

CLINICAL CASES: COLLECTING ON THE GROUND!

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(Original Print-1999)

We were asked by a new client to help collect a stallion on her farm and breed some mares. Having no phantom and worrying about using a mare of her own to collect from, the owner wanted her 17-year-old, Arabian stallion to be collected on the ground. He was collected once this way last year and seemed to have accepted the procedure. Experienced with this form of collection, we were happy to help. We arrived the initial collection day and set up as usual. Our minivan contains a ready-to-use station for semen evaluation, so all we had to do upon arrival was fill the artificial vagina (AV) with water and plug the equipment into a power outlet. When everything was ready, we went to the collection area and waited for the owner to bring the stallion. It was quite evident that this stallion had very good libido. As he was brought out of the barn towards the collection area he already had an erection. We proceeded to wash his penis and then positioned him for collection. It is important when collecting in this manner that a stallion learns to support himself on the ground since there is no mare or phantom to help stabilize him. This particular stallion seemed to have adapted to this procedure quite well. After the AV was appropriately positioned, he began forcefully thrusting with all four feet remaining on the ground. We kept a firm hold on the AV so it would not move while the stallion crouched and thrust into it. Within 5 to 7 thrusts, the stallion ejaculated without issue. This was a very easy horse to work with. Many times, the stallion will struggle to find the proper support position. Certain stallions will rise up on their hind legs in an effort to mount something while thrusting. Others move their whole body forward as they thrust because they haven't found the right stance yet. New stallions may actually fall to the ground because they tend to crouch more and more after each rhythmic push into the AV until they lose their balance. Once a stallion becomes

familiar with this type of collection then it becomes a straight forward procedure. The advantage to this procedure is that it may be used for breeding mares that don't show heat or have physical problems that prevent a stallion from mounting her. It also has been mentioned as the method of choice for collecting stallions with back or hock injuries that prevent them from mounting. From our standpoint, this is not the preferred method of collecting a stallion. The collector is put in a more awkward, back wrenching position when compared to collecting off of a mare or



Ground collection of a black, Arabian stallion. He is thrusting into the AV with all 4 feet on the ground.

phantom. More arm strength is also necessary to support the AV during this procedure. Some traditional horse breeders have a negative connotation with this style of collection. Claims are that "it's unnatural!" Since when has semen collection ever been a natural process. Stallions can learn this procedure as efficiently as any other process. Of course, certain guidelines have to be put in place so as not to frustrate or injure the stallion but those have to be abided by no matter what procedure for collection is used. Although it may not be our first choice, we at ERC feel that it is an appropriate method of collection under certain circumstances.