

## **Live and Learn**

*by Suzy Hopkins*

Horses have been domesticated since the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C. by the Danes. Yet, even today when a baby horse, called a foal, is born in captivity, in a stall in a barn with the veterinarian and the owner present it will hide behind its mother. Eventually when she shows no fear of humans the foal will be braver but skittish. Every foal has to learn to trust humans.

In the wild herds all the horses distrust humans. It takes months of kindness and discipline to tame a mustang and even then it will revert to the wild when frightened. Horses have long memories and must learn to disregard their instincts.

Since a foal can take from 30-60 minutes to stand after birth and from 30 minutes to two hours to walk and run they are vulnerable to attack from cougars and stallions other than their father. Wild mares have learned to give birth in a secluded area, away from the herd, during the night.

Wild horses that learn the most live the longest.