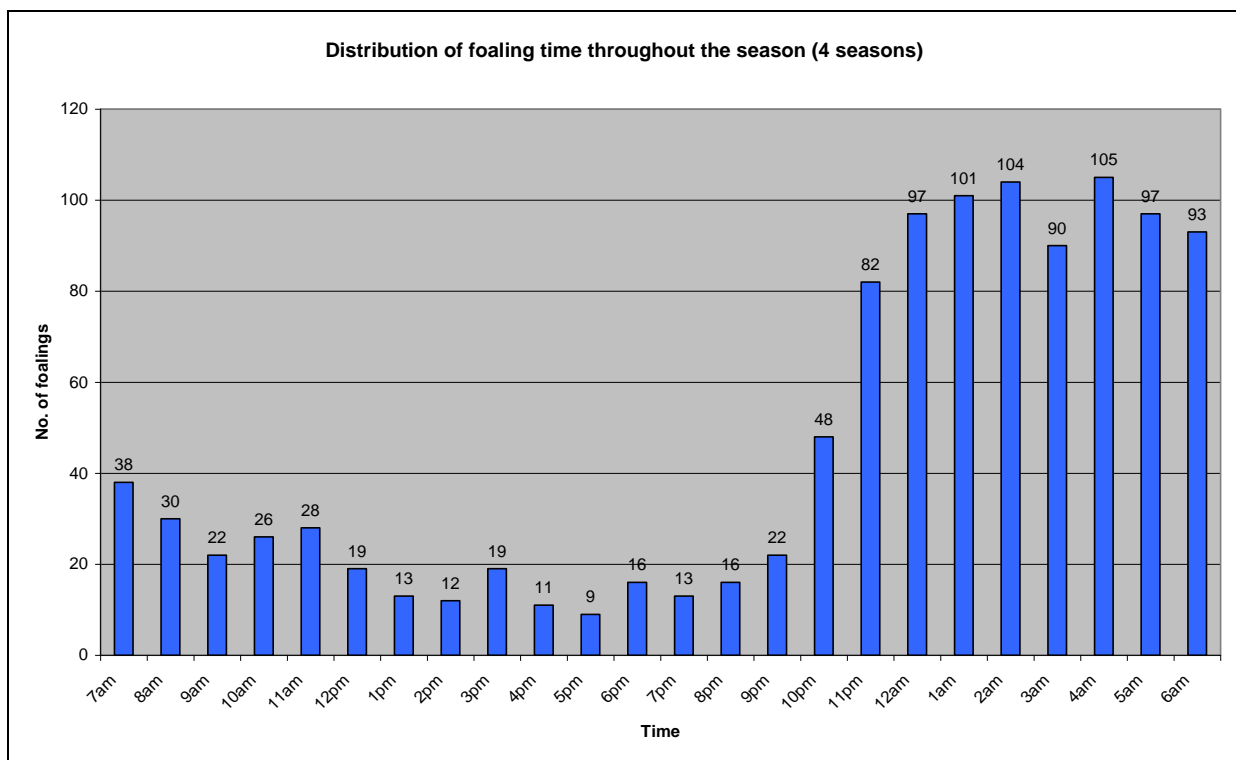


What is a “normal” foaling?

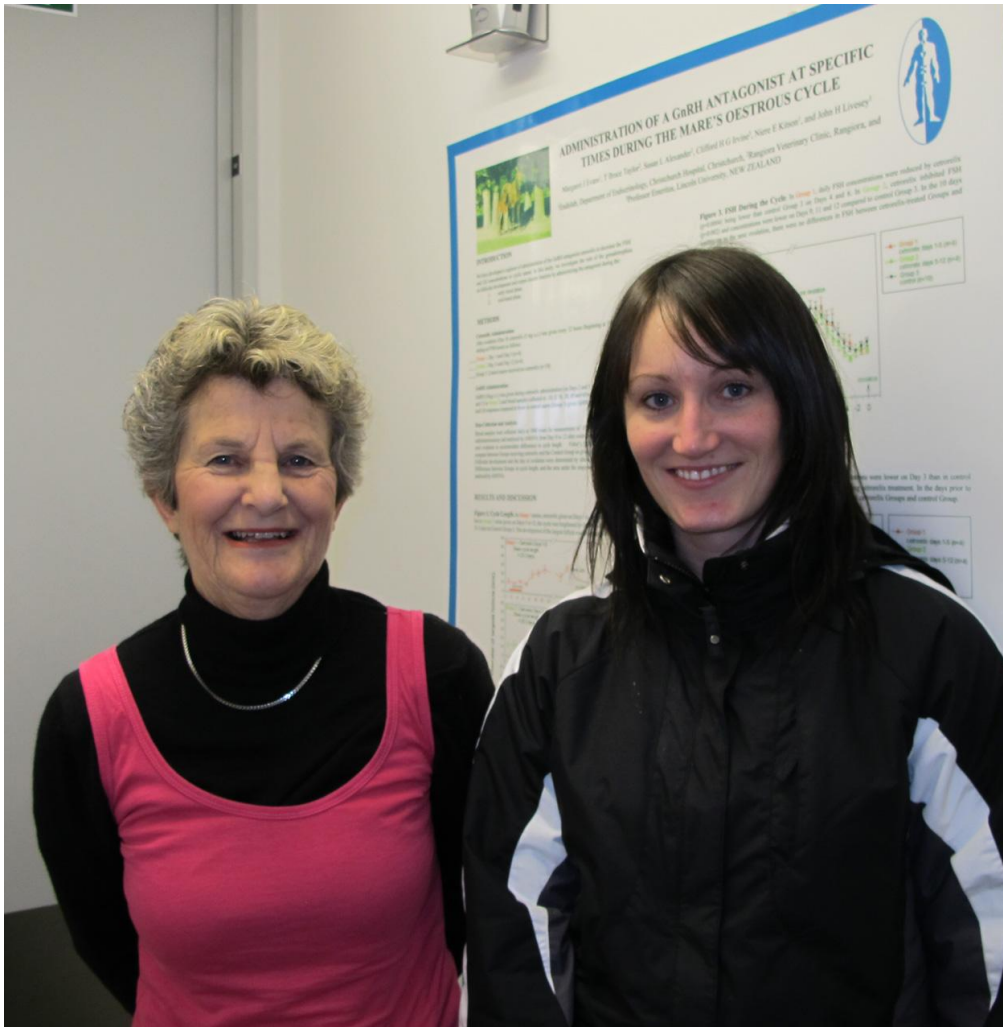
This study examined the foaling records of approximately 1000 standardbred mares to determine the “normal” parameters for mares foaling at pasture under New Zealand conditions. The records were provided by the stud in the form of a completed questionnaire which was filled out by stud staff at the time of foaling. The analyses were performed by Sarah-Jayne Vincent, a veterinary science student whose 2 summer studentships were funded by the NZ Equine Research Foundation. The results are still being analysed, but the following characteristics have been established.

- Of 1109 foals, 553 fillies and 556 colts were born (sired by 82 different stallions).
- The average length of the pregnancy was 349 days (approximately 11 months and 3 weeks), with a range of 312 to 393 days. This is longer than often quoted, but was the same in each of the 4 seasons studied.
- More foals were born during the night time (78.9% took place between 9 pm and 7:59 am and 21.1% took place between 8 am and 8:59 pm – see figure below).



- The average length of foaling was 15 min, with 90% of mares foaling within 10 min.
- Most mares (83%) stood within 15 min after foaling (7% of mares foaled standing)
- Most foals (86%) stood up within 90 min of foaling.
- While 63% of foals which suckled within 120 min, 37% took longer than 120 min.

Further analysis is continuing to determine if any of these or other factors such as the mare’s attitude at foaling (anxious, relaxed), leakage of colostrum, age of mare, number of foals, etc, is associated with the incidence of retained placentae.



Margaret J Evans and Sarah-Jayne Vincent
2010