

What To Do with All the Pretty Horses?

Drought and the economy force tough decisions on horse owners, and shelters can't keep up

By Gwyneth Doland August 20, 2013



Amid debate over a proposed horse slaughterhouse in Roswell, a question remains: What should New Mexico do with all the unwanted, injured or aging horses? - Photo by Alexa Schirtzinger

The horse that tried to kill me was named Adonis, and he was a beautiful white thoroughbred who stood more than 17 hands (a complicated way of saying: a lot taller than I am). Having been on my college equestrian team, I was eager to ride a fine horse again and maybe show off a little

for the gelding's owner, a new friend. But if Adonis—as his name suggests—were a character in a Harlequin romance, he would have been the handsome rake who breaks the heroine's heart. And maybe a few bones.

After a nice walk and a fine trot, I was 30 seconds into what felt like a pretty smooth canter when handsome, gigantic Adonis stopped short and ejected me toward a fence. I landed hard in a mud puddle. Stunned and filthy, but also proud, I got back on, determined to do better, sit deeper, lower my hands, grip tighter. He threw me again.

The next day, I woke up feeling like I'd been beaten with a stick. I had three badly bruised ribs and two sprained ankles. Part of it was my fault. The 19-year-old buns of steel that won so many pretty ribbons had turned into 30-something saddlebags that jiggled like the star of a twerking video. And I'd been too cocky—Adonis was no mellow lesson horse. My ankles hurt for months.

A stable owner had given Adonis to my friend Nick after the horse had thrown a student, causing serious injuries. Nick, an expert rider, hoped that time and effort could bring the horse around. But a few months later, a terrifying incident at the stable convinced him it was time to give up.

"I went to grab the saddle out of the tack barn and came back, and he was just freaking out, like crazy-huge flipping out," Nick recalls. "He broke the hitch, the big steel ring his halter was clipped to. And I just said, you know, I don't think this horse is right in the head. Life's too short to put me or you or anybody in peril for the sake of keeping this animal alive."

He agonized over the options—Nick believed Adonis was "a genuine liability," but he didn't have the money or land to let him live out his days away from people and other animals. The thought of euthanizing him at a busy barn in town felt too practically and emotionally difficult. In the end, Nick found a solution that felt right: he loaded the horse onto a trailer bound for a wild cat sanctuary in Texas, where Adonis would be butchered. His life would end, yes, but he would help the rescued cats live.

It wasn't a quick or easy decision for Nick, but neither is it quick or easy for other horse owners, government officials, pueblos and tribes to figure out how to manage thousands of wild, abandoned, abused, neglected, injured or dangerous animals. A persistent drought and painful doubling in the price of feed has caused a spike in the number of unwanted horses just as a loud, emotional debate rages over a proposed horse slaughter facility in Roswell.

Earlier this month, New Mexico's horses gained national attention when former Gov. Bill Richardson and actor Robert Redford took a public stand in opposition to Valley Meat Company's proposal to slaughter horses in Roswell. Claiming solidarity with Native American leaders,

Redford and Richardson got a slap in the face when Ben Shelly, the president of the Navajo Nation, responded by saying wild and abandoned horses cause more than \$200,000 in damage on Navajo land every year, and that many are sick and dying on the drought-parched range. Shelly told the New York Times that he'd like for all of the animals to be adopted, but barring that, he wants to keep slaughter as an option.

And, as others have noted, banning the slaughterhouse in Roswell wouldn't stop horses in New Mexico from being killed for meat. Last year, nearly 10,000 horses crossed through New Mexico on their way to a facility in Mexico that processes horsemeat for export. Many horses sold at private auctions today will end up being processed on the other side of the border. In essence, the Roswell plant would just be a quicker, easier trip. But as the debate rages on—a temporary ban has delayed the plant's opening for six months—many horse owners continue to struggle for a solution.

The New Mexico Livestock Board is the government agency with the authority to take possession of stray, abused and neglected horses. And Executive Director Ray Baca says the board has been taking in a lot more horses over the past couple of years.

"It's increased dramatically because of the drought, the lack of forage and not being able to afford other feed to make up for the lack of forage," he says.

Cutting down on breeding, gelding more male horses and experimenting with birth-control shots for female horses will all help, but in the meantime, the state's rescue organizations—which must be certified by the Board—are struggling to handle all the unwanted animals Baca rounds up.

(The Equine Protection Fund can help with financial assistance for feed, gelding and euthanasia; see sidebar below.)

Some of the horses taken in by the Livestock Board end up at The Horse Shelter in Cerrillos. The no-kill, no-breeding shelter currently houses 74 horses—double the number they had a few years ago.

"The last couple of years have been really hard on people because of the economy," explains the shelter's program manager, Susan Hemmerle. "...I had a woman call me; she said, 'You know, I used to pay \$6.50 for a bale of hay. Now I have to pay \$15—and I only make \$8 an hour.'"

A generous grant allowed The Horse Shelter to pay for a training program that is helping more horses become easily adoptable, Hemmerle says. Still, only a dozen or two are successfully adopted every year. And they keep coming.

“It’s the way there aren’t enough shelters for dogs. I mean, they put down how many dogs every year in shelters?” Hemmerle says.

Irresponsible horse breeders, like puppy mills, are part of the problem. Amateur breeders and those who overbreed can be surprised by the lack of financial reward for their efforts.

“They assume that they can always sell horses, but they just aren’t informed enough. People are giving away papered horses right now and having a hard time doing it. They call here and they’re very upset [to hear we don’t accept horses from owners]. They say, ‘I can’t sell them! I’ll have to take them to the sale barn and to slaughter!’ And I say, well, stop breeding,” Hemmerle says. “Not that I wouldn’t embrace another shelter,” she adds, “but I don’t think that’s the answer to the problem.”

The Sky Mountain Wild Horse Sanctuary occupies several hundred acres of land abutting the Carson National Forest, which spreads north toward Chama in a leaf shape from Abiquiu Reservoir on the east and Dixon on the west. It’s home to five wild horses rounded up by the US Forest Service in 2007, in an attempt to manage the forest’s horse population.

Five horses: it’s not very many, but Sky Mountain founder and president Karen Herman says her organization is looking to grow thoughtfully and carefully.

“We’re working to keep more horses free in the wild in numbers where the horses—and the range that sustains them—can be healthy,” she says. But with tens of thousands of wild horses in the West, progress can be slow.

In the meantime, she’s working with Carson National Forest officials on a small project to round up female horses and inject them with porcine zona pellucida (PZP), a substance derived from pigs that prevents conception. It’s not exactly equine Depo-Provera, but the end result is the same: One shot a year is supposed to keep them from getting pregnant.

It’s a little complicated—a few weeks after the first injection, female horses must receive a booster shot. PZP has to be kept frozen and mixed in the field just before injection. And the injection can only be done by people who’ve gone through a special training program at a conservation center in Montana.

“You do need some real skill and people who are well-trained in order to successfully implement it, but it’s effective and humane and it gives us a different vision for our wildlife,” Herman says. She hopes the birth-control shot will eventually eliminate the need to round up and sell off wild horses. It could also help manage wild-horse populations on private and Native American land.

Adopting unwanted horses isn’t as simple as adopting stray cats. In addition to the significant finances and expertise needed to maintain a horse, while many adoptions go well, some just don’t work out. Katie Stone thought adopting a horse would be a great idea for her 12-year-old daughter, Emma, who was born with hemiplegic cerebral palsy and has been riding in hippotherapy classes for more than a decade.

But in the end, the horse she brought home could not be brought back to full health and had to be euthanized.

“I ended up with Cricket because somebody told me that someone had a starving horse on her property out in the mountains. She was a nice woman and she had rescued this horse, but it was beyond what she could deal with,” says Stone, the host of *The Children’s Hour* on KUNM. “I thought I was doing the noble thing. And I’d been told he was rideable if he could be healthier.”

The idea was that Emma and the horse could help each other out.

“We home-school her, we have three acres, we grow alfalfa, and having a horse here would allow her to get more therapy while being a part of something great,” Stone says.

She thought of buying a horse, but the idea of adopting a struggling animal had a special appeal to Stone, an animal lover. It didn’t work out the way she planned.

“The fact that he only had one eye was obvious. The fact that he was all bones was obvious. But what we learned once we got him was that he was an angry, suffering, miserable horse,” Stone recalls. She says the vet told her the horse had been suffering for years due to chronic underfeeding.

Stone knew the time to act had come when she started seeing muddy, horseshoe-shaped prints on her llama’s flanks. She paid the vet to euthanize Cricket and had the body hauled away.

The experience was expensive—she spent about \$1,000 on vet bills, supplements and feed—but more importantly, Stone says she was disheartened by her glimpse of the struggles faced by so many horses in New Mexico.

“We already took away the natural situation for these animals, so now we’ve become the stewards of this system,” she says. “I tried to be a hero. I’m not a hero. I ended up just putting this poor horse out of his misery. And how many of them are out there?”

Gwyneth Doland is a former SFR staffer and current freelance writer. Her last story for SFR was “Wild Hogs” (July 31), about New Mexico’s feral hog eradication program.

Can’t keep your horse? Here’s help.

Animal Protection of New Mexico’s Equine Protection Fund has several programs to help struggling horse owners. For more information, visit equineprotectionfund.org.

Emergency Feed Assistance

Available if you’ve lost your job or had a medical emergency within the past six months.

Trail’s End

Can cover veterinary fees and disposal costs for humanely euthanizing suffering horses.

Gelding Assistance

Will pay for gelding stallions and colts owned by low-income families, veterinarians and law enforcement.

COMMENTS

08.21.2013 at 02:11

Linda Horn

I believe USDA Secretary Vilsak's "Third Way" can remedy the unwanted horse dilemma better than slaughter. These are some existing programs. There are many. The vast majority of horses who end up at the borders come from somewhere else. To be successful, the dilemma must be addressed at the source. We're beginning to overcome our issues in New Mexico. If we only had to deal with those within our state and other states would deal with theirs, I believe we could make real progress nationwide.

To access the links, please copy and paste as a URL address, and remove the space after <http://>

AVAILABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE EXCESS HORSE DILEMMA STATE PROGRAMS

New Mexico Equine Protection Fund.

I live in New Mexico, and I'm really proud of what this organization is doing. If every state set up something like this - with each handling its own excess population - it would go a long way toward solving the dilemma.

[http:// www.equineprotectionfund.org/](http://www.equineprotectionfund.org/)

Information about other state programs is available online.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

American Humane Association – Red Star Program – Disaster Relief

Help for the Leachman Horses. They helped on several other rescues involving horses <http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/programs/emergency-services/recent-emergency-services/montana-horse-relief.html>

American Humane Association Second Chance Fund

[http:// www.americanhumane.org/animals/programs/shelter-services/second-chance-fund/](http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/programs/shelter-services/second-chance-fund/)

HAY BANKS

Grants and other support [http://](http://www.equisearch.com/horses_care/nutrition/hay/horse_hay_bank_resources_061410/)

www.equisearch.com/horses_care/nutrition/hay/horse_hay_bank_resources_061410/

ASPCA "Hay It Forward"

[http:// www.aspca.org/About-Us/horses-and-the-aspca/aspca-hay-it-forward-project](http://www.aspca.org/About-Us/horses-and-the-aspca/aspca-hay-it-forward-project)

UHC Partners with ACTHA to Help Unwanted Horses

[http:// www.thehorse.com/articles/31295/uhc-partners-with-actha-to-help-unwanted-horses](http://www.thehorse.com/articles/31295/uhc-partners-with-actha-to-help-unwanted-horses)
Stamp Out Starvation of Horses – Georgia
[https:// www.facebook.com/groups/sosofhorses/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/sosofhorses/)
Equine Safety Net – Kentucky Horse Council
[http:// www.kentuckyhorse.org/safety-net/](http://www.kentuckyhorse.org/safety-net/)
Oregon Hay Bank
[http:// oregonhaybank.org/](http://oregonhaybank.org/)
Sound Equine Options – NW Oregon & SW Washington State
[http:// www.soundequineoptions.org/programs/temporary-feed-assistance](http://www.soundequineoptions.org/programs/temporary-feed-assistance)

HAY

The USDA could provide subsidies to grow hay and establish a National Hay Registry that publishes horse hay available in each state.

GRANTS

ASPCA Provided \$1.8 Million in Grants to Equine Groups in 2012
[http:// www.thehorse.com/articles/31259/aspca-provided-1-8-million-in-grants-to-equine-groups-in-2012](http://www.thehorse.com/articles/31259/aspca-provided-1-8-million-in-grants-to-equine-groups-in-2012)

TRAINING & SHOWCASING RESCUED AND SECOND CAREER HORSES

The Penn National Racetrack Model
[http:// www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/76860/penn-national-working-for-horse-adoption](http://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/76860/penn-national-working-for-horse-adoption)
UHC Member Addresses Rescue and Adoption: Rags to Riches Rescue Competition
[http:// www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org/?id=5&s=4&story=110](http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org/?id=5&s=4&story=110)
‘Thoroughbreds for All’ Event to be Held April 26
[http:// www.paulickreport.com/news/bloodstock/thoroughbreds-for-all-event-to-be-held-april-26/](http://www.paulickreport.com/news/bloodstock/thoroughbreds-for-all-event-to-be-held-april-26/)
RESCUE SUPPORT

This is something state legislatures can do to help rescues at no cost to the taxpayer. It won't solve the problem, but every little bit helps. Colorado has a tax check off as well. It raised about \$90,000 last year. The New Mexico legislature passed a check off bill as well. "THANK YOU to the New Mexico House for passing SB274 on a 62-0 vote! Sen George Munoz's bill will create a tax check off to help fund licensed horse shelters to help more abused, abandoned, and neglected equines in New Mexico without raising taxes! Having passed the

Senate, the bill awaits a signature from Governor Martinez to become law. SO MANY people came forward to support this bill."

This is the Fact Sheet. I can get you the Text of the Bill if you'd like.<http://apvnm.org/legislation/2013/Horse%20Shelter%20Rescue%20Fund%20Factsheet-1-26-13.pdf>

GELDING CLINICS & GELDING VOUCHERS

National Equine Resource Network (NERN)

Their goal is to help set up clinics nation-wide based on their model.

[http:// www.nationalequine.org/](http://www.nationalequine.org/)

The Unwanted Horse Coalition

[http:// www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org/?id=7&s=8](http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org/?id=7&s=8)

New Mexico Equine Protection Fund - Voucher

[http:// www.equineprotectionfund.org/](http://www.equineprotectionfund.org/)

Horse Plus Humane Society – California – Monthly Clinics Low-cost clinics

They pay \$125, the owner pays \$25-\$75 depending on the age of the stallion.

[https:// www.facebook.com/horsehumane](https://www.facebook.com/horsehumane)

EMERGENCY VETERINARY CARE

Sound Equine Options – NW Oregon & SW Washington State

[https:// www.facebook.com/EquinePartnersUnlimited](https://www.facebook.com/EquinePartnersUnlimited)

NETWORKING TO RESCUE HORSES

A Home for Every Horse

[http:// www.equisearch.com/a-home-for-every-horse/](http://www.equisearch.com/a-home-for-every-horse/)

Participating Rescues and their information

[http:// www.equisearch.com/a-home-for-every-horse/rescues/?utm_source=EquiSearch-Hub&utm_medium=left-rail&utm_campaign=AHFEH](http://www.equisearch.com/a-home-for-every-horse/rescues/?utm_source=EquiSearch-Hub&utm_medium=left-rail&utm_campaign=AHFEH)

HSUS Safe Stalls Horse Rescue Network

[http:// www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2012/12/safe-stalls-horse-rescue-network-120512.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2012/12/safe-stalls-horse-rescue-network-120512.html)

CANTER

[http:// www.thehorse.com/articles/31448/canter-transitions-1-000-ex-racehorses-in-2012](http://www.thehorse.com/articles/31448/canter-transitions-1-000-ex-racehorses-in-2012)
I belong to at least 15 Facebook groups that successfully network to re-home horses in need and help owners in difficulty. There are many, many more.

TRANSPORT FOR RESCUED HORSES

Reasonable transport is one of the biggest challenges to those rescuing horses. The following Facebook groups and others are helping meet that challenge.

Fleet of Angels

[http:// www.fleetofangels.org/](http://www.fleetofangels.org/)

Horse Rescue Transport Network

[https:// www.facebook.com/HorseRescueTransportNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/HorseRescueTransportNetwork)

Rescue Rangers

[https:// www.facebook.com/groups/rescuerrangers/?ref=ts&fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/groups/rescuerrangers/?ref=ts&fref=ts)

uShip Highways to Help. Rescue horse info is at the bottom.

[http:// www.uship.com/learnmore/charitylearn.aspx](http://www.uship.com/learnmore/charitylearn.aspx)

EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY

Articles on Value to Individuals and the Community

Grants Fund Research on Equine-Assisted Therapy and Veterans

[http:// www.thehorse.com/articles/29767/grants-fund-research-on-equine-assisted-therapy-and-veterans](http://www.thehorse.com/articles/29767/grants-fund-research-on-equine-assisted-therapy-and-veterans)

Equine-assisted psychotherapy: a mental health promotion/intervention

modality for children who have experienced intra-family violence

[http:// www.chrysalisequine.com/files/EAP%20-](http://www.chrysalisequine.com/files/EAP%20-%20a%20mental%20health%20intervention%20for%20children%20who%20have%20experience%20intra%20family%20violence.pdf)

[%20a%20mental%20health%20intervention%20for%20children%20who%20have%20experience%20intra%20family%20violence.pdf](http://www.chrysalisequine.com/files/EAP%20-%20a%20mental%20health%20intervention%20for%20children%20who%20have%20experience%20intra%20family%20violence.pdf)

Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy: Healing Therapy or Just Hype?

[http:// psychcentral.com/lib/2008/equine-assisted-psychotherapy-healing-therapy-or-just-hype/all/1](http://psychcentral.com/lib/2008/equine-assisted-psychotherapy-healing-therapy-or-just-hype/all/1)

Horse therapy helps youth deal with life issues

[http:// www.hpj.com/archives/2009/feb09/feb16/Horsetherapyhelpsyouthdealw.cfm](http://www.hpj.com/archives/2009/feb09/feb16/Horsetherapyhelpsyouthdealw.cfm)

A FEW EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY PROGRAMS, including those for veterans - Many of their horses are donated by those who can no longer care for them

[http:// www.examiner.com/article/equine-assisted-therapy-for-military-veterans-and-families](http://www.examiner.com/article/equine-assisted-therapy-for-military-veterans-and-families)

Equine Therapy Associations

[http:// www.equine-psychotherapy.com/therapy-associations.html](http://www.equine-psychotherapy.com/therapy-associations.html)

EGALA <http://www.eagala.org/>

Equine Assisted Therapy – Care for the Troops

[http:// www.careforthetroops.org/about_equineassistedactivities.php](http://www.careforthetroops.org/about_equineassistedactivities.php)

Equine Assisted Therapy – St. Louis

[http:// eatherapy.org/](http://eatherapy.org/)

Equine Partners Unlimited – Ohio

[https:// www.facebook.com/EquinePartnersUnlimited](https://www.facebook.com/EquinePartnersUnlimited)

HSUS Responsible Horse Breeders Council - 800 breeders had signed on as of January 2013.

[http:// www.thehorse.com/articles/31238/responsible-horse-breeders-council-formed](http://www.thehorse.com/articles/31238/responsible-horse-breeders-council-formed)

Back in the Saddle Project

[http:// backinthesaddleproject.com/index.html](http://backinthesaddleproject.com/index.html)

Horse Plus Humane Society – California

[http:// www.horsehumane.org/programs.htm](http://www.horsehumane.org/programs.htm)

Pet Partners Equine Therapy

[http:// www.petpartners.org/page.aspx?pid=183](http://www.petpartners.org/page.aspx?pid=183)

Mini Horses as Therapists for Children

[http://](http://www.bendbulletin.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=%2F20130106%2FNEWS0107%2F301060351%2F1051&nav_category=NEWS0107)

www.bendbulletin.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=%2F20130106%2FNEWS0107%2F301060351%2F1051&nav_category=NEWS0107

Medicine Horse Project – Colorado

[http:// www.medicinehorse.org/vets.html](http://www.medicinehorse.org/vets.html)

TRULY HUMANE CHEMICAL EUTHANASIA

HSUS Humane Horse Remains Disposal - by State

[http:// www.humanesociety.org/animals/horses/facts/humane_horse_remains_disposal.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/horses/facts/humane_horse_remains_disposal.html)

Veterinarians for Equine Welfare List

[http:// www.vetsforequinewelfare.org/veterinary-medical-schools.php](http://www.vetsforequinewelfare.org/veterinary-medical-schools.php)

New Mexico Equine Protection Fund – Voucher System

[http:// www.equineprotectionfund.org/](http://www.equineprotectionfund.org/)

Horse Plus Humane Society – California - \$150 for Euthanasia and Disposal for Hardship Cases

[http:// www.horsehumane.org/eclinic.htm](http://www.horsehumane.org/eclinic.htm)

DISPOSAL SERVICES

HSUS Humane Horse Remains Disposal - by State

[http:// www.humanesociety.org/animals/horses/facts/humane_horse_remains_disposal.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/horses/facts/humane_horse_remains_disposal.html)

Veterinarians for Equine Welfare List

[http:// www.vetsforequinewelfare.org/veterinary-medical-schools.php](http://www.vetsforequinewelfare.org/veterinary-medical-schools.php)

New Mexico Equine Protection Fund – Voucher System

[http:// www.equineprotectionfund.org/](http://www.equineprotectionfund.org/)

DISPOSAL - RENDERING

National Renderers Association Members

<http://>

cdn.harmonyapp.com/assets/5102c58a7a5072026f0005d0/NRA2012Directory_1_25_13.pdf

08.21.2013 at 03:40

Elaine Brown

Ms. Doland, don't know who taught you how to ride but it is not a great idea to jump on a horse you are not acquainted with and then to jump back on after being thrown. I doubt that the horse intended to kill you either. Nearly all horses have a reason for their behavior. In your case Adonis probably smelled fear and your dislike.

So you were off to a bad start with me, but as I read on I realized you wrote an article that should at the least have been titled an op ed as it was definitely a lop-sided opinion piece. Having read down through the comments, the commenters have pretty much covered what I have to say so I will thank Linda Horn for her absolutely fabulous list and for those who pointed out that you disguised your personal feelings very poorly. You never once took the point of view of those of us who love horses or of the horse.

Therefore I would like to remind you that slaughter is slaughter, Ms. Doland - brutal, cruel, violent and particularly vicious and never humane if the animal slaughtered is the highly spirited, flight oriented, easily frightened prey animal which is a horse.

I would like to point out to you that the drought is over.

I would like to instruct you that if there are pockets of excess horses and there are not many, but where they do exist its because of man not horse. Mismanagement and over breeding has brought on the excesses and there are many solutions. The first is to take back the control of our corrupted government agencies. The second is to quell the influence of people like you for you are a Horse Hater, Ms. Doland.

08.21.2013 at 02:45

Cindy

"Many horses sold at private auctions today will end up being processed on the other side of the border. In essence, the Roswell plant would just be a quicker, easier trip. "

This infuriating statement is written solely from a human's perspective and convenience, and does not in any way reflect the animal's view. But then again, in our society, we don't give a rat's ass to the animal's view, do we? It's a heartbreaking situation.

08.21.2013 at 02:52

Cindy

AND BRAVO to Susan Hemmerle!

They call here and they're very upset [to hear we don't accept horses from owners]. They say, 'I can't sell them! I'll have to take them to the sale barn and to slaughter!' And I say, well, stop breeding," Hemmerle says. "Not that I wouldn't embrace another shelter," she adds, "but I don't think that's the answer to the problem."

08.21.2013 at 02:57

Marcie Newman-Perskin

This is a disgusting one sided article

Shame on you for thinking MURDERING A HORSE IS AN OPTION You dont love Horses they have the right to LIVE ~~Rideable ~Or Not !

WE AMERICANS BUILT THIS LAND W/ HORSES
I WILL FIGHT TILL MY DEATH FOR THEM !

DOGS , CATS .WOLVES , ELEPHANTS , TIGERS ~i GUESS YOU GET THE GIST
DISGUSTING AND BIASED ARTICLE

08.21.2013 at 03:14

Gail Clifton

"He agonized over the options—Nick believed Adonis was “a genuine liability,” but he didn’t have the money or land to let him live out his days away from people and other animals. The thought of euthanizing him at a busy barn in town felt too practically and emotionally difficult."

This is another infuriating statement. Heaven forbid that a human have to deal with "practicality or emotional difficulty" of euthanizing their horse. Yes, MUCH better to load him onto a slaughter truck to head off to be butchered for wild cat food. Ahhh. Out of sight, out of mind. Heartless, irresponsible, lazy, unfeeling--and the ultimate betrayal. What a gift Nick could have given that horse---and the other humans at the stable-- by providing Adonis with a kind and humane end to his tortured life. THAT would have been the responsible, empathetic, humane thing to do. One of those "do unto others" kinds of moments....

Instead, I'm sure Nick got at least another 500 bucks out of his "dead horse walking." Follow the money, folks. That's what the proslaughter people are all about. It is NOT about the welfare of the horse. Horse slaughter is NOT humane.

08.21.2013 at 03:25

Cindy

Right on Gail Clifton!! undeniably the truth!

08.21.2013 at 03:06

Linda Horn

I noticed this is filed as a News Story. Sorry, but having worked for news organization, my editors would have considered it a Guest Column. Ms.Doland prejudiced readers by spending the first third of the article chronicling a bad personal experience with ONE horse. Journalism at its WORST!!!

08.21.2013 at 03:08

Lynn

If you can't care for or sell your horse then call the vet to put him down and call the renderer if you can't bury him. Why send him on an abusive trip where his last moments are spent in terror? Do right by your horse and stay near him when he crosses the bridge in your loving arms. His last moments spent in quiet and calm forever.

08.21.2013 at 04:01

Ted PeepLove Wells

I find it disturbing that the writer starts out this piece with a very biased anecdote that predisposes the naive reader to entertain the notion that slaughter is a viable option. Those who know horses, of course, would realize that there are so many holes in this story, that the tendency would be to dismiss it as worthless. But the author does much damage in this poorly presented piece.

1. If a horse has issues such as the what was described, the appropriate course of action is to assess the animal for pain. Let's say the author had kissing spines, I'm sure she would buckle under the weight of a heavy backpack with someone forcing her to jump over obstacles.
2. If in fact the horse was shown to be free of physical issues by a competent vet, and it was ascertained by competent and qualified individuals that there was a significant behavioral issue, it should have been appropriately addressed by those with the skills to do so.
3. If this was not successful, then yes, humane euthanasia IS the best option.

Not butchering. Please know the following indisputable facts: equine slaughter facilities are an ecological and economic disaster to the surrounding communities (www.kaufmanzoning.net is but one example) and slaughter is not humane euthanasia. As practiced in the US, in Canada, in Mexico - anywhere - it is horrifically cruel and barbaric.

08.21.2013 at 05:19

Diane McEvoy

I had to read the paragraph a couple of times as my first impression was that the horse was going to be butchered by the cats, which was not true, I hope. Having the horse slaughtered and fed to the cats was something this guy could live with. Likely, not a humane death but a death just the same. The only humane death is euthanasia. The cost to put a horse down is about the as it would be for a Great Dane. Disposal costs vary. If you can't afford a horse, you shouldn't have one. I weep for the woman who was bemoaning the fact that hay prices have risen. She makes what, \$8.50 an hour? How could afford a horse in the first place? If the Safe Act passes there will be no more slaughter, not in Mexico or Canada or in the good old USA. No interstate transport of equines or equine parts for human consumption. Laws must be put in place to prohibit the "dumping" of --I hate this term -- unwanted horses. There are quite a number of analogies to dogs in this article. Puppy mills = overbreeding. Overbreeding is a real problem from the backyard breeder to thoroughbred breeding, quarter horses, etc. Limit it. The Jockey Club said numbers were down, good. Good for the nurse mares as well. Dogs are put down in kill shelters, they are not "slaughtered." Times get tough and what's the first thing to go: the animal. What

happened to the concept that we are responsible for our animals, responsible to care for them, and if we unable to do that we seek alternatives. If none are available, the taking of their lives is the absolute last resort and must be a good death, not a horrific one.
Just going to have to live with the typos that I am only seeing now!

08.21.2013 at 08:42

Cynthia Marsh

I agree with the many commenters on this "piece". It is a poorly written testament to a poorly played out disaster. My first thought was what a heartless man to put down Adonis before even trying to figure out what was causing his so called "wild" behavior? Pain is likely the source for the behavior and it is egocentric to believe the horse tried to "kill" you... They simply don't think that way, in my experience. And heaven forbid his "owner" endure the awkwardness of having him humanely euthanized in a busy barn? Really? So Adonis was giving back to the human until the end of his tortured life, even taking on the burden of his own death to ease the discomfort of his "owner". A real owner loves his animals, works tirelessly to ensure they are happy and comfortable, both physically and mentally. I have FOUR rescue horses and each one is amazing in their own way. Some are slower learners than the others and some have emotional baggage, likely from people like "Adonis"' owner that needs to be overcome. Differences are, I understand this and care enough to allow the time it will take to accomplish this. I am in no rush... I am willing to allow the time necessary for them to bond to me. THAT makes me a responsible owner. WHEN the times come that they need to cross the Rainbow Bridge, I will be there until their last breath. That is my responsibility and I will gladly do for them as they will inevitably do for me. Your "article" is a travesty on so many levels. Train wreck.

08.21.2013 at 11:22

Equine_Right_To_A_Quality_Life

Irresponsible breeding practices and using Canada as a horse slaughter dumping ground is the biggest reason for USA's "horse population surplus". If there was no slaughter, a lot of people would have to pull back the reins on the insane number of horses that are bred, used, abused, and discarded on trucks to Canada for a horrific, nightmare called "Death By Torture in Canada's horse slaughter houses www.EquineRight.com . Respect for horses is where it all begins and lack thereof is where the nightmare that these tragic short-lived lives of such magnificent and service-oriented horses must now endure.

08.22.2013 at 08:07

criticofone

When a horse bucks people off it is many times due to a back problem causing the horse pain. An equine chiropractor can quickly assess if that is the problem before resorting to killing the horse for bucking.

08.23.2013 at 06:21

Jguttman

Any good reporter would know there's no over- abundance of horses, just an abundance of breeders and eager to kill mayhem. Shall we kill every dog,cat and unwanted child? Every time I c someone write "an over population" I know they haven't checked their facts and their lazy reporting will conclude some pro slaughter rhetoric. Ugh

08.23.2013 at 06:31

Jguttman

Every time I read "an over-abundance of horses" I know I'm about to read pro slaughter, ignorant un reporting. There is no over abundance of horses. There is however short-sited uneducated rhetoric. Shall we skin alive unwanted cats, dogs and children?

08.23.2013 at 10:57

savethehorses

The solution is to NOT over breed domestic horses and if you can't feed your horses, ask for help, rehome and don't get any more horses. That's the solution. Stop breeding so many domestic horses and using that as an excuse for horse slaughter. Please.