

Horse Corral

Mothers and Offspring at Equine Advocates

At Equine Advocates, we consider all our equine residents and human staff one big family. However, some of our horses are actually related, and we love knowing they're in the same safe home. In recognition of Mother's Day, we want to share their stories and some fun facts about mares and offspring.

Peggy and Melanie

Peggy, a Belgian Draft born around 1996, is a former PMU (Pregnant Mares' Urine) Mare who was part of a major rescue operation of 46 Canadian PMU mares that Equine Advocates saved in Manitoba between October 2003 and March 2004. Peggy was in foal at the time of her rescue in 2004. She arrived at the sanctuary in the spring of that year and gave birth to her daughter Melanie shortly after. Peggy has a freeze brand #157 on her side, which represents the stall number at the PMU factory farm where she came from.

The majority of foals born to PMU mares are considered byproducts, and many are sent to auction and/or slaughter. Since Melanie was born at our sanctuary, she thankfully will never experience the abuse her mother and countless other horses suffered in the name of medicine. These two beautiful mares live in the same field with two other draft horses.

Annie and Connor

Annie, born around 2001, is a Belgian Draft branded with #157, the same as Peggy. She was the youngest of the 46 Canadian PMU mares we rescued in Manitoba. For that reason, she does not seem to have as many physical and emotional scars as most of the other mares rescued during those six months. She gave birth to a colt named Connor in the spring of 2004 at our sanctuary. They were adopted out, but both horses came back to us in 2008. Annie lives in the same field as Peggy and Melanie, while Connor lives with Jeffrey Mac, a Draft Cross and fellow PMU offspring.

Facts about dams and foals

- The female parent, or mother, of a foal is referred to as a "dam."
- Mares are seasonal breeders, meaning they can be bred from late spring to early fall.
- The average gestation period for a horse is 340 days, or about 11 months. That's two more months than humans!
- Mares typically give birth to one single foal. Twin pregnancies are rare and are very risky for the dam and offspring. It's rare for both foals to survive.
- Most often, foals are born at night, and it happens very quickly. This is because in the wild, it protects the mare and foal from predators when they are at their most vulnerable.
- Foals can weigh up to 150 pounds at birth.
- When first born, foal hooves have a special covering called "fairy slippers," which



EQUINE
ADVOCATES



Equine Advocates Rescue & Sanctuary
3212 State Route 66, Valatie, NY

2025 OPEN DAY SCHEDULE

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sunday, May 4
Saturday, June 7
Saturday, July 19
Saturday, August 16
Saturday, September 13
Saturday, October 18
Sunday, November 9



Come spend a few hours walking around and meeting our horses, ponies, donkeys and mules, most of whom were rescued from abuse, neglect and/or slaughter. Also, you will have the opportunity to meet our retired veteran military horses from the Colston Palace at Arlington National Cemetery. All are happily enjoying their life here at the sanctuary.

We have graphics posted at each paddock so you can learn about where each animal came from and why they needed to be rescued. This helps make your visit a much more personal and educational experience.

FEEDING OUR EQUINE RESIDENTS IS NOT PERMITTED

Please feel free to picnic at our pond and enjoy one of the most beautiful and serene spots here at the sanctuary.



Please note that all visitors will need to sign a release form upon arrival. Sorry, no pets permitted. Admission is free, but we do ask that you please consider making a non-deductible donation. Also, on your visit, learn about our Equine Sponsorship and Monthly Giving Plan.

Equine Advocates is a non-profit 501(c)(3) equine protection/charitable organization founded in 1998. Our Mission Statement is "To rescue, protect and prevent the abuse of equines through education, investigation, rescue operations, the dissemination of information to the public and the operation of a horse sanctuary for slaughter-bound, abused and neglected equines." Photos: John & Karen by Brian Goodenough; Jeffrey Mac by Michelle Jacobs

www.equineadvocates.org

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develop in the womb to help protect the dam's reproductive organs and birth canal during pregnancy and birth. This covering hardens as foals start standing and walking within hours of birth.

- Colostrum, the dam's first milk, provides foals with infection-fighting antibodies. Since foals are born without a fully developed immune system, receiving the colostrum is critical for a horse's health and survival.

At Equine Advocates, we don't breed our rescued equines. We do, however, feel proud to have saved dams in foal and had many equines born under our care, ensuring they're safe from a life of abuse or mistreatment.