

Last Chance Corral 2020

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THE VIEW FROM THE BARN.

How does one even begin to chronicle the year 2020 without coming off as a complete curmudgeon? It can't be done. I've tried! It was the best of times, it was--*nope, scratch that*. It was a year that would live in infamy--*nope, scratch that*. It has been said that "When the going get tough, the tough get--"*nope, scratch*. I did, however, find a quote from Hunter S. Thompson which encapsulates my feelings of this past year: "When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro." I think we can all agree that 2020 was a challenge. Personally, I can't wait to see it in my rear view mirror. At the risk of sounding like a whiner, (I know, we are all in the same box stall,...with a kicking mule), I will give you my annual review of the 2020 Foal Season.



We were just hitting our peak in March when the orders came to "SHUT 'ER DOWN!" It would have been devastating at this point had my guardian angel not provided me saving grace in the form of Annie Demuth. She had only worked here for a couple of months when the world locked down. And didn't she just step right up and offer to be a lonely shut-in with me. Bless her little cotton socks! The two of us put our backs to the wind and sallied forth into these unknown times.

Now the idea--no, the very dangerous reality of COVID-19 scared me down to my toes. My lungs are my Achilles heel. Over the years, I've suffered several pneumonias and a MRSA lung infection, so I was ever so grateful to have Annie's company. No, one person can not do this job solo. A smooth season requires a whole team of dedicated workers. This year, we became a very tight, cloistered team of two plus the invaluable Dr. Rourke.

Each morning, Annie and I would do a brief check in, then dispense meds to sick foals and put out fresh milk. I would then head out to feed the big horses and clean their stalls and paddocks while Annie took care of cleaning the foal barn, sanitizing buckets and throwing the first load of

poopy towels into the washer. Before you knew it, it would be time to bathe poopy bums and administer the second round of meds.

Being a full-time student at OU, Annie also had to take time out for her classes--virtually, of course. And me--I'd have a phone glued to my ear screening messages and talking with potential adopters. Separating the wheat from the chaff, so to speak. "Do you have a farm?" "Have you owned horses before?" "Have you read the information on our website?" "Thoroughly?" Yes, there will be a test.

We also get many calls from around the country from desperate folks looking for advice for their own sick foal. After 30-plus years of Foal Seasons, with an annual rescue of 150-200 orphan foals--most less than a week old -we've probably seen and done just about everything these little rascals can dish out. Of course, we remind folks to contact their own vet, but we are happy to share our expertise.

You may wonder, "How hard can it be to put a bucket of milk in front of a foal?" Well, that's only a fraction of what is required to help these little ones thrive. Diarrhea is the number one killer of these fragile lives. And when you have 15 curious muzzles licking and chewing on anything they can find, you need to have exceptional quality standards. It's a never-ending merry go round of bathing butts, washing towels, giving meds, making milk, making meds, (My own secret recipe-kind of like KFC) giving meds; REPEAT.

Some of my days would begin before sunrise, heading to KY to pick up more foals in need. That meant Annie would be holding down the farm, administering meds to and washing

bums of 100-plus pounds of "I don't wanna." Oh, and man the phones. As soon as they arrive on the farm we are monitoring for poops and pees and any signs of distress while I document each foal's sex, breed, color, age, and markings, and Annie introduces them to buckets of milk. Sometimes this requires a bit of teaching and a lot of calm patience--some foals insisting, "This isn't how my mother does it". continued ->



Victoria checking the age of a new foal.



Victoria and Dr Rourke evaluating and teaching a new foal to drink.



Victoria and Annie giving "secret recipe" poop medicine.



Annie rounding up new arrivals.