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## CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING PROGRAMS IN MARES

(“Putting mares under lights” is a management tool used to hasten the onset of ovulation and regular cyclicity in the mare)

1. Initiate the artificial lighting program December 1<sup>st</sup> in order to start the breeding season in the latter part of February. It takes approximately 50-60 days from onset of the “15-16 hour day” to onset of first estrus and ovulation.
2. Add light at the end of the day before dusk.
3. Provide a minimum of 10 foot candles of light (107 lux), either incandescent or fluorescent. **PRACTICAL RULE OF THUMB: PROVIDE ENOUGH LIGHT TO COMFORTABLY READ A NEWSPAPER!** A 12’ x 12’ stall typically would require a 100 watt light bulb or 2 x 40 watt light bulbs. Mares can also be illuminated as a group in a lighted paddock.
4. Lights can be added abruptly starting December 1<sup>st</sup> to produce a 15-16 hour “day” (constant lighting regime) or lights can be gradually increased over 60 days to produce a 15-16 hour “day” (stepwise lighting regime). Examples: a) **CONSTANT REGIME:** Add light from 4:30 pm until 10-11 pm for 10 weeks prior to the desired breeding date. **STEPWISE REGIME:** Add 3 hours of light the first week and then an additional ½ hour of light each additional week until a 15-16 hour “day” is achieved.
5. A one hour flash of light can also be given 9.5-10.5 hours after dusk. This lighting regime is also effective in hastening the onset of the breeding season. (Results have been less reliable with this method.)

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

For February and March matings, there is no advantage to beginning the lighting scheme prior to December 1<sup>st</sup>.

An automatic timer will help save money and labor when implementing an artificial lighting program.

The artificial lighting program can be discontinued once mares begin ovulating and cycling regularly.

Artificial lighting programs can be used in mares that are due to foal early in the breeding season to shorten the length of gestation.