



Thank you for your interest in Contango. We are pleased that you are considering one of our exceptional stallions for your mare. As part of our breeding protocol, we routinely test our stallions for equine arteritis virus infection (EVA). Contango's semen has been confirmed as positive for carrying the virus. The purpose of this letter is to explain the significance of this virus infection and what precautions need to be taken when breeding to a stallion shedding EVA.

Facts about Equine Arteritis Virus

Equine arteritis virus is a viral infection of horses that can affect both respiratory and reproductive systems. The virus is the cause of a disease termed equine viral arteritis (EVA). This virus is present in horse populations in many countries throughout the world. Adult horses of certain breeds in some European countries show as high as an 80% carrier rate. A similar percentage of adult Standardbreds in the USA are seropositive for antibodies to the virus. Exposure of susceptible horses to EVA may result in clinical or subclinical infection (an absence of any clinical evidence of disease). ***The vast majority of cases of infection are not associated with the development of clinical signs of disease.*** Exposure of a horse to the virus for the first time is followed by an incubation period of 3-14 days before onset of the acute phase of the infection. Cases of EVA may present with all or any combination of the following clinical signs: fever, depression, loss of appetite, discharges from the nostrils and eyes, and swelling of the legs and perhaps other dependent parts of the body. Exposure of pregnant mares previously uninfected with the virus may result in abortion. It should be emphasized that horses affected with EVA invariably make uneventful clinical recoveries without any medical treatment. ***Furthermore, susceptible (seronegative) mares only shed equine arteritis virus during the acute phase of the infection and cannot later become carriers of the virus.***

Two of the most common routes of infection with this virus are via the respiratory tract and venereally, by stallions that shed virus in their semen. No detectable reduction in fertility has been observed in carrier stallions or in mares to which they have been bred naturally or by artificial insemination, using fresh cooled or frozen semen. You can safely breed a mare to a stallion that sheds this virus in his semen by adopting these simple precautions.

Guidelines for Breeding a Mare to an Equine Arteritis Virus Shedding Stallion

Prior to breeding your mare:

Mare should be tested for serum antibodies to equine arteritis virus. A blood sample can be submitted to any veterinary medical diagnostic laboratory approved by the USDA to carry out the test for this infection.

Mares that test **antibody negative** can be classified in **Category I**. Proceed as follows:

Category I Mares

1. If the mare is not pregnant, she should be vaccinated against EVA as soon as possible. The only vaccine currently against EVA is a modified live vaccine (ARVAC[®], Ft. Dodge Laboratories, Ft. Dodge, Iowa), which has been shown to be completely safe for use in stallions and non-pregnant mares. It is not recommended for use in pregnant mares or in foals less than six weeks of age.
2. Mare(s) that are vaccinated should be temporarily isolated from other horses that are seronegative for antibodies to the virus for 21 days. This period of time is required for a mare to build up adequate protection against the virus following vaccination.

3. Foaling mares can be vaccinated as early as 10 days postpartum. In such cases, it is recommended that the mare's foal should also be bled at the same time and tested for antibodies to equine arteritis virus. Since the present vaccine against EVA contains live virus, one cannot exclude the remote possibility that a foal could become inadvertently infected with the vaccine virus following vaccination of its dam. In the exceptional case where this might occur, such foals are likely to lose their antibody titer to the virus after several months. It is recommended that your foal should be in good physical condition before vaccination of your mare.
4. Once 21 days have elapsed after vaccination, your mare can be bred to an equine arteritis virus shedding stallion.
5. After being bred, your mare should be isolated from other non-EVA vaccinated or seronegative horses for 21 days.

Mares that are **serologically positive** for antibodies to equine arteritis virus can be classified in **Category II**. ***You can proceed with breeding these mares to a shedding stallion without the need for prior vaccination against EVA or isolation from other horses after breeding.***

The foregoing information is summarized in the following chart which may help with your planning.

Bleed and test mare to determine if seronegative (Category I) or seropositive (Category II).

Category I

Step 1.	Step 2.	Step 3.	Step 4.	Step 5.
If mare is <i>not pregnant</i> , proceed to Step 2a.	a) Vaccinate against EVA ASAP.	After vaccination, isolate mare from other seronegative horses for 21 days.	21 days after vaccination, mare is ready to be bred.	After breeding, isolate mare from other seronegative horses for 21 days.
If mare is <i>pregnant</i> proceed to Step 2b.	b) Vaccinate against EVA not less than 10 days after foaling. Also draw blood from foal for EVA test.			

Category II

Step 1.	Step 2.	Step 3.
No need for vaccination against EVA	Proceed with breeding.	No restrictions after breeding.