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*A Tradition of Leadership and Excellence in Equine Medicine*

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## **Fetal sexing Mindy G. Sharp, D.V.M.**

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Fetal sexing is a veterinary procedure that utilizes an ultrasound machine during a specific stage of pregnancy to determine the gender of the fetus. Some may question the necessity of this procedure, but others find it to be a helpful management tool.

You may be able to more closely predict next year's income by estimating the value of a colt versus a filly from a particular mare or sire. You also may plan to sell or keep a mare depending on what sex she is carrying. For instance, you may be more likely to keep and foal an older, well-bred mare that has thrown nothing but colts if it is determined that she is carrying a filly that may one day replace her in your breeding stock. Thirdly, many people simply enjoy the idea of knowing whether to expect a "baby girl" or a "baby boy" the following spring.

The procedure is performed using trans-rectal ultrasonography to identify the position of the genital tubercle in relation to the stifles and tail head. The tubercle will be seen closer to the tail head on a filly and towards the abdomen on a colt. Due to the embryological changes occurring at this time, it is important that the procedure be performed as close to day 60 (post breeding) as possible (58-70). The risks or drawbacks in performing this procedure are similar to that of a regular pregnancy check.

Fetal sexing is a safe, inexpensive, and entertaining management tool that I encourage you to utilize.