

The horse course at Tocal 360 - transcript

Hello, I'm Warwick Lawrence, we're here today at Tocal College. So this morning we're going out to get our horses in for our days work today. With our setup here at Tocal we've got numerous paddocks, different mobs of horses are in different paddocks. So the paddock I'm going into first, the horses with the rugs on they're actually our sale horses for our sale on the first (weekend) of November. So we're just going to slip out there, they're on a paddock that sown with ryegrass, we've fertilised and lucky now we've had a nice bit of rain and that paddocks' looking real well. We've found that the rye grass plus our hand feeding twice a day is a really good thing to get these horses up to sale prep which in the 4th of November (this year). So we'll just slip out and run around these horses and they will go up into the yards to be drafted up into their individual yards. Then we will go and get the next lot of horses.

[01:10] So the next lot we are getting are just a few breakers that are in a paddock we have been using over the last fortnight. Again that paddock's been sown with ryegrass and it actually had a bit of oats sown in it earlier in the piece but it was pretty dry and there wasn't a lot of oats come up and again it's been fertilised and then it's had a bit of a hit of chook manure.

[01:32] The second paddock I'm going down to get is further down the laneway as you'll see. It's our main paddock of where all our breakers are. So the horses that will come up not are the breakers that the students are breaking in this year at Tocal. There is probably 25 odd horses in that paddock and again we just run them up, we draft them up into the yards and then the students go about doing what they've got to do with them throughout the day. Again this paddock has been sown with ryegrass and fertilised. So we'll slip down and bring them up the lane.

[02:06] So the next paddock that we are going to bring in is our mare and foals. We have a little paddock - again it's been sown with ryegrass and fertilised - we just maintain to have one little paddock for the mares that we are working on throughout the week. Our main mob is further away but when they are getting close to being worked on to be vetted to breed they will come up in these smaller paddocks so that we're not running them as far each day. So it's nice and close, we can just slip out to this paddock, bring them in, draft them up, wait for the vet to turn up, he will do his vet work on them to tell us whether they are getting close to breeding, or whether we've got to AI them or whether they're getting in for an ovulation scan. And that's what we are doing today, there's a grey mare called Holly, we bred her on Sunday night, she's actually coming in today for an ovulation scan.

[03:10] A typical day for the students here ... while the horses are being mustered in, the students have turned up, they've got the wheelbarrow and manure rakes, they've cleaned out all the yards, they've started to make sale feeds for our sale horses. So then when the sale horses come in all the yards are cleaned out, the feeds are made up, we let all the sale horses in. Now whilst they're eating their morning feed, we've got our brood mares organised for the vet, the vet

will turn up scan those mares, do what we've gotta do to our brood mares, put them away. Then our breakers are being brought up and so the students then for the rest of the day will ride a breaker that they have been breaking in and a sale horse. And then sometimes, you know the likes of what's happening this week, the students are in half groups so half of them are with me to ride sale horses and breakers and to do broodmares, the other half are doing skills - learning to drive tractors quads, do chainsaws, all those - fencing skills - then they will actually come to me just after lunch and the students that I've got this morning, after lunch they will go to the skills and it's just a roll on effect until everyone gets through everything.

[04:30] As you can see around here there's mares and foals that have been brought in today for breeding purposes. What happens here at Tocal, students come for a 12 month course, they learn to ride and train a horse, um, then they wean a foal, they learn to trim horses, tack shoes on in the first two terms. Start of third term, if they pass requirements, we take the horse they've been riding off them and we give them a horse to break in and then they break and train that horse for the next two terms. In the last two terms, they will foal all these mares down and then they will see the breeding of these mares as well. So we've got 24 mares in the broodmare plant, we AI (artificial insemination) with outside semen, we AI six mares, the rest get bred to our stallions here. Plus the students will prepare a horse for sale, which our sale is on the fourth of November - the first weekend in November every year - and so we sell somewhere between 18 and 20 horses a year. And so these little fellas here that are standing about here now, these foals that'll be the yearlings that you will wean next year for next years horse course and then the horses that the students are breaking in at the moment, they become our horses that the students that start next year, they learn to ride and train those horses and we turn them out at the end of second term and they become our sale horses at the end of that year - that same year. So they will be three year old at sale.

[06:25] We've got our stud here at Tocal which is an Australian Stock Horse stud. We believe the Stock Horses it's what they call a breed for every need. In that Stock Horse breed we have actually got Quarter Horse blood in it so we can cross Quarter Horses with Stock Horses and we do that for temperament and training ability. Because our horses are sold by three year old, it's very important not to have a late maturing horse. We need to have a horse that's early maturing and so we find our cross bred horses - as in Stock Horse / Quarter Horse - for us are ideal and os all our horses are registered Australian Stock Horses but there is an influence of Quarter Horse blood in them.