

A collection of humorous essays about life as a horsewoman. The title essay is made up of lighthearted reflections on the unique challenges that horsewomen face during pregnancy and early motherhood. Practical tips are also included.

Horsewomen in Foal and Other Equestrian Adventures

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/3104.html?s=pdf>

Horsewomen in Foal
And Other Equestrian Adventures

Copyright © 2007 Claudia Stack

ISBN-13 978-1-60145-261-0

ISBN-10 1-60145-261-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Printed in the United States of America

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2007

Horsewomen in Foal
And Other Equestrian Adventures

By

Claudia Stack

Table of Contents

Introduction HORSEWOMEN IN FOAL.....	1
Chapter 1 YOU MIGHT HAVE TO COME INDOORS.....	3
Chapter 2 THE BUTTERBEAN.....	7
Chapter 3 THE BUTTERBEAN BECOMES A BUN.....	13
Chapter 4 AS SOON AS WE GET THE BABY SITUATED	19
Chapter 5 THE WORDLESS WONDER	23
Chapter 6 RIDING DOESN'T DEFINE YOU—OR DOES IT?.....	29
Chapter 7 GOALS? WHAT GOALS?.....	33
OTHER EQUESTRIAN ADVENTURES.....	37
Stupid Money Moves I Have Made with Horses	39
Crappy the Pony.....	45
Horsewomen and the Men Who Love Them	51
Horse Sales: A Real World Primer	57

Chapter 1

YOU MIGHT HAVE TO COME INDOORS

There are some things your doctor won't tell you simply because it won't occur to him or her that you need telling. One of these things is that pregnancy and motherhood involve spending a fair amount of time indoors. Oh, you'll resist it at the beginning. But sooner or later your doctor will lay down the law: No more riding. No more heavy work. This can be a traumatic transition, I know it was for me. Before pregnancy, I spent most of my waking hours either outside, or at my job earning money for the farm payment, feed, shoeing bills, etc. By month five of gestation my outdoor activities were dramatically curtailed by summer heat and a hernia. For the next sixth months I had the unaccustomed pleasure of spending most of my time indoors.

Before you draw the conclusion that I live on a fabulous estate and my life bears no relation to yours, oh fellow struggling horsewoman, let me hasten to clarify. My fabulous equestrian estate is really just a few acres in an obscure part of North Carolina. My one indulgence in the early days of owning the farm? A new, four stall shedrow barn with a center tack room. Of course. The horses basked in the comfort of their new stalls with individual run-out paddocks, while I made do with a used singlewide house trailer that leaked when the rain blew to the East.

It wasn't until my husband, Joe, came along a few years later that I became acutely aware of the shortcomings of living in what he termed "the tin can." Eventually we managed to qualify for a construction loan, despite the fact that he was in graduate school, and I work just thirty hours per week at the local university. Thus our current domicile came to be, an actual house without wheels. Inside it I paced through much of my later pregnancy, looking longingly out the window at my horses as they idled in the pasture.

Horsewomen in Foe

Eventually you will find that TV is boring, you can't spend all of your time on the phone, you have actually oiled all of your tack (even all the spare parts hidden away in the old trunk), and you have read all the current books and magazines that interest you. Your husband or partner is outside mowing, desperately trying to pick up your slack, and then it occurs to you. Isn't there some indoor activity that your mother and sister do? I mean, apart from ironing all the little baby clothes, which doesn't make sense anyway because the baby is going to rumple them. But there is something else, it has to do with the house. You look around at the piles of horse magazines and the mounds of laundry that you managed to wash but never had time to fold before. And this thought dawns: I could clean up. This is the first step in your transformation from barely domesticated to somewhat domestic.

That thing with the hoses in the hall closet is a vacuum (vak'-yoom). Ask your mother or a non-horse friend how it works. You will probably find some glass cleaner and furniture polish spray under your kitchen sink. These wipe on and wipe off the appropriate surfaces much like saddle soap on tack.

This is your chance to appreciate how most people live, strange as it is. In the past you might have wondered, how do people who don't ride fill the void of meaninglessness in their lives? Why do they live the way they do? You have secretly puzzled for years over why people would voluntarily live on a non-horse property that is not even near a decent boarding stable. Did they have horses in the past and have now moved on to something else, unlikely as that seems? Or, what seems more likely, maybe they are saving their money for that perfect horse or horse property.

In any event, you can't spend all your time contemplating the irrationality of most people in the world. You have Things To Do. This is different from your previous lists of priorities, which curiously never seemed to hold much interest for other people. Your mother didn't used to call to ask when you are going to build another cross country jump. Yet suddenly dozens of people are conversing with you about things that might never have occurred to you, but that presumably you should be doing. For example, they will ask you about your nursery theme. The Theme becomes very important and takes on a momentum and life

of its own, because people are actually expecting to buy you gifts related to the Theme. Your friend at work, the one people compare to Martha Stewart, is planning a shower for you around this yet-to-be-determined Theme. At this point I panicked and chose Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive", but then it became clear to me that it wasn't a theme *song* I was supposed to pick. This Theme relates to *décor*.

I realized that Early American Drywall is not a suitable *décor* choice, but I was still confounded. All my money was going to the farm payment, the feed bill, and the obstetrician's bill. Who has money for a Theme? Who has time? I felt hopelessly inadequate. Then I surrendered my own clothes dresser to Joe, so that he could add a railing around the top and make it into a changing table. I painted it myself and felt a little better.

Another aspect of being indoors is that you may actually begin to cook on a regular basis. While in the past you may have viewed food as fuel and given no more thought to eating than to filling your truck's tank, food does take on a new importance when you are pregnant. Your first clue to this will be in the first trimester, when you will either be ravenous or incredibly nauseated. Your food choices will seem much more important, either because you can't get enough or because so few things appeal.

I am not the best cook by any measure, but I have mastered cooking efficiently. This can either mean cooking the meal quickly, or preparing something that can sit forgotten in the oven for a few hours until it is done. Since I hate to waste time on mundane things I multi-task when I am cooking, sometimes to a degree that frightens my husband. A typical pre-dinner scene in my kitchen includes me on the phone scheduling a lesson, while I make a salad, pay some bills, and keep an eye on the chicken roasting in the oven.

I don't truss, stuff or baste, but unless all of my friends have been lying for years it seems my simple method for roasting a chicken reliably yields a dinner that is better than just edible. I will share it here, for whatever it is worth: Rinse the cavity of a whole chicken and pat dry with paper towels. Sprinkle salt and pepper all over the bird, especially inside. Pour a little lemon juice in the cavity. Fill the cavity with diced onions (these are not for eating, but to keep the bird moist

Horsewomen in Foal

and flavor it from the inside out as it cooks). If desired, slip a few slivers of raw garlic clove under the skin all over the bird. Cover with foil and roast at 500 degrees for 30 minutes, then at 350 degrees for an additional thirty minutes per pound. Take the foil off for the last half hour. Prep time: 5 minutes. Cooking time: Typically 3 1/2 hours. A good side dish that is very easy is to put some baking potatoes alongside the chicken for the last hour it is cooking.

This concludes the extent of my domestic knowledge. If you get really frustrated with folding laundry and being indoors, try to borrow some of the training videos you've been meaning to watch.

Tips for Now:

- Start thinking about making arrangements for help with your horses for the later part of your pregnancy and the first few months after the baby is born. Is there a college student or friend who might be willing to exchange work for riding privileges? This works to your advantage in two ways, since you will have barn help and the horses will get some exercise.
- Take a long hard look at your operation and ask yourself whether you should make some herd reductions, or, if you board other people's horses, whether there are some that are more trouble than anything else. Remember, there will come a point when someone else will have to feed, turn out, etc., for you. You want to make everything run as smoothly as possible. That might mean selling that cute three year old filly you haven't quite gotten around to breaking yet.
- Take a look also at your stable and household finances. Don't be blindsided by baby expenses. Even if you have excellent health insurance, you are probably in for a sizable doctor and hospital bill. In addition, even a healthy baby sees the doctor a lot in the first year. A baby racks up medical bills more quickly than an ex-racehorse. Think now about where you can cut back.

A collection of humorous essays about life as a horsewoman. The title essay is made up of lighthearted reflections on the unique challenges that horsewomen face during pregnancy and early motherhood. Practical tips are also included.

Horsewomen in Foal and Other Equestrian Adventures

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/3104.html?s=pdf>