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Katiuska Satué, María Marcilla, Pietro Medica, Adriana Ferlazzo, Esterina Fazio

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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

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4 Katiuska Satué¹, María Marcilla¹, Pietro Medica², Adriana Ferlazzo², Esterina Fazio²

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¹Department of Animal Medicine and Surgery. Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. CEUCardenal Herrera University, Valencia, Spain

²Departament of Veterinary Sciences, Veterinary Physiology Unit, Polo Universitario
Annunziata, Messina University, Italy

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11 ABSTRACT

12 Androgens modulate maternal ovarian activity, embryo implantation and correct 13 placental development. The objective of this study was to establish reference values for 14 testosterone (T), and rostenedione (A_4) and dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) 15 concentrations in pregnant mares. A total of 30 healthy Spanish Purebred mares with an 16 age range of 9.33 ± 3.31 years, were studied during the 11 months of gestation. T, A₄ 17 and DHEA concentrations were determined using EIA validated specifically for equines. T increased in the 2^{nd} and 3^{rd} month (P < 0.05), showing a plateau between the 18 4^{th} and 6^{th} month, decreased from the 7th to the 9th month (P < 0.05) and increased in the 19 20 10^{th} month (P < 0.05), reaching the maximum value in the last month of pregnancy (P < 0.05). A₄ increased in the 2^{nd} month (P < 0.05), reaching the maximum value in the 3^{rd} 21 month (P < 0.05), decreased in the 4th month, increasing in the 5th and 6th month (P < 22 23 0.05). From the 7th month the average values decreased until reaching the minimum at 24 the end of gestation. DHEA progressively increased from the 1st to the 5th month, at 25 which time the maximum mean value was reached (P < 0.05), after a decrease in the 6th and 7^{th} month occurred (P < 0.05), reaching the minimum value in the last month of 26 27 gestation. T, A₄ and DHEA were positive and significantly correlated (P < 0.05). The androgens analyzed in this study can be used as predictive markers of pregnancy in the 28 29 mare.

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31 Keywords: androstenedione; dehydroepiandrosterone; pregnant mare; testosterone

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