**Hormones of Late Pregnancy and Birth:**

**Oxytocin**

Oxytocin comes from both foetus and mother:
- Foetal pituitary gland
  - Releases small amounts of oxytocin before birth.
  - Crosses placenta to sensitive myometrium.
  - Increases myometrial tone by stimulating release of prostaglandins.
  - Together oxytocin and PGF2α stimulate more frequent and powerful contractions.

Maternal oxytocin:
- Released as a result of discomfort and stress?
- Further augments contractions stimulated by foetal oxytocin and PG positive feedback.

**Birth requires hormone relaxin**

Produced by ovary or placenta (species dependent)
- In response to the PGF2α.

Functions:
- Softens fibrocartilage uniting the pubic bones of pelvis.
- Allows pelvic cavity to widen during childbirth.
- Softens cervix allowing dilatation to occur.

**Stages of Labour: Animals**