thing Rose did was map out her Gainesville, Texas, ranch, and give each pasture an identifying number.

"When I went to Dr. Graham's place, I saw his map and his lab, and I copied it exactly," Rose said. "I remember Matlock was really happy because I'd tell him 'No. 61 is in pasture No. 100.' It was a lot easier for him and everybody."

Through Graham's influence, Rose trained her staff to stay on task and be disciplined.

"I learned we had to be regimented. We don't do a lot of visiting, and everyone has a job, and they know what their job is," she said.

In 1985, David Hartman, D.V.M., became the reproductive veterinarian for Rose's operation. He collects the senior stallions and does most of the medical reproductive procedures with the mares. Since 2000, Dickson Varner, D.V.M., of Texas A&M University and his staff have also worked closely with Rose, helping to redesign the semen lab and advise on how to get the most fertility out of the stallions.

"I'm an owner, but I'm also a worker," Rose said. "I'm right there, I'm hands-on, and I know what's happening. But I have a wonderful staff, too. What we do here works very well for us, and it has for many years. A lot of people think we do things that are unnecessary, I hear that all the time, but the bottom line is to get that mare pregnant, and that's what we're here to do." ■

*Tonya Ratliff-Garrison is a field editor for The American Quarter Horse Journal. She can be reached at [tonyag@aqha.org](mailto:tonyag@aqha.org).*



Most of Rose's breeding staff arrives at the barn by 4 a.m. Shortly after arriving one morning, breeding assistants Jade Martin and Jessie Waite examined cultures collected from a mare the day before.



Martin laughs at a joke from Gabriel Gonzales. Although the staff members are always focused on their duties, they still have time for a little fun during the day.



Waite warms up an artificial vagina in preparation for collecting a stallion. One of the first duties of the day is to collect the stallions that need semen shipped.



Waite collects Shiners Lena Doc.



Waite removes the collected semen from the artificial vagina to prepare for shipping.



Waite examines the sperm motility and count under a microscope.



Waite removes seminal plasma, leaving only the spermatozoa at the bottom of the tube.



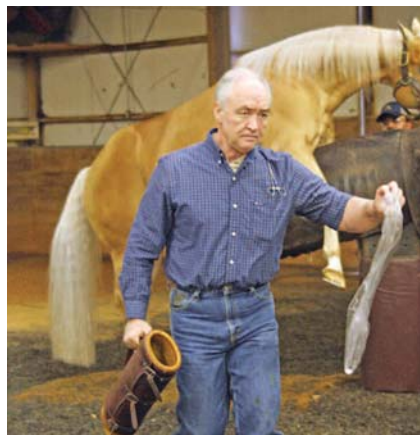
Waite inserts semen into a NucleoCassette for electronic analysis in the state-of-the-art NucleoCounter machine, a recent addition to Rose's laboratory.



Within seconds, Waite is able to view the motility of the semen and determine the count.



Waite then packages the cooled semen into containers for transportation across the country. The stallions whose semen is shipped are always collected early so a courier can pick up the semen shipments by 8 a.m.



David Hartman, D.V.M., has been working with Rose since 1985 and was the person to train Shining Spark for collection. Hartman is the only one to collect Shining Spark as well as the other senior stallion, Peptoboonsmal, also at Rose's ranch.



After the stallions are collected, the artificial vaginas are immediately cleaned and sanitized.



Breeding assistant Lupe Gutierrez prepares medicine to be given to the broodmares that need it as they are brought in for palpation.



Charles Graham, D.V.M., convinced Rose in 1979 to identify all of her mares with numbers on collars. Today, the collars are also color-coordinated, with the colors signifying which stallion the mare is bred to as well as separate colors for the ranch's mares and a recipient mares.



Mares are either brought in from their stalls or from the pasture to be checked by Hartman.



Three mares are brought in at once, and two of the stocks have places for foals. With the ultrasound machine on a wheeled cart, Hartman and Rose's staff are then able to stay mobile and can quickly go down the line to palpate and treat mares.



Martin is like an orchestra conductor, standing at a table with the books detailing all of the mares on Rose's ranch. As Hartman calls out diagnosis and treatment of the mare he is examining, Martin makes notations on that horse's page. She also tells Hartman when the mare was last seen, what he said about the mare and any other pertinent information Hartman needs to determine what to do with the mare.



Rose is an owner, but she is also an active participant in the breeding operation. It's not unusual to see her scooping up manure or making phone calls to customers to keep them up to date on their mares.





Martin measures the 30-day-old embryo of Tejons Annie Chex.



Before the mares are brought back to be flushed, treated or inseminated, the area is cleaned and sanitized from a morning of palpating. It's not unusual for the staff to palpate 80 to 100 mares a day.



Hickorys Holly Cee is prepared to be artificially inseminated.



Waite places Shining Spark's semen in tubes for Hartman to inseminate Hickorys Holly Cee with.



Mares are also brought in to be flushed. Rose says you can't get mares pregnant if they are infected, so she always ensures all of the mares at her place are healthy before they are bred.



Waite and Hartman insert the semen into Hickorys Holly Cee.



A foal born only hours earlier is brought in to receive plasma while the mares are being treated in the other stocks. Rose gives plasma to all of her foals within 24 hours of birth and then again at 2 weeks to ensure they stay healthy.



Hartman prepares an embryo transfer. It's not unusual for him to perform three or four embryo transfers a day at the ranch.



Hartman inserts the embryo into the recipient mare.



With the horses back in the barn or the pasture, it's time to clean and sanitize, and finish up paperwork.

## CHARTS, CHARTS & MORE CHARTS

If you need to know anything about the horses on Carol Rose's place, all you have to do is look at the walls in the breeding lab. Hanging up throughout the lab are charts highlighting information from when mares are due to foal to when semen is shipping to when embryo transfers are scheduled.

"It's just a matter of having good records and being organized," Rose said. "I'm always asked, 'Where did you learn this?' And I always say, 'From Dr. Graham.'"



The largest chart in the laboratory highlights the matings and breeding dates of mares to stallions and when embryo transfers occurred.



Another chart in the semen lab highlights the ranch's stallions and which mare they will be breeding or whether their semen is to be shipped.



One chart shows when mares have foaled and when they are expected to foal. The red bars mean a filly, the blue a colt, and the white are mares that have not yet foaled.



Another chart highlights the resident mares and the ranch mares at Carol Rose's ranch.