

H.M.H. Rockin Bentley Frozen Semen Background and Additional Information

Preservation of semen begins with the actual collection of stallion semen and for this process we have chose to have all our semen professionally collected, froze, stored and shipped from Vogler Semen Centre. Vogler has been in the semen freezing business since 1983 and is a leader in the industry, utilizing the best technology, procedures and knowledge available to ensure the quality of the product. Vogler farms has been successfully collecting HMH Rockin Bentley since 2012. Where most stallions produce 15-50 straws of semen with the average being 25-30 they have been very impressed by the quality and volumes, averaging 158 straws per collection in 2015. Each straw is .5ml and contains 250 to 300 million sperm cells. Industry standard for commercial distribution of semen is $\geq 30\%$ post-thaw progressive motility, however this is not the case at Vogler. Vogler Semen Centre will not even take the time collecting and freezing a stallion unless the post thaw motility rate is greater than 55% and they test every collection to be at least 60% post thaw motility and have less than 20% abnormal. Bentleys post thaw rates have always been greater than the high standards set by Vogler and much greater than industry standards. Where some stallions do not freeze well, this is not at all the case with HMH Rockin Bentley and his frozen semen has been proven with several foals on the ground and several more on the way.

While chilled semen is usually fertile 1-3 days after collection, Frozen semen has an indefinite "shelf life" until thawed when stored properly. Frozen semen can be sent to the mare breeding farm as soon as the contract or breeding agreement is signed, and stored until needed, eliminating the need for same-day or overnight courier service, as is required with cooled semen. Frozen semen can be thawed 'on demand' for breeding a mare with a history of unpredictable ovulation to ensure you do not miss the optimum breeding window. The use of frozen semen can also be less costly than cooled semen for mare owners. When using frozen semen all doses for a breeding season and multiple mares can be sent in one shipment. If using cooled semen only one or two doses can be shipped per cycle requiring multiple shipments per breeding season.

Breeding with frozen semen is not more difficult than breeding with chilled semen, it is just a slightly different procedure. The insemination is relatively easy and can be preformed on the farm in most cases... However, every vet has their own process and comfort level with breeding so please discuss this with your vet and what process they like to follow to determine what works best for you both. No matter the quality... chilled or frozen...semen is only as good as the person handling it, so please ensure you are working with a practitioner who is experienced with breeding procedure, as timing and handling of the semen are the key to success.

We have found that for best results, reproductive management of mares is essential. Our best success rates have been when the mare is scanned by ultrasound every four to six hours pre-ovulation and insemination occurs as close to ovulation as possible, with the additional process

of deep horn insemination for ultimate success. Nearing ovulation is best determined by the softening and flattening of the follicle and the absence of uterine edema vs follicle size. Mares will ovulate at different sizes and draft mares especially will ovulate with a much larger follicle (usually a 50-65mm) and if your vet is not experienced in draft horse reproduction they can have a tendency to want to breed the mare before the follicle is ready (before it starts to soften and flatten). We suggest a natural ovulation rather than a drug induced ovulation to insure a follicle that ovulates at full term at the optimum fertility. With Frozen semen, you can have the semen on hand and not worry about ordering a shipment or diminished semen quality if a mare does not ovulate as soon as expected, so forcing ovulation with drugs is not necessary or suggested. When the mare is ready, the semen is ready within minutes.

Frozen semen, when properly stored will keep indefinitely. Most vet hospitals offer storage of semen if you choose to not have your own container. The cost savings should outweigh collection fees on cooled semen as well as shipping fees or the chance of the semen not being good when shipped cool.

For additional information on H.M.H. Rockin Bentley, frozen semen, breeding process and procedure, or scheduling a breeding Please feel free to contact Performance Unlimited Clydesdales at:

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