



BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM

BABY FARM ANIMAL CELEBRATION: ALL ABOUT FOALS

What is a foal? A foal is the term we use for baby horses. Male foals are called colts and female foals are called fillies. When a mare (female adult horse) has her baby, we say she has foaled. When foals turn one year old, we no longer call them foals but instead we call them yearlings.



Mares have an 11-month gestation period. A foal's weight at birth depends on the size of the mare. So, a mare weighing 1,000 pounds will give birth to a foal weighing about 100 pounds and a draft breed

mare weighing 2,000 pounds will give birth to a foal weighing about 200 pounds. Foals are up and walking within a few hours of being born.

Directly after birth foals will start to drink their mother's milk just like human babies. Mares produce on average 3-6 gallons of milk a day depending on their size and breed. After a few weeks the foal will begin to eat other things like grass and hay. At 4-6 months of age foals will be weaned from their mothers meaning they will no longer be drinking milk.



Foals are too small to be ridden or driven but they can be trained at an early age. Foals can be halter-broken meaning they will learn to wear a halter and be led by someone. They will also learn how to be groomed and have their hooves trimmed by a farrier. They may even learn how to be loaded into a trailer so they can be transported.

While a foal will only be called a foal for the first year of its life, a horse is not fully mature until it is 4-5 years old. Those are their teenage years!

HORSE & FOAL TERMINOLOGY

THERE ARE A LOT OF WORDS WE USE WHEN WE TALK ABOUT HORSES AND FOALS. LET'S LEARN SOME OF THEM!

Foal = a baby horse.

Filly = a female foal.

Colt = a male foal.

Mare = a mature female horse.

Stallion = a mature male horse capable of producing offspring.

Gelding = a mature male horse not capable of producing offspring.

Yearling = the word used for a foal that has turned one year old.

Draft horse = a breed of horse that does work; not a horse you ride.

Farrier = a person who trims and shoes horse hooves.

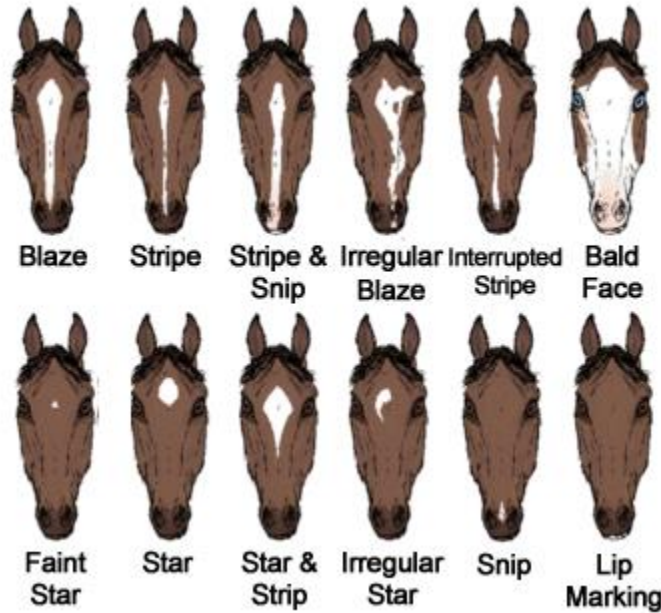
Halter = a rope placed around a horse's head, used for leading a horse.

A farrier puts a shoe on a horse. Horses are usually shod at around 6 weeks of age.



FOAL FACIAL MARKINGS

Did you know some horses are born with white markings on their faces that won't change for their whole life? Here are some examples of those markings:



Can you figure out what markings these foals have?

