

## ***The Lactating Mare***

*Better understanding of the nutritional needs of mares and foals in the first six months following birth enables the breeder to supplement lactating mares more accurately in order to limit their loss of body condition score.*

*Protein and energy requirements of lactating mares are greater during the first and second months of lactation.*

*Mare's milk is subject to variations in levels of protein, fat, and lactose in the first 180 days of lactation. All three components of the mare's milk go through rapid changes in the first month with more gradual changes in the following months.*

*While Lactose levels go up throughout the nursing period, fat and protein levels drop.*

*Total milk output reaches a peak at about 31 days after foaling and then steadily drops down to nearly half that amount by the six month mark.*

*By three months, the production is low enough to indicate starting nutritional supplements for the foals so they will be better prepared for weaning, and they will eventually get through (weaning) better.*

*Supplements are most beneficial to the mare during the first three months following foaling.*