

TESTIMONIALS



"I've been working with Thoroughbreds for about 30 years. The Ultimate EZ™ is the best milker I've ever worked with. It's a really nice piece of equipment. I'm glad we have it."

- Steve Avery, Broodmare Manager, Taylor Made Farm

Taylor Made has raised 49 Grade 1 winners, including 2015 Triple Crown winner, American Pharoah

"The Ultimate EZ™ with its tubing and silicone inserts is a more natural feel to the mare. She relaxes easier, she lets down easier. This machine also allows us to easily collect and store more colostrum, which is always very much needed. It's a wonderful thing to have."

- Dan Kingsland, Nightwatch Manager, Taylor Made Farm



"The Ultimate EZ™ Electric Milker is great in a high volume Equine Nursery. It's an invaluable piece of equipment for pulling colostrum or when dealing with Neonatal Isoerytholysis (NI) Positive mares post foaling as they must be stripped out regularly until their regular milk comes in and the foals muzzle can be removed."

- Dr. Tim A. Strathman, DVM, Equine Medical Associates, PSC

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ULTIMATE EZ A HIT AT RAMSEY FARM



NEW MILKER HELPS NOURISH FOALS WITH SERIOUS ILLNESS

BY NATALIE VOSS



Every year at Ramsey Farm in Nicholasville, Kentucky, some 12 dozen Thoroughbred foals are born, filling the farm's brilliant green pastures with spindly legged Kentucky Derby hopefuls. The 1,700-acre farm has staff on hand round-the-clock to monitor all the births, and most of them go off without a hitch.

There's a lot that could go wrong, though, which is why the start of the year brings a stretch of sleepless nights for some of the farm's managers. Usually a manager's focus is on getting the mare through the birth safely and getting the foal up and nursing relatively soon. The mare's first milk,

called colostrum, is rich not just in nutrients but in antibodies that will give the foal's immune system an early boost and start his growth off right. In rare instances though, that first milk could actually prove fatal.

Ramsey Farm, like other large breeding operations, sees occasional instances of neonatal isoerythrolysis (NI), a disease in which the foal's blood type does not match up with his dam's. The antibodies in the colostrum end up fighting against the NI foal's red blood cells, which they identify as imposters. During pregnancy, the foal is protected by the placenta, so foals are usually born without complications or obvious problems. If an NI foal gets a gulp of colostrum, he will begin showing signs of depression, decreased appetite, jaundice and anemia, and sometimes death can result.

Fortunately, early identification helps the Ramsey Farm team manage NI foals differently. After a few days, a mare's milk will lose those antibodies, so affected foals need to be prevented from nursing and given another mare's colostrum instead. That has meant tasking a nightwatchman or groom with milking the mare every few hours, and that hasn't always been easy—until now.

Longtime Ramsey Farm manager Mark Partridge has been testing the Ultimate EZ electric pump milker on mares this foaling season and has found it an easy solution both for his staff and his horses. The milker, made by EZ Animal Products, has been used by hobby dairymen on cows, sheep and goats, but comfortably fits mares, too. The machine works with a light, adjustable suction vacuum to

MARK PARTRIDGE OF RAMSEY FARM WAS ONE OF THE FIRST USERS OF THE UDDERLY EZ HAND MILKER. NOW, 10 YEARS LATER, HE CONTINUES TO COUNT ON EZ ANIMAL PRODUCTS.



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draw milk from two teats or just one at a time; gentle silicone inserts keep the device comfortable on the mare's teats, which is important for horses who might be anxious with a little one underfoot.

"They're all different," Partridge said. "Some don't care [about being milked]; with some you can't do it; and some, they might fuss a little bit but they'll let you do it."

The foals pay little attention to the machine, which is much quieter than other electronic milkers and has been specially adapted with longer silicone air tubing, so the electric pump does not have to be in the stall with the mare and foal.

Previously, the farm had used the Udderly EZ hand-powered pump milker made by the same company, though Partridge likes that the new model does the work in half the time. It's also gentle enough to be used on mares with mastitis, a painful udder infection. (Mastitis cases need to be milked to help remove infected milk from the udder, but the udders are usually very sensitive to touch. The milker doesn't create any friction on the teats or bag.)

In Partridge's experience, NI foals are usually cleared to begin nursing after a day or so and go on to lead normal lives as future racehorses. Colostrum collected from the mare during that time is stored (with the mare's blood type noted) for use with orphaned or sick foals who are compatible with a certain blood type. Ramsey Farm also contributes to local colostrum banks, milking non-maidens when possible.

Partridge says it only makes sense that Ramsey Farm try out this new machine, which is entering its second year on the market. The farm's philosophy is a mixture of hardboot horsemanship with cutting-edge innovation.

In the "traditional" column, the farm removed its pipeline for city water about six or seven years ago and draws water from the springs on the property—an approach the horses seem to thrive on. Besides its trademark water, Ramsey Farm prides itself on raising horses with minimal time indoors, with the idea that exercise and bluegrass build stronger, happier horses, many of whom run under the farm's red and white colors rather than going through public auction.

It's an approach that's worked: Farm owners Ken and Sarah Ramsey picked up \$10.5 million in earnings as owners in 2014 and \$10.4 million as breeders, earning them coveted Eclipse Awards in both roles for the second time (plus three previous Eclipse Awards as leading owner).

The innovation comes in the farm's well-known "spa," originally engineered for prize stallion Kitten's Joy. These days, all Ramsey horses enjoy trips to the farm's very own aquatred exercise pool and a vibration plate under a panel of heat lamps.

"We do like to try out anything new that's coming along; people say I like having new toys," Partridge said with a laugh. "We try to mix old school with new technology."



For more information on the Ultimate EZ, or its smaller, hand-powered cousin, the Udderly EZ, visit ezanimalproducts.com or call (859) 368-9509 or (800) 287-4791.