

OWN RESPONSIBLY

WORKING TOGETHER TO
HELP **AMERICA'S HORSES**
AT RISK OR IN TRANSITION.



An informational booklet for current and potential
horse owners from the United Horse Coalition.



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INTRODUCTION:



There are two things that often come to mind when thinking of horse ownership: how incredibly rewarding it can be, and how overwhelming the responsibility of owning a horse can be at times.

The meaning of the first is immediately apparent: Every horse owner quickly understands how rewarding it is to be part of a horse's life, whether that life is showing, driving, racing, or of providing simple pleasure.

Raising our horses, training our horses, and being there when they excel at their particular discipline is both satisfying and extraordinary, and you soon come to understand what Winston Churchill meant when he said,

"There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man."

Our horses become a catalyst for personal accomplishment, the center of family activity, and a means to further social interaction among those who own horses.

But the rewards come with a responsibility — caring for the life of an animal who will come to rely upon us for food, shelter, healthcare, education, and emotional interaction. Horse owners also quickly begin to understand the complexities of such a "life bargain," and accept it without reservation.

There are times, however, when the bond between horse and owner must be broken: There are changes in our personal lives, changes in the health of the horse, and other such circumstances that dictate the necessity to move on from that connection with our horses.

In this booklet we discuss just such situations, and how you as a horse owner can **responsibly** bring your ownership of a horse to a positive end. It's something that new or long-time horse owners don't like to think about, but preparing for the day when a horse may become considered "at risk" or in transition, has to be considered as a fundamental aspect of horse ownership from the very first day we decide to own a horse.

We all must learn to "Own Responsibly." That means that before you buy or breed a horse, you think about how your actions affect the future prospects for that horse. Your responsibility to your horse begins before your stewardship and extends past your care.

Fortunately, there are many options, and the **United Horse Coalition** is there to help you find them.

WHO WE ARE: THE UNITED HORSE COALITION

The **United Horse Coalition** is a broad alliance of equine organizations that have joined together under the **American Horse Council (AHC)** to educate the equine industry about the issue of horses that are at risk, or in transition.

The UHC is an educational alliance that seeks to provide information for current and prospective owners, breeders, sellers, and horse organizations, regarding the long-term responsibilities of owning and caring for horses, as well as focusing on opportunities available for these horses. UHC also provides information regarding end of life decisions, including veterinary care, euthanasia, and disposal options.

The United Horse Coalition works closely with industry leaders and equine organizations to stay up-to-date on current issues and initiatives.

OUR MISSION:

THROUGH INDUSTRY COLLABORATION,
THE UNITED HORSE COALITION PROMOTES
EDUCATION AND OPTIONS FOR HORSES
AT-RISK OR IN TRANSITION.

UNITED HORSE COALITION IS COMMITTED TO HELPING HORSES AT-RISK OR IN TRANSITION BY:

- **Educating** current and prospective horse owners on how to **own responsibly**; including proper care, breeding, and options available to owners before a horse becomes unwanted
- **Raising awareness** of the issue of unwanted horses and its consequences to horses and the horse industry
- **Reducing the number of unwanted horses** and working towards eliminating the problem
- **Ensuring that horses are treated humanely and with dignity throughout their lives**
- **Facilitating the exchange of information** on adoption, care, and alternative careers available
- **Providing information** on end-of-life decisions, including veterinary decisions, euthanasia, and disposal
- **Explaining the issue** through presentations at industry gatherings, such as symposiums, expo's, conferences, summits, and fairs.

UHC RESOURCE DATABASE:

RESOURCES FOR CURRENT OWNERS:

- Facilities that accept horses
- Questions to ask before surrendering/retiring a horse.
- Feed and Hay Safety Net Programs
- Castration programs and clinics
- Funding for Veterinary Care
- Euthanasia programs and clinics
- Information on helping owners in end of life decisions
- Racing aftercare, placement, and training.
- Other programs

RESOURCES FOR RESCUES/SANCTUARIES:

- Guidelines for Rescues
- Accreditation
- Matching programs for Horses and Prospective Adopters
- Non Profit Management/Fundraising
- Equine Welfare Grants
- USTA financial assistance

RESOURCES FOR PROSPECTIVE OWNERS:

- Owning responsibly
- Finding "The Right Horse"
- Basic Horse Care and Costs
- Alternatives to buying a horse
- Is horse ownership right for me?
- and other important information

www.unitedhorsecoalition.com



IS HORSE OWNERSHIP RIGHT FOR ME?

Did You Know? There is an estimated 2 million horse owners in the United States and a total of 7.1 million Americans are involved in the industry as owners, service providers, employees and volunteers. (American Horse Council 2017 Economic Impact Study.)

You might be questioning - is horse ownership right for me? Here are some topics to consider before purchasing or adopting an Equine.

Why do I want to own a horse?

There is no right answer, but understanding your true motivations for owning a horse will help you determine if there might be better options available. Do you want a horse for recreation or showing? Do you want one because your friends have one or because you've dreamed of owning a horse as a kid? Are you trying to earn money by breeding or racing? Do you want to save a horse in need? Should you consider leasing, lessons, 4H, fostering, or volunteering first?

How long do I plan to own my horse?

Many horses live for 20 years and some live more than 30. If you cannot make a 20-year commitment to a horse, you should know all the options and have a plan in place should you no longer be able to take care for your horse.

Will I need to relocate for any reason?

Moving with a dog or cat usually isn't too difficult, but moving an animal that weighs 1,000 pounds can be. If your lifestyle requires multiple relocations, be prepared for the expense and logistics of moving a horse.



Is the horse for my child?

If yes, what will I do with the horse when my child leaves home? What will happen if my child outgrows the horse? Consider what will happen to the horse when your child leaves for college or moves out of the house. Will the horse be left at home? Will there be someone to take care of it? If your child is close to an age that he or she may leave home soon or his or her interests might change, leasing is a good option.

Do I have the knowledge and skills needed to care for all the horse's needs?

Despite the countless books, magazines, and websites available with tips and ideas for managing your horse, there is a set of knowledge and skills that you must have to care for a horse on your own property. In fact, many rescues and breeders will require that first-time horse owners board the horse at a site with knowledgeable staff. Seeking professional help from your veterinarian, farrier, and trainer is always in the best interest of the horse.

What will I do if the horse becomes sick or injured?

Illness and injury are more common with horses than most people realize. Some illnesses and injuries can be remedied with simple steps, and some can be career or life-ending. Few owners are equipped to handle a sick or injured horse on their own, and the best course of action is to contact your veterinarian. Be prepared to provide sometimes lengthy follow-up treatments or pay a knowledgeable horse person (e.g. barn manager) to help you. It is also important to have money set aside in the event of a medical emergency as veterinary emergencies can be costly depending on the situation.

Do I understand all the costs associated with Horse Ownership?

See "What is the Cost of Horse Ownership?" in this booklet to learn about the common and hidden costs of ownership. You'll be better prepared to make an educated decision.

THE TRUE COST OF HORSE OWNERSHIP:

The initial cost of purchasing or adopting a horse is only a small portion of what goes into the financial responsibility of Horse Ownership.

Results of a horse ownership survey through the University of Maine found that the average annual cost of owning 1 horse is \$3,876, while the median cost is \$2,419. Meaning that the monthly expense of owning a horse is approximately \$200-\$354. This number does not include the cost of boarding at a facility if the horse cannot be kept on your property.

Feed Costs:	Quantity:	Units:	Cost Per Unit:	Median Cost:	Total:
Hay or Hay Pellets	7300 Lbs.	146 Bales	\$4-\$18	\$8	\$1168.00
Grain or Pellets	700 Lbs.	14 Bags	\$4-\$16	\$10	\$140.00
Minerals and Salts	30 Lbs.	4lb. Block	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$20.00

Maintenance:	Quantity:	Units:	Cost Per Unit:	Median Cost:	Total:
Bedding	15 Yds.	Bulk	Less expensive in bulk	\$142.50	\$142.50
Farrier Service	8.6 times/yr.	-	\$ 45 to \$100+	\$75	\$645.00
Worming	4 times/yr.	-	\$5 to \$15	\$12.00	\$48.00
Vaccines (minimum)	2 times/yr.	-	Varies	\$15.00	\$30.00
Vet and Medicine	Varies	-	Varies	Varies	\$375.00
Horse Care Products	Varies	-	Varies	Varies	\$100.00
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	\$50.00
Private Riding and /or Horsemanship Lessons	2 times/mo	-	\$30 to \$75 per lesson	\$40.00	\$960.00
Books/Magazines/Info	-	-	-	-	\$50.00

Boarding Costs:	Quantity:	Price Range:	Average Cost:	Total:
Board	12mos.	\$150-1,200	\$700.00	\$8,400

(The above information was taken in part from www.horsedirectory.com.)



CARING FOR YOUR HORSE: NUTRITION

Owning a horse is a privilege that carries with it many responsibilities on the part of the owner. Today's domesticated horse depends upon its owner to provide all of its basic needs for survival and good health. No matter what sort of environment a horse will occupy, a horse will require varying degrees of attention from the owner or someone else knowledgeable about proper horse care. The enjoyment of horse ownership depends heavily on the horse's health and well-being. In return for the privilege of

horse ownership and the enjoyment that brings, the prospective horse owner must not only make a substantial commitment of time to care for their horse, but they must also be prepared to make a substantial financial commitment to provide for the needs of the horse.



NUTRITION

Proper nutrition is an everyday consideration of horse management and is essential to every horse engaged in any activity. The proper feeding of horses involves knowing the nutritional needs of the horse and providing for this need through the provision of suitable feedstuff. It is always a good idea to check with your veterinarian or an equine nutritionist if you have questions regarding the nutritional needs of your horse. Proper feeding of horses means attention to details. The horse's nutritional requirements are influenced by the following factors: size of the animal, the environment in which the horse is kept, the age of the horse, the type of use or activity, and individual metabolic needs and characteristics. It is important that horses be provided with feed regularly and that they have adequate access to clean, fresh water at all times.

Water is an essential nutrient that is necessary for horses to maintain normal bodily function. Horses are best given water free-choice or they should be able to drink their fill at least twice a day. Most horses will drink 5 to 10 gallons of water per day with factors such as hot weather, exercise, and lactation causing a significant increase in water consumption. When horses are given inadequate access to water, they become dehydrated and become more susceptible to a variety of health problems, such as weight loss, colic, and kidney disease.

Since the horse is a grazing animal, the basis for all horse diets should be hay or pasture. Good-quality forage alone can meet the maintenance requirements for most horses. In many cases, horses will not only maintain weight, but can make slow body weight gains when fed an all-forage diet. Horses should be fed free-choice hay or pasture; if this is not possible they should receive at least 1 to 1.5 percent of their body weight in forage per day, which is 10 to 15 pounds of hay or pasture grass per day for a 1,000-pound horse.

Physical activity will, of course, increase the nutrient requirements of the horse and may necessitate the addition of concentrate to a basic forage/roughage feeding program. A variety of grains are utilized for the concentrate portion of the diet. The most common grains are oats, corn, and barley. The mixed grain diets are readily available from feed and farm supply stores and should be fed according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

CARING FOR YOUR HORSE: SHELTER

As a general rule, the amount of concentrate should not exceed 30 percent of the total amount of feed being fed and it should be divided into at least two feedings per day. The grain is used to supplement forage to provide the energy and other nutrients needed for faster weight gains, growth, increased milk production, and high levels of athletic activity.

If your horse is not on grain, or if the grain you feed does not include trace minerals, you may want to provide your horse with a trace mineral block or salt lick.

It is interesting to note that horses can not vomit or regurgitate food, so if they overeat or eat something poisonous, vomiting is not an option. They also do not have a gall bladder which makes high fat diets hard to digest or utilize. If possible, horses should be allowed to graze ideally up to 16 hours a day.



SHELTER

Horses can adapt to a wide variety of environmental extremes if they are acclimated and have adequate feed and water. Horses with free access to shelter will often choose not to use it when it seems logical they would do so. Acceptable shelter may be natural, such as trees or rock formations, or constructed, such as sheds or barns. Horses do benefit from shelter, especially if it serves as a sunshade and windbreak.

The shelter should be of adequate size for the number of horses using it to avoid fighting and injury among the animals. Individual stalls in a barn should be large enough for the horse to turn around in and lay down in. A 12-foot by 12-foot stall is large enough for all but the largest horse. The shelter should be tall enough for the horse to be able to stand with its head held in a normal position without its ears touching the ceiling. The shelter should be adequately ventilated to help prevent respiratory tract irritation and should be free of hazards that might cause injury. Finally, it should have good footing/traction and be well-drained.

Horses should be given the opportunity for daily exercise. If the horse is kept in a stall or small paddock, it should be exercised daily, weather permitting, either by being ridden or by being turned out in a large paddock, arena, or pasture. If horses normally live in large paddocks or pasture, they will generally receive adequate exercise on their own.

Horse owners should use whatever fencing is adequate and safe to secure the type of horse they own. (i.e. Stallion vs mare, vs, gelding, vs foal, vs, mini horse.) This can vary in types from wood, to electric. Wire fencing is a poor choice, unless specifically designed for horses in order to prevent a horse from kicking a foot through, or sticking its head between and becoming entangled.

CARING FOR YOUR HORSE: WINTER WEATHER

COLD WEATHER TIPS:

First and foremost, it is important to increase the amount of hay (free choice) in a horse's diet. Hay allows for an increase in hind gut fermentation, thereby allowing for an increase in their overall body temperature through the production of energy. It is the single most important tip to keep your horse warm when the temperature drops. The physical aspect of eating and moving will keep them far more comfortable than any blankets we could offer!

Secondly, horses and livestock must have access to water at all times. This is most easily done through the use of a water heater to ensure access to fresh water 24 hours a day. If use of a water heater is not feasible, then access to water must be allowed either by offering water to the animal throughout the day, or a running stream. It is imperative that you not assume a horse knows how to break through the ice of a bucket.

Should you blanket your horse? That is a question to be treated on an individual basis. Below are some examples of situations in which it might be preferable to blanket your horse.

- your horse is visibly uncomfortable or shivering in the cold weather
- your horse is older, weak, ill or recovering from an illness
- your horse is very young
- your horse is clipped
- your horse is being shown or ridden consistently
- your horse does not have a sufficient winter coat
- your horse was from a warmer climate and is now in a cooler climate



Blanketing however does not come without a price. Once a decision is made to blanket your horse, you must continue it throughout the season. It is important to monitor a blanketed horse closely. If the horse becomes too warm beneath the blanket, it can cause sweating, and if not caught, the horse can become chilled. Blanketing a horse also modifies their own protection from the elements – their winter coat. It is also important that the blanket be removed periodically to ensure the horse has a proper body condition. Too often people do not realize a horse has become skinny beneath a winter blanket. If the tips above are adhered to, a blanket can become an appropriate alternative to their natural winter coats.

For those horses that are of good weight, and have grown in a good thick winter coat, not blanketing is and can be the healthiest option. Whether or not you choose to blanket, horses and livestock need access to shelter from the elements.

Appropriate shelter must be provided at all times. This allows a horse to have shelter from the elements, and wind chills. Appropriate shelter can be something as simple as a three sided shed, to a stall, to in and out situations. Please note, you must have enough shelter to allow each horse access without being chased off or in jeopardy of being kicked or bitten. The horse is the best monitor of their comfort level, and will use their shelter when needed. The more they are able to move around, the better they are able to generate heat.

In the end, it is the horse that is the best judge of its happiness and comfort. It is up to us to listen to those cues and ensure we do what is best for each individual, blanket or not.

CARING FOR YOUR HORSE: HEALTHCARE/LIFESPAN

HEALTHCARE:

Horse owners should engage the services of both a licensed veterinarian with experience in caring for horses and a farrier. Horses, like all animals, need regular, preventive health care as well as veterinary care for health problems as they arise. Horses should be observed by the owner or those caring for the horse at least once a day or more often during high-risk periods such as seasonal changes, introduction of new animals, or near foaling time. All horses should have a preventive health care program designed to meet the specific needs of the horse and appropriate to the facilities and environment.

Increased horse population density requires greater attention to disease prevention. The types of vaccinations, deworming program, and type of dental care should be determined by the veterinarian in charge of the horse's health care. Vaccinations are administered at least annually and often more frequently depending on the risk of exposure to infectious diseases. Horses are exposed to parasites in their environment on a regular basis, so deworming protocols will involve year-round administration of anthelmintics as determined by the veterinarian, as well as manure and pasture management to help reduce the level of exposure. Horse's teeth and oral cavity should be examined at least annually. Dental abnormalities should not be neglected as they will interfere with normal eating habits and adversely affect the overall health of the horse. Dental care should be performed by a licensed veterinarian or under veterinary supervision.

All horses require routine hoof care. This may range from simply trimming the hooves to complex corrective shoeing procedures. All horses require some type of hoof care at least every two to three months throughout the year, and more frequently if they are shod, in order to maintain the health of the foot. The frequency of required hoof care will depend on such factors as age, season, nutrition, environment, management, and injury. A farrier will normally be employed to do this work and is the one to advise what the needs may be.

LIFESPAN

It is not uncommon these days to hear of a spry 40-year-old pony, and we too hope our own will live to such an extent. Whether or not a horse will have the capability and chance to live this long depends on many factors - genetics, a good home, veterinary care, and a bit of good luck.

We generally find that horses begin to show signs of aging in their mid-teens. If they were living in the wild, disease, poor dentition, predators, and other mishaps would probably lead to a natural life span of 12 to 18 years. If we assume that a horse does not suffer a catastrophic event, such as colic or fractured bones, it is reasonable to expect that a horse will live into his 20s, and many will reach their 30s. Most horsemen consider a horse as old or aged when they reach 20 years of age. According to some references, the oldest horse lived to be nearly 50 years of age. Good dental and other veterinary care, good nutrition, and regular exercise will help a horse to live as long and as healthy a life as possible.





RESPONSIBLE BREEDING:

Own Responsibly— Consider Gelding and Spaying your horse.

In today's world, in which far too many horses become at-risk each year, gelding, spaying, and hormone therapy is the responsible choice for many horses. By considering these practices, breeders and owners are “owning responsibly,” and helping to significantly reduce the number of at-risk horses in America.

Although chances are low that horses in a controlled environment will find a way to breed, gelding and spaying horses of minimal breeding quality will also prevent future owners, who may not exercise responsible control, from breeding those horses. The long life expectancy and the frequency with which horses change hands over a lifetime should make this a primary concern of every responsible horse owner.



GELDING

In gelding a horse, the veterinarian removes the testicles which produce the hormone testosterone. This is the hormone that is responsible for sperm production as well as aggressive, sometimes dangerous, behavior including fighting and mounting. Left intact, a mature stallion may become progressively more difficult to manage and train as he becomes older.

In most cases geldings are preferred over stallions for pleasure riding and for competition because they are typically calmer, easier to handle, and more tractable. It is for these reasons that a gelding is also more likely to be adopted out of a care facility.

Gelding a horse that is not an attractive commercial breeding prospect may ensure their viability in an alternate career. A stallion or colt with no commercial use as a breeding animal is an unattractive proposition for a new owner for several reasons:

- The owner faces the costs of a gelding surgery in addition to other expenses required to prepare a horse for a new career
- Stallions require specialized housing, fencing, and turnout
- Farm owners and individual horse owners have considerable legal exposure for the actions of their animals

Many prospective buyers are not equipped to house or manage a stallion and therefore may overlook an otherwise suitable horse.

SPAYING

Ovariectomy, or “spaying,” is a surgical procedure in which a veterinarian removes a mare's ovaries, rendering her incapable of reproduction. Because of the costs and risks associated with abdominal surgery, spaying is far less common than gelding and is usually reserved for medical reasons, such as ovarian tumors.

While spaying is one way to prevent pregnancy in a mare, it is also an option when, in extreme cases, behaviors associated with estrus make a mare unmanageable, unridable, or dangerous. These may include irritability, aggression, biting, kicking, persistent vocalization, back soreness, and lack of focus. Like gelding, spaying can create future career options that might have been limited by hormone-related behavior.

In less severe cases, hormone therapy may be enough to eliminate or greatly reduce undesirable behaviors. These include synthetic hormone treatments, injectable progesterone, progesterone implants, and intra-uterine devices. While various forms of hormone therapies will keep a mare out of heat, they do not completely stop her from cycling and are not, therefore, guaranteed to prevent pregnancy.

RESPONSIBLE BREEDING:

RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP BEGINS WITH RESPONSIBLE BREEDING.

There are many things to consider before breeding a mare, and horse owners should invest a significant amount of time weighing the pros and cons of such a decision. There are both good and bad reasons to breed, and owners must honestly analyze how realistic bringing a new foal into the world is for their individual situation.

Responsible breeders carefully consider multiple factors when selecting horses for breeding. These include health, soundness, conformation, athletic ability or performance history, disposition, and pedigree. Not all horses should be bred.

The costs associated with breeding are numerous. The stud fee, which can range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars, is only part of the overall picture. Many of the costs associated with breeding are incurred beforehand.

Owners should pay particular attention to obtaining proper medical care for their mare. A veterinarian should conduct a thorough exam of the mare to ensure that she is physically healthy enough to possibly withstand the stress of pregnancy and motherhood. Even during an uneventful and otherwise "normal" pregnancy, the mare requires regular check ups in addition to her regular vaccination and deworming schedule.

Her feed and water intake levels will also increase over the course of the pregnancy, so owners should be prepared to absorb the increased cost of feeding and/or increased cost of boarding. In addition to the veterinary costs for the mare, many newborn foals will require specialized medical care during the first few weeks of life that may also be costly.

Owners should truthfully examine exactly why they want to breed their horse. It can be very difficult to make a profit on the sale of a foal, as the initial investment in breeding and raising it often outweighs what the animal will be worth to others. And owners should consider what they will do with an offspring if they are unable to sell it, including the training involved to be able to increase it's chances of marketability in the future. Owners may even want to consider microchipping options in an effort to create a safety net for that horse in the future.





FINDING THE RIGHT HORSE:

"A lovely horse is always an experience.... It is an emotional experience of the kind that is spoiled by words." ~Beryl Markham

Buying a horse or pony is a big decision. It can be a culmination of a life dream for some, and also one of the most costly purchases that you will make in your lifetime. For the latter reason alone, it is important to approach finding your new horse with plenty of forethought.

We encourage you to read through "Is Horse Ownership Right For Me?" in the UHC Materials. If after understanding all that is involved with owning a horse responsibly sounds like a feasible option for you, it's time to move onto the next step - making sure to find the right horse.

We strongly discourage people from purchasing or adopting a horse just because it sounds like "a good deal." If the horse doesn't match your needs in several key ways, he won't make you happy - even if you get him for free. It is very important that the horse's temperament and training match your goals and skills as an owner.

Below are some key criteria to consider when picking out the "perfect" horse:

- **Is the horse a match for your riding ability?** The horse's temperament and training must match your own experience and ability level as not only a rider, but a handler as well. Unsure as to what your ability level may be? Take a few lessons with a reputable trainer, then ask him or her to recommend a type of horse that would work best for you; this trainer may even be able to help you find that "perfect" horse!
- **Does the horse suit your needs or riding goals?** Ask yourself- do you want to take nice relaxing trail rides? Be competitive in the show ring? Both of these warrant a horse with different backgrounds and experiences.
- **Does the horse require more exercise than you can provide?** Say, for example, you go look at that 17hh Thoroughbred, who has been in a program where he gets ridden 6 days a week, and is as quiet and well behaved as can be. So you buy him and bring him home, and only end up being able to ride him twice a week, so he becomes a bit "wild" and un-rideable. Always be sure to ask what type of program or riding schedule the horse requires.
- **Have you decided on a set budget?** Of course, money can be the deciding factor when purchasing a horse. In fact, sometimes the "better deal" horse can be a bigger financial burden because of health or soundness issues that were the reason for the lower price to begin with. It's always important to keep in mind that the up-keep of a horse is what can be most costly and be the "downfall" of horse ownership. Having a horse is a rewarding experience, just be sure you have the budget to support its needs!
- **Do you have a trainer picked out?** A trainer can give you their professional opinion a horse's suitability for you. Additionally, it's almost always a good idea to have a veterinarian picked out and available to come do a pre-purchase exam on a horse. Pre-purchase exams can help you find out whether or not the horse has any underlying health or soundness issues that could be a problem immediately or down the road. Keep in mind that every horse will have some negatives, but the key is to talk to your vet about what you can and cannot live with based on your intended use for the horse.



FINDING THE RIGHT HORSE:

So where can I find my prospective horse?

- Equine Rescues
- Internet Searches
- Classified ads in newspapers
- Notices on feed/tack store bulletin boards
- Horse Shows
- Local Barns
- Auctions

This list is certainly not all-inclusive, but if you are seriously searching for a horse, you should be able to come up with a good selection of prospects from one or more reputable sources.

The explosion of the internet has certainly made a difference in the ability for information to be made available almost instantly. Websites such as My Right Horse, A Home For Every Horse, Equine.com, and Retired Racehorse Project that are backed by reputable organizations are the best place to start when searching for a horse online. It is **strongly** discouraged to purchase a horse sight unseen or online without first meeting the horse and ensuring the horse is a good match both in training level and personality for you as an owner.

You can also purchase a horse locally through your trainer or riding facility - your trainer may know of a horse who would make a great match for your skill level and training.

Some individuals may choose to purchase a horse through auction. Keep in mind that purchasing a horse at an auction can be risky as you may not be able to find out the background or health status of the horse. Auctions can be better suited to the more experienced horseperson who will be able to spot any potential issues with the horses' health, temperament, and training. You will also want to quarantine a horse from auction with a verified quarantine facility.

Buying a horse is a major decision, do not make it quickly or on an impulse. Once you have found your horse though, enjoy! After all, isn't the saying "Horses can be cheaper than therapy"? Have fun with your new horse, knowing that you have done all you can to make an informed decision.





ESTATE PLANNING FOR YOUR HORSE:

The following information is intended to be a general guide for estate planning as it applies to your horses. The UHC recommends contacting a knowledgeable attorney to guide you through the details of estate planning involving your equine.

While it's common for people to regularly think about what they need to do to establish their will and ensure that their property and belongings are taken care of in the event of their death, it's not common that their horses are included in this process.

Without a will, your horse could become the property of your heirs, and these family members may have no interest, or even the required knowledge, to inherit and care for your horse.

Some owners might just elect to have their horse sold at either a private sale or a dispersal sale at an auction. However, some owners may also be wary of this as once a horse leaves an auction, its fate can sometimes be unknown and the horse may end up in the wrong hands. Additionally, horses that are retired or have special needs might be more difficult to sell or place in a good new home.

How do I protect my horses if they outlive me?

One of the first things to consider when estate planning is **"Who"**: Who do you know among your equine contacts, friends, or family that has the knowledge, and most importantly, the desire to care for your horse after your death? Will this person not only be able to care for the horse, but will he or she also be able to successfully sell or rehome him?

Another consideration is **"How"**: How does this person you have identified take ownership of your horse? Here there are two options: Naming the horse in a will; or creating a trust for the horse.

Naming the Horse in a Will

A will is a legal document that allows you to leave property to certain individuals and organizations. Many owners will take the simplest option and state in their will that the horse must be given to this specific person. Some owners even leave a bequest of a specific amount of cash or property (if the horse is stabled on the owners property) to help cover the costs that will be associated with the care of the horse. However, it is also important to note that a will does not automatically give your estate away the minute you die. It must go through probate, which means it is filed with the court and becomes a public document that can be seen by anyone who looks up the file. Probate can take anywhere from 9 months to several years, depending on the complexity of the estate and whether challenges arise from family members to the will. A will may also require the payment of estate taxes. In conclusion, if you haven't made other plans for the probate period, your assets are not available to pay for horse's needs, such as board, feed, and farrier care, leaving your beneficiary on his or her own to incur the costs for caring for your horse.

Additional note: While probate assets are tied up during administration, the executor has a fiduciary responsibility to take care of estate assets which would include making sure that the horses that are part of the estate are cared for.



ESTATE PLANNING FOR YOUR HORSE:

Creating a Horse Trust

A trust is a written statement that allows you to leave your estate to certain individuals or organizations. In this case, it can also explain how the horse owner wishes his horse be cared for after his death. One advantage of a trust is that funds to care for your horse are available automatically since trusts do not go through the probate period that a will does. There are two types of trusts that are available to the horse owner: *testamentary* and *inter vivos*.

Testamentary trust: This type of trust is a trust document that is created when the horse owner passes away, as laid out in his/her Last Will and Testament. Because the establishment of a testamentary trust does not happen until death, it is by nature irrevocable.

A will may contain more than one testamentary trust, and may address all or any portion of the estate. There are typically four parties involved in a testamentary trust:

- The grantor, also referred to as the settlor. This is the individual who specifies that the trust be created, usually as a part of his or her will, but it also may be set up in during the person's lifetime.
- The trustee, whose duty is to carry out the terms of the will. He or she may be named in the will, or may be appointed by the probate court that handles the will;
- The beneficiary(s), who will receive the benefits of the trust;
- The probate court; although not a party to the trust itself, it oversees the trustee's handling of the trust.

Inter vivos trust: Also known as a living trust, this is a trust document created for the purpose of estate planning while the horse owner is still living. An inter vivos trust is drafted as either a revocable or irrevocable living trust, and it allows the individual for whom the document was established to access assets such as cash, investments and real estate property named in the title of the trust while he is still alive. Inter vivos trusts that are revocable have more flexibility than those that are deemed irrevocable, but both types of living trusts bypass the probate process once the trust owner passes away.

It is important to note that each type of trust has its own specific considerations and should be considered in connection with any type of estate plan.

Generally speaking, in the trust, the horse owner names a trustee that will carry out your desired wishes for your horse, as well as a back-up trustee should the primary trustee become incapacitated, unable to fulfill the requests in the trust, or dies. The trust also provides information and instructions on how the trust funds should be distributed for the horse's care. Typically, the trust will dictate how the funds in the trust are to be managed, and where any remaining assets should go if the horse should also pass away (it's also important to note that the trust terminates upon the death of the horse). The trust can contain information about anything from how the horse should be taken care of, any health issues it may have, feed/hay preferences, riding or turnout schedule, and more. The trustee will care for your horse in accordance with the guidelines set within the trust. Ideally, the individual named as trustee will either have a horse of his own, or have plenty of experience in caring for horses.

Is there a benefit of establishing a trust as opposed to simply putting the horse in my will?

When trying to decide whether to create a horse trust or put your horse in your will, it's important to consider both the pros and cons of each. However, if you intended to leave the person who will take care of your horse the necessary funds to ensure its proper care, a trust offers more structure and oversight.

Trust assets must be separated from the trustees' personal assets, and must be used for the horse's care as directed within the trust document. If money is given outright to the horse's new owner upon your death, it can potentially be used by that person however they choose; there is nothing that guarantees, or holds them to, using that money for the horse's care as intended.

A trust also allows for succession of the horse guardian. For example, if you leave your horse to someone as a bequest in your will, and that individual dies, that person's estate determines what happens to the horse. If the horse is left in a trust and the trustee becomes incapacitated or dies, the individual you name as a back-up trustee will take over and continue care of your horse.

ESTATE PLANNING FOR YOUR HORSE:

What about putting my horse in a retirement home?

Another vehicle that a horse owner may wish to consider when thinking about the horse's future is a retirement home. You will need to have funds set aside for board and care, and think about what happens should your horse outlive those available funds.

Can I donate my horse?

Depending on your horse's training and suitability, you may be able to donate your horse to a 501c3 program such as a therapeutic riding, or school program. Your donation of the horse (if accepted into a program, is considered a tax deduction for the fair value of the equine.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Registration Papers and Medical Records

In the case that your horse is registered with a breed registry, or any other registration based organization for that matter, it's important to ensure that all of the horse's registration papers are in order and included with the will or trust. This will not only be helpful to the trustee when dealing with what you have left behind, but will also be helpful in the case the horse is sold to a new owner. Additionally, ensuring that the horse's medical records are in order will be helpful for both the trustee and potential new owner in becoming knowledgeable about the horse's current and past health status and issues.

Your Belongings

We all know- horses come with a lot of "things!" So while you plan for your horse's future, you should also consider what to do with who will inherit your belongings. It's also important to know how much valuable items such as saddles, harnesses, or even farm maintenance equipment are worth- getting these potentially valuable items appraised will be helpful to your beneficiaries or trustees.

Your Land

It's become increasingly common that farmland is bought up by developers to build houses, shopping centers, strip malls, and more. If you own the land that your horse was on, you may want to ensure that your property doesn't end up being bought and turned into one of those shopping centers. One way to do this is with a conservation easement.

A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement that limits certain types of use, or prevents development on the land. Essentially, you can specify what you want your land to be used for in the future.

Conservation easements can be tricky as they can potentially decrease your property value, make your land more difficult to sell when the time does come, and limit future land use potential. However, some perks include income and estate tax benefits, along with agricultural land conservation.

The Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) is an excellent organization and resource for any questions you may have as it pertains to conservation easements and ensuring the security of your personal land.

Your Equine Business

If you own an equine business, you have the added challenge of determining who you want to leave in charge or what you want to happen to your business upon your death. The UHC suggests working with an attorney to help you determine and document the business's future.

ESTATE PLANNING FOR YOUR HORSE:

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, the UHC strongly suggests that you sit down with a knowledgeable attorney to help you figure out what is best for you and your horse's future. The time and effort to think through and plan a complex issue like this will assure that your equine family is taken care of after your death. In connection with the planning meeting with an attorney, it is very helpful if the horse owner were to prepare an inventory with specific information as to the equine assets owned. This would include the horse's name, costs, date of purchase, gender, and the estimated value of the horse. The more organized the information the horse owner can provide to the attorney, the less time (and expense) the attorney will need to spend on such preparation matter.

A special thank you to Peter Ecabert, General Counsel for the National H.B.P.A., on his assistance with this guide.

Disclaimer:

The UHC's Estate Planning Guide should not be construed as, or is intended to constitute, legal, financial, advisory, investment, legal, tax, accounting, regulatory, insurance, or other professional advice to you or any other party. Nothing mentioned in the Guide should be acted upon without first obtaining professional advice from a qualified professional with regards to your own objectives and needs.





OPTIONS FOR OWNERS WHO CAN NO LONGER KEEP THEIR HORSE:

For a variety of reasons, there comes a time in many horse owners' lives in which they are no longer able, physically, or financially to provide care for their horse. Sometimes the horse is very much wanted, but an owner's circumstances do not allow them to keep their beloved horse. It is important to note, that not all horses at-risk or in transition have suffered from neglect and abuse. Owners may become ill, or have a change in their financial capability to care for a horse. A rider may outgrow their horse both in size and skill, and in turn a horse may also be better suited for a career

change depending on age, temperament, and soundness. It is incredibly common for various reasons for a horse to change hands frequently throughout their life.

***If you find yourself in a situation, in which you want to keep your horse, but need temporary assistance until you can get back on your feet physically or financially, there are various safety net programs available to help. Please visit UHC Safety Net Programs and Resources Online for more information.**

Horse owners should feel a moral obligation to make sure their horse in transition ends up receiving proper care and treatment. Legally, as a seller, you must share anything important you know about the horse's behavior and physical condition. If the horse is healthy and of a reasonable age, it is always best to find a suitable new vocation, owner, or home, rather than have to euthanize the horse. On the other hand, if the horse is old and not in good health, or suffering, then the most humane decision may indeed be euthanasia – this is a decision between you and your veterinarian.

In most cases, there are 4 options available to owners: sale, donation/gift, surrendering to a rescue/sanctuary, or euthanasia. The options available to you may be based on the health, soundness, age, training level, and temperament of your horse. Some options have strict criteria for qualification; not every horse is suitable for every job. For more information visit our Resources for Owners section.

Private Sale

Selling your horse to another person enables you to meet and perhaps develop a relationship with the buyer. There are many ways to advertise your horse for sale, including classified ads in your local paper, horse magazines, websites, feed and tack stores, shows or rides in your area, or by directly contacting other horse owners and letting them know you're marketing your horse for sale. Prices and conditions vary by sale and by region, so be aware of standards in your area. Also, in a private sale, you might have the option of putting a buy-back agreement into the sale. So if the new owner decides to sell the horse, you'll have an opportunity to buy the horse back. Please remember to disclose any health problems, limitations or vices that your horse might have when selling him, this will help to ensure that your horse is well-matched in the new home, and lessen the chance your horse could be put into a situation where it becomes at-risk. You may also want to consider microchipping your horse so that you can be contacted and given the opportunity to purchase or receive them back should a situation arise that warrants it.

Auction:

Although Auction is another option for selling your horse, we do strongly encourage owners to pursue other available options first. Local sale barns or fairgrounds can provide you with auction dates. Additionally, some auctions are advertised in newspaper classifieds or at feed and tack stores, and on various websites. We do want to caution owners to be aware of the types of animals that are being sold at various auctions, and to do their due diligence. Almost all "horse auctions" involve the sale of horses to individuals who want to buy a horse for various purposes, such as racing, showing, stable horses or recreational riding. Many of these horses have "reserves" or minimum bids that must be paid for the sale to be completed. Indeed, at many the seller can speak to the auction company and set a price below which the horse would not be sold; it would be returned to the seller. Other sales do not have such minimums and the horse is sold regardless of the bid price. At livestock auctions, dealers are purchasing horses to take to facilities that will process the horses for meat to be shipped overseas for human consumption, and it is important that all owners be aware of this possibility when they send their horses to auction.

OPTIONS FOR OWNERS WHO CAN NO LONGER KEEP THEIR HORSE:

Leasing:

An increasingly popular form of horse "ownership" is leasing. Provided the horse is sound with a good disposition, many people are interested in owning horses that would prefer this try-before-you-buy option. It provides an opportunity for potential owners to see how a horse would fit into their lives. As leasing grows in popularity, so do the forms of lease payments. You can loan the horse in exchange for boarding and daily care, or you can create another lease deal with the lessee.

Retirement:

A retirement facility can be compared to an assisted living facility for people. The staff is trained in caring for the health issues facing older horses and those with injuries. More often than not, retirement facilities house horses that are no longer used for riding and working. Not only elderly horses but horses that have ailments but are still comfortable to walk and graze. Their daily routines should include lots of turnout with buddies and good, quality attention. Of importance, a good retirement facility should have plenty of pasture. A key issue with elderly horses is that they need room to move around to combat arthritis — horses standing in box stalls will stiffen up quickly. Another thing to take note of is if specialized care is offered - such as custom feed, special medical attention, and an educated staff that understands the needs of your horse.

Retirement facilities are not free for the most part. The owner pays a monthly board bill just as you would at any boarding facility. There are retirement facilities in which you can donate your horse, but you would no longer own him or control what happens to him. Most of these are for specific breeds. In some cases, horses must be at least pasture sound — some may go on to second careers, while most spend the rest of their days eating grass. Unsound or "pasture pet" horses are only accepted for retirement at some facilities with a yearly tax-deductible donation for the on-going care of the horse.

Surrendering your horse to a Rescue or Sanctuary:

If you are in a position in which safety net programs are not an option, and you are unable to pursue other placement options due to limited resources or the horses suitability for a particular program, the next best course of action would be to pursue placement of your horse in transition through reputable Equine Rescues and Sanctuaries. Even if a rescue does not have physical space to accept the horse, they may offer direct placement services or other available options to find a suitable home without entering the rescue directly. Rescues and Sanctuaries can often network to keep a horse who is in a transitional phase, from reaching an at-risk state.

There are many different Rescues and Sanctuaries available to choose from Nationwide, with as many different missions and policies regarding the horses they take in. Although the UHC does not endorse one particular facility, it supports the Care Guidelines for Equine Rescue and Retirement Facilities, developed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). If you've decided to find a Rescue or Sanctuary for your horse, we strongly encourage you to read these guidelines and ensure the facility you're considering operates by them. The AAEP guidelines were intended for rescue and retirement facilities, but any facility that accepts horses should adhere to the basic principles outlined in these guidelines.

In addition, we have also included a list of important questions you should ask before re-homing or surrendering your horse in order to ensure that your horse is placed with the best suited organization.



OPTIONS FOR OWNERS WHO CAN NO LONGER KEEP THEIR HORSE:

Therapeutic Riding Centers:

Therapeutic riding centers are found in cities and towns across the nation. These centers provide a variety of equine activities to people with physical, emotional and learning disabilities. For individuals with special needs, equine-assisted activities have been shown to improve muscle tone, balance, posture, coordination, motor development, as well as emotional well-being.

The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA), a national non-profit organization, accredits many of these riding centers and certifies their instructors.

Horses are valued partners in the human–equine relationship that is therapeutic riding. Because the horses must interact with individuals who often have profound disabilities, these riding centers are highly selective when accepting horses into a program. Many of these horses are donated, volunteered or leased by horse owners in the community.

The breed of a horse is not a critical consideration — different breeds offer different builds needed for a wide range of activities, including riding, driving, vaulting, and interaction on the ground — the most important aspect is the individual horse's suitability for equine-assisted activities and therapy.

While minor health issues may be acceptable, horses used for therapeutic riding programs must be sound enough to work regularly. To the casual observer, walking in an arena with a disabled person looks like an easy task for a horse, but it is not. The horse must be physically able to carry a person whose weight may be unevenly distributed. In addition, the horse must also be able to deal with situations such as quietly walking up to a ramp with a person in a wheelchair and standing perfectly still while the person is being assisted in mounting the horse.

Prior to accepting the donation of a horse, most therapeutic riding centers will

- Evaluate the horse's conformation
- Evaluate the horse's health using a thorough veterinary check
- Examine the horse's gaits and way of going
- Assess the horse's attitude, reliability and adaptability to new situations

Many programs require the horses to go through a trial period at the center before they are accepted. Only a select number of horses meet the strict qualifications set forth by these riding centers. You can find a NARHA-affiliated therapeutic riding center near you on their website, www.narha.org.



OPTIONS FOR OWNERS WHO CAN NO LONGER KEEP THEIR HORSE:



Colleges and Universities:

Many colleges, universities and private schools across the country have equine programs and accept donations of horses. These horses may be used for a riding program, breeding program, or needs associated with the curriculum of a pre-vet or veterinary degree.

Schools with an animal science department that includes an equine research component or a veterinary school may accept your horse to be used in teaching/research to benefit medical advancements in the equine field. Once the property of a university, you will (generally) not be able to place restrictions on the use of that horse. It is certainly acceptable to inquire about the type of research undertaken by that particular school.

Academic programs have varying requirements for the horses that are accepted as donations. In some cases the school may lease the horse for a certain period of time. As in any other legal agreement, be aware of all the legal details and potential liabilities associated with a lease.

Potential donations to be used in the riding programs are often evaluated using stringent criteria as far as soundness, disposition, amount of training and age. Institutions that have very strict donation requirements generally want the horse for the long-term. Schools that accept any and all donations tend to have a high turnover rate of horses within their program.

Horses accepted as a part of a university breeding program must meet breed and quality standards. Just because the horse is a mare, it doesn't mean that she is destined to be a breeding animal. Some schools specialize in a specific breed of horse — there are major universities that currently specialize in Arabians, Thoroughbreds, American Quarter Horses, and Morgans. Other school programs may be known for a specific equestrian discipline, such as hunters or reining horses. A horse that doesn't fit in one school's program may be an ideal candidate for another.

A Home for Life?

Many people assume that when a horse is donated to an educational institution, it will spend the rest of its life there. Once a horse is donated it becomes the property of the institution and may be sold immediately or at a later date to raise additional funds for that program.

Do your homework! Before donating your horse to any organization, make sure you understand, and are comfortable with, their policies. The most important thing you can do is research the organization so that an informed decision is made about your horse's future.

OPTIONS FOR OWNERS WHO CAN NO LONGER KEEP THEIR HORSE:

Mounted Police Units:

The mounted unit pursues a fourfold mission that consists of traffic control, crowd control, community relations, and prevention of street crime. Public relations is a mounted unit forte. Seldom is public attention so magnetically drawn to police as it is to an officer on horseback. The expertise of mounted unit officers in crowd control is also renowned. Officers are used extensively at concerts, demonstrations, strikes, entertainment events, public celebrations, and the numerous assemblages that take place throughout the year. It has been estimated that one mounted officer on horseback has the effect of 10 officers on foot, depending on the demeanor of the crowd. The mounted unit has therefore earned the reputation for being in the vanguard whenever the police department is called upon to ensure the order and safety of large throngs of people.

What types of horses can be donated? Every mounted police unit has specific requirements but generally these apply:

- Sex – Geldings only
- Age – 3-9 years
- Height – Minimum of 15.2 hands, preferably taller
- Color – Solid darker colors with minimal white markings
- Conformation – Good withers; sturdy legs and feet; strong bone and muscle
- Health – Must be sound and in prime working condition; negative Coggins
- Horses with vices such as kicking, biting and cribbing would be disqualified

Prison System:

Some retired horses spend their days in the prison system. Not only does your horse benefit from the care but the inmates benefit as well. Many inmates have never been around large animals and building a bond with an animal helps teach them empathy and compassion. It's a great learning experience for the inmates to see and treat the ailments that come with horses that have been around the block, and each horse gets that special attention it might need. For many horses it's their last option, as many non-profit retirement facilities don't have the staff to treat lots of special needs cases, so it can be viewed as a hospice situation for the horses.





IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE RE-HOMING A HORSE:

Finding a new home for a horse is not always an easy job and various equine facilities play a role in providing care or finding new owners for horses. Whether an owner is searching for the perfect retirement farm, looking to find their horse a new job in therapeutic riding or in the mounted patrol, or if they are in need of placement with a rescue or sanctuary, there are questions every owner should ask before giving up care and control of their horse.

1. Does the organization subscribe to accepted guidelines for operating such facilities, such as the "Care Guidelines for Rescue and Retirement Facilities" prepared by the American Association of Equine Practitioners?
 - a) For Thoroughbreds, is the organization accredited by the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance?
2. Is it an entity exempt from federal tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code?
3. Does it file IRS Form 990 and forms required by the state? Will the facility provide copies?
4. Does it have a mission statement and a board of directors? Who are they?
5. How long has the organization been operating?
6. If it is a facility that will use the horse, how will it be used?
7. Will the facility allow you to walk the property, including entering barns?
8. Does the facility appear to have adequate feed (hay, pasture, grain) for the number of horses on the property?
9. What are the physical characteristics of the facility, including barns, pastures, shelters, and fencing? Does the facility have ample room for horses to graze and/or move about? Do the horses have adequate shelter?
10. Is the organization's agreement with the owner for free lease or donation or something else?
11. Will the horse stay at the facility or be placed into foster care? If the facility uses foster care, how are foster homes screened?
12. Does the organization have an agreement regarding the use, boarding, or care of the horse?
13. If it is an organization that adopts horses out, what are the requirements for adoption? Does the facility follow up with the new owners to ensure the horse is being properly cared for?
14. Does the organization have a policy against breeding or restrict the horse's use in any way?
15. What is the organization's post-adoption policy on breeding and use?
16. If this is an adoption facility, are stallions gelded upon entry and before adoption?
17. What becomes of the horse when the adopter or the user no longer wants the horse? Will the organization automatically take the horse back?
18. Will the organization advise you before your horse is transferred to a new owner?
19. Can the original owner ask for the horse back?
20. Will the facility provide routine and emergency veterinary, dental, and farrier care?
21. Does the facility provide training/re-training for the horse?
22. Can owners visit their horse at the facility? Can owners visit the horse at an adoption home?
23. Any welfare charges been brought against the organization?
24. Does the facility euthanize horses that cannot be placed? If so, will the facility notify the owner beforehand?



Rescue vs. Retirement

Many people are confused when it comes to the topic of rescue versus retirement. What is the difference between a rescue and a retirement facility?

I. Rescue

- Oftentimes work to help neglected or abused horses
- Emergency care
- Horses that are removed from owners or abandoned
- Horses may be adopted out when recovered from trauma
- Programs funded by donations, non-profit

II. Retirement

- Older, pensioned horses
- Injuries that make them unsuitable for work
- Maintenance care needed
- Horses are privately owned
- Private boarding facilities, for-profit



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PROGRAMS THAT EXTEND THE USEFUL LIVES OF HORSES:

Supply and demand — they are the ingredients that form the foundation for nearly all successful business models. Markets are sound and profitable when there is a healthy balance between the two. The theory holds true for the horse market as well. Often, however, owners may not be aware of the demands that exist for horses that may be in transition.

The purpose of this chapter is to show some of the many programs already in place by horse breed organizations and other groups, in which horses are needed by participants. From trail riding enthusiasts to horse show exhibitors, people are searching every day for horses that fit their lifestyles and interests.

By understanding the activities encouraged by breed organizations, owners of some unwanted horses might find a good fit, and a good market, among people seeking horses for organized shows and recreational events.

Following is a listing of some of the most popular programs and activities underway today and some true-life stories of unwanted horses that developed into champions.

Competitive Horse Shows:

Nearly all horse breed associations offer opportunities for friendly competition. Although a horse may be retired or reaching advanced years of maturity, horse shows offer outlets to help keep the horse active and involved. The registries offer several different disciplines with classes ranging from leadline to saddle seat pleasure to barrel racing. A horse owner can often find a way to keep horses involved for a long time in the variety of disciplines offered in the showing world.

The majority of breed registries in the United States host local shows. More competitive riders enter their horses in national and world championship horse shows. The events are qualifying or non-qualifying, based on each association's standards. Contact the specific association you are interested in to find out more information on how to become involved in showing and what various other programs they offer.

The United States Equestrian Federation (www.usef.org) is the national governing body for horse sports in the U.S.



PROGRAMS THAT EXTEND THE USEFUL LIVES OF HORSES:

The following organizations offer both competitive and noncompetitive options to keep your horse active.

Horse Breed Association Programs

American Hackney Horse Society

www.hackneysociety.com

American Morgan Horse Association (AMHA)

www.morganhorse.com

American Paint Horse Association (APHA)

www.apha.com

American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA)

www.aqha.com

American Saddlebred Horse Association

www.asha.net

American Shetland Pony Club

www.shetlandminiature.com

Appaloosa Horse Club (ApHC)

www.appaloosa.com

Arabian Horse Association (AHA)

www.arabianhorses.org

International Andalusian and Lusitano Horse Association

www.ialha.org

International Friesian Show Horse Association

www.friesianshowhorse.com

Missouri Fox Trotters Horse Breeders Association

www.mfthba.com

Palomino Horse Breeders of America (PHBA)

www.palominohba.com

Paso Fino Horse Association

www.pfha.org

Pinto Horse Association (PtHA)

www.pinto.org

Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association

www.twhbea.com

Welsh Pony and Cob Society

www.welshpony.org



PROGRAMS THAT EXTEND THE USEFUL LIVES OF HORSES:



Wild Horses and Burros:

One aspect of the unwanted horse situation that the coalition does not want to forget is the tens of thousands of America's wild horses and burros that are managed by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM has offered these horses for adoption for years under the Adopt-A-Wild Horse Program, but herd sizes continue to grow at a faster rate than horses are adopted. This is a growing part of the issue of unwanted horses, and a private organization has been created to help deal with this situation.

The Mustang Heritage Foundation is dedicated to helping increase the successful adoptions of America's excess Mustangs and burros. The Mustang Heritage Foundation works with the BLM and other adoption-oriented programs to find quality homes for these animals. In addition the foundation has created training programs designed to involve knowledgeable horsemen and horsewomen in the gentling of Mustangs prior to adoption. The organization is also committed to creating a more marketable horse through improving selection and expanding and enhancing training programs for critical mustang age groups.

Mustang Heritage Foundation
www.mustangheritagefoundation.org

Racehorses:

Although many require a knowledgeable trainer/handler, with proper re-training, ex-racehorses are suitable for myriad horse-related activities. They have been successful at all levels of competition in multiple disciplines, including eventing, show jumping, barrel racing, dressage, trail riding, endurance, and roping. They also make excellent pleasure riding horses and companion animals. Those interested in providing a home in which to extend the useful life of an ex-racehorse can find information through the following organizations:

American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA)
www.aqha.com
The Jockey Club
www.jockeyclub.com
National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA)
www.ntra.com
United States Trotting Association (USTA)
www.ustrotting.com

More Information:

For an extensive listing of breed organizations and other groups that offer programs and activities for horses, see the Horse Industry Directory published annually by the American Horse Council. You can reach them at (202) 296-4031.



TAX RAMIFICATIONS OF CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS:

Did You Know? In 2013, a whopping 98.4% of households participated in charitable giving. Total gifts to charity in 2013 reached over \$335 billion, continuing the trend for four straight years of increased giving with a 4.4% jump!

The decision to donate your horse to a charitable organization can be rewarding for you, your horse, and the charity. If your donation is eligible for a tax deduction, it is important to keep good records and research the charities to which you choose to donate. What follows is a summary of the tax code on charitable contribution of property, specifically horses. For reference, the general rule related to the deduction of the value of charitable donations is located in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code; exceptions and limitations follow in further sections.

The Charity:

Your donation will be tax deductible only if it is made to a properly formed and qualified Internal Revenue Code §501(c)(3) charitable organization. These include public charities, educational institutions, hospitals, governments, humane organizations, and private foundations.

In order to get the most tax benefit out of your donation, the horse must be used by the donee charity in connection with the charitable purpose for which it was formed. If a horse is donated to a charity that in turn uses the horse in a manner unrelated to its charitable purpose, then the donor taxpayer can deduct only their basis in the horse, which is usually the purchase price, less any depreciation; the basis in a homebred horse would be zero.

It is important to note that if the charity simply sells the horse and keeps the profits, then the donor taxpayer's deduction is limited to the basis in the horse because the sale of the horse is unrelated to the charity's purpose. Thus, owner-initiated surrenders to an adoption program or re-training facility may not be eligible for the charitable deduction. Monetary gifts made concurrent with or subsequent to the surrender may be eligible for a tax deduction under charitable contribution rules, discussed at the end of this chapter.

Before finalizing the donation of your horse, you should examine the charity's IRS Exemption Certificate and get a statement in writing from the charity affirming the charity's tax exempt purpose and their intended use of the donated horse.

Some possible charities to research for horse donations include therapeutic riding centers, horse clubs, mounted police units, and schools and universities. A complete list of qualified organizations can be found in IRS Publication 78, available at <http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=96136,00.html>.

The Donation:

As a general rule, you can deduct the fair market value of a horse donated to a charitable organization if:

- The donation is made without expectation or receipt of a financial or economic benefit in return,
- The horse will be used by the charity in connection with its charitable purpose, and
- The horse was held by the donor for sporting, breeding, or draft purposes for 24 months prior to the donation.



TAX RAMIFICATIONS OF CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS:

There are, of course, exceptions to the general rule that may reduce the amount of the deduction. For example, when a horse eligible for capital gain treatment has been depreciated and is donated to a charity, the amount of the gift is the value of the horse reduced by the amount of depreciation that has been taken. Section 170(e) of the Internal Revenue Code lists these exceptions, including horses eligible for capital gains treatment and a donation to a charity that does not relate to the charity's exempt purpose.

In addition, the total of all charitable contributions that can be deducted in one year cannot exceed 50% of the taxpayer's income in some cases and 30% in others, depending on the type of donee charity (IRC §170(b)).

Required Records: In all horse donations to a charity, the taxpayer must have a record of:

- The name and address of the charity,
- The date of the donation,
- The location of the donation,
- A description of the horse in detail reasonably sufficient under the circumstances
- (note: the required amount of detail increases with the horse's value),
- The fair market value of the horse at the time of donation and the method used to determine the value, including a written and signed appraisal if used or required, and
- The terms of agreement relating to the horse's use or disposition.

If the horse is worth more than \$250, but less than \$5000, the taxpayer seeking the deduction must also have a written acknowledgment from the charity. The acknowledgment must include:

- A description of the horse,
- A statement concerning whether or not any goods or services were provided to the
- donor by the charity in exchange for, in whole or part, the horse, and
- A description and good faith estimate of any value or services given by the charity in exchange for the horse.

If the horse is worth more than \$5000, the taxpayer seeking the deduction must also complete and file with their tax return IRS Form 8283, available at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8283.pdf>. In addition to the information above, Form 8283 requires the taxpayer to disclose (1) how the horse was acquired, (2) the date of acquisition (approximate), and (3) the cost basis of the horse. In addition, the taxpayer must obtain a written appraisal by a qualified appraiser. Unless a herd of horses is donated to one charity at one time by one donor, each donated horse must have a separate written appraisal. If a herd is donated, then one appraisal is allowed, but it must describe and value each horse individually. Finally, the taxpayer must attach an appraisal summary to their tax return.



TAX RAMIFICATIONS OF CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS:

Qualified Appraisal: The qualified appraisal for horses valued at more than \$5000 must be completed not earlier than 60 days prior to the date of donation and not later than the due date of the tax return on which the deduction is taken. The qualified appraisal must be conducted by a qualified appraiser, which is defined by the IRS as someone who:

- Holds himself or herself out to be an appraiser or who performs appraisals on a regular basis;
- Is able to make appraisals of horses because of his or her qualifications;
- Is not within a group of disqualified people, including the donor, the person who sold, gave, or exchanged the horse to or with the donor, anyone who acted as an agent in the sale, exchange or gift of the horse (unless the donation is within two months of the date of acquisition and the appraisal value does not exceed the acquisition value), the donee, and any employees, spouses, or relatives of the people above; and
- Understands and acknowledges in writing that an intentionally false or fraudulent overstatement of the horse's value may subject the appraiser to penalties.

A declaration to the above and signed by the appraiser must be included with the appraisal summary. The fee charged for the appraisal, with a very limited exception for nonprofit and uncompensated appraisers, cannot be based on a percentage of the appraised value of the horse. The written qualified appraisal must be prepared, dated and signed by the appraiser and must include:

- A description of the horse(s);
- The physical condition of the horse;
- The date or expected date of the donation;
- The terms of agreement, if any, to the use, sale, or other disposition of the horse;
- The identity and qualifications of the appraiser, including background, professional memberships, education, etc.;
- A statement that the appraisal is being made for income tax purposes;
- The date of the appraisal;
- The appraised value of the horse(s);
- The method of evaluation; and
- The specific basis for valuation.

Appraisal Summary: Taxpayers who are deducting the value of a horse worth more than \$5000 must also attach an appraisal summary to the tax return on which the deduction is claimed. The summary must:

- Be made on Schedule B IRS Form 8283,
- Be signed and dated by the charity,
- Be signed and dated by the qualified appraiser who prepared the qualified appraisal, and
- Contain information specified in Schedule B relating to the donor, the horse, the donee, and the appraiser.

Another tax issue to keep in mind during tax time is monetary gifts to qualified 501(c)(3) charitable horse organizations, including many rescue groups. Monetary gifts to charities are deductible as charitable contributions if made to a qualified organization, do not exceed specified limits (set forth in the tax code and usually no more than 50% of a taxpayer's income), and are truly a gift rather than an exchange for a financial or economic benefit.

Planning to get the most tax benefit from a charitable contribution of a horse is very fact-specific. The tax rules described in this document are general, and the UHC strongly recommends consulting with a qualified tax professional who can help you apply applicable tax rules to your specific facts.



END OF LIFE DECISIONS AND EUTHANASIA:

EUTHANASIA

Euthanasia is a term derived from the Greek words "eu," meaning good, and "thanatos," meaning death. Euthanasia means "good death."

Horse ownership undoubtedly comes with numerous responsibilities, and owners must be prepared to make good decisions regarding the health and welfare of their equines on a daily basis. One of the most difficult and emotionally draining responsibilities is determining, with the help of your veterinarian, the appropriate time to end a horse's life. It is a good idea to have a plan in place before you, as an owner, are faced with such a decision, because often times these situations arise in the form of an emergency and a decision must be made quickly.

According to the American Association of Equine Practitioners, justification for euthanizing a horse for humane reasons should be based on medical considerations as well as current and future quality of life issues for the horse. Some, but certainly not all, of the factors to be considered in evaluating the necessity for intentional euthanasia of a horse are:

- Is the horse's condition chronic, incurable, and resulting in unnecessary pain and suffering?
- Does the condition of the horse present a hopeless prognosis?
- Is the horse a hazard to itself or to others around it?
- Will the horse require continuous medications for pain relief and suffering for the rest of its life?

Each horse should be treated on a case by case basis as an individual when making a euthanasia decision. Euthanasia is an incredibly emotional issue, but must be approached from a practical standpoint as an owner. The AAEP has developed euthanasia guidelines to help assist in making humane decisions regarding euthanasia of horses:

- A horse should not have to endure continuous or unmanageable pain from a condition that is chronic and incurable.
- A horse should not have to endure a medical or surgical condition that has a hopeless chance of survival.
- A horse should not have to remain alive if it has an unmanageable medical condition that renders it a hazard to itself or its handlers.
- A horse should not have to receive continuous analgesic medication for the relief of pain for the rest of its life.
- A horse should not have to endure a lifetime of continuous individual box stall confinement for prevention or relief of unmanageable pain or suffering.



END OF LIFE DECISIONS AND EUTHANASIA:

PLANNING AND PREPARATION:

(Taken from AAEP: <https://aaep.org/horsehealth/euthanasia-most-difficult-decision>)

If you and your veterinarian agree that euthanasia is the best choice, it is important to prepare as best you can. If you are able to make the decision in advance rather than in an emergency situation, making prior arrangements will ease the process. These guidelines might help:

- Decide when and where the procedure will be best carried out, bearing in mind that arrangements must be made for removal of the body. Choose what is most comfortable and practical for you, your veterinarian, and your horse.
- If you board your horse, inform the stable manager of the situation.
- Decide whether you wish to be present during the procedure. If you cannot or do not wish to be present, you may want to ask a friend to stand in for you. Decide what is right for you. (If you are unfamiliar with the procedure and are unsure what to expect, discuss it with your veterinarian.)
- Be aware that, for safety reasons, your veterinarian may not allow you to be touching or holding the horse during the procedure. You will, however, be able to touch and be with your horse afterward.
- Make arrangements in advance for the prompt removal and disposal of the body. Check with your veterinarian and/or the city or county health department. Many municipalities have ordinances prohibiting or restricting burial. Removal to a rendering facility or pet crematory may be required.
- Explain to members of your family, especially children, in sensitive but honest terms, why the decision was made to euthanize the horse.
- Allow yourself to grieve. Finding a support person to talk with can help you work through this difficult period (see below).
- If the horse is insured, notify the insurance company in advance so that there are no problems with claims. While the veterinarian will provide you with any required documentation, the rest (notification, filing, follow-up, etc.) is your responsibility.

COPING WITH EMOTIONS

Given the affection we have for our horses, dealing with their deaths can be extremely difficult. But dealing with your emotions honestly and going through the grieving process is important for your emotional well-being.

To help you deal with your grief, there are local and national counseling organizations, such as the University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine's Pet Loss Support Hotline, (530) 752-4200. Your veterinarian may also know of resources in your area that can help you, so don't be afraid to ask.

THINKING AHEAD

Death is an inevitable part of life. Your horse, like all living creatures, will not live forever. Ideally, your horse will remain healthy and happy into old age and will die a peaceful, natural death. However, it is wise to give some thought to other possibilities.

By thinking about what you would do in an emergency, or how you would act if your horse were to develop a painful or debilitating condition from which recovery was unlikely, you can be prepared for whatever happens. Be sure to share your thoughts and wishes on this issue with others, especially those who may be caring for your horse in your absence, such as your barn manager or neighbor, and your veterinarian. Doing so may spare your horse needless suffering if a severe illness or injury were to occur when you could not be contacted.

END OF LIFE DECISIONS AND EUTHANASIA:



According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, there are only three acceptable methods of euthanasia for horses: barbiturate overdose given intravenously by a veterinarian, gunshot, and penetrating captive bolt. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages and must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

BARBITURATE (given by a veterinarian):

The most commonly used barbiturate is sodium pentobarbital, which brings about a state of unconsciousness within a few seconds. The drug then shuts down the animal's brain function, including the part of the brain that controls cardiac and respiratory systems, bringing about the animal's death. Veterinarians may choose to inject a sedative prior to administering the barbiturate. This often makes the procedure less stressful for the owner or other bystanders to view. The major advantage of the barbiturate overdose is its speed of action and minimal discomfort to the horse. The major disadvantages to this method are that only a licensed veterinarian may administer the IV injection, and following euthanasia, the carcass will contain high levels of barbiturate, making it an environmental hazard. There is also a rare chance the horse will experience a reaction to the barbiturate. The cost of this type of euthanasia varies throughout the country.

GUNSHOT:

The proper use of a firearm causes trauma in the cerebral hemisphere and brainstem and results in a painless, immediate death. One advantage of gunshot is that there is less need for the animal to be restrained. Additionally, the carcass does not present any environmental dangers. However, this method should never be attempted by an inexperienced person. This method of euthanasia can be dangerous if performed improperly. The bullet may ricochet, for instance, and bystanders must use extreme caution during the procedure. It is also aesthetically displeasing to the owner and/or bystanders.

CAPTIVE BOLT:

Penetrating captive bolts are powered by gunpowder or compressed air. Similar to gunshot, it causes trauma to the cerebral hemisphere and brainstem, resulting in an instant, painless death. Additionally, the carcass is not an environmental threat. The captive bolt should only be used by skilled individuals and might not be available in all locations. This method might be extremely displeasing for an owner or bystanders to observe.



DISPOSAL OPTIONS FOR EQUINES:

Arrangements must be made for removal of the animal's remains following death, be it from natural causes or euthanasia. If the horse dies or is euthanized at an equine hospital, the hospital can take care of this for a fee. In other cases, the owner of the deceased must make arrangements, keeping in mind that in most states, it is the legal responsibility of the attending veterinarian to ensure the carcass is properly disposed; therefore veterinarians must possess specific knowledge of their area's regulations. If the owner does not follow local statutes, he or she may unintentionally cause legal problems for their veterinarian.

First and foremost, carcass disposal must be done in a manner that does not cause harm to other animals or humans. regulations vary greatly from state to state with regard to animal species. Local agricultural extension offices are a useful resource for this type of information. There are several commonly used methods of equine carcass disposal, including burial, landfills, composting, incineration, rendering and biodigesters.

BURIAL:

Regulations on horse burial vary from state to state and within states, from locality to locality. Many jurisdictions require the burial site be no fewer than 100 yards from wells, streams, and other water sources, and in some locales, it is illegal to bury a chemically euthanized horse. Generally, a trench 7 feet wide and 9 feet deep is sufficient, with at least 3 to 4 feet of dirt covering the animal's remains. In order to accomplish this, one needs access to a backhoe, which can be rented for a fee between \$250 and \$500, depending on the location.

LANDFILLS:

Landfills are an alternative to burial. Keep in mind that not all municipal landfills accept animal carcasses, and those that do, do not necessarily take horses. Additionally, some landfills that accept horse carcasses will not take the remains of a chemically euthanized animal. Costs can be higher, but tend to be between \$80 and \$150.

INCINERATION/CREMATION:

While incineration/cremation of a horse carcass is very expensive, it is one of the most environmentally friendly solutions to body disposal. Cremating a 1,000-pound horse can cost between \$600 and \$2,000, depending on location and the current price of propane. The incinerators are regulated by strict environmental laws at both the federal and state level, thus providing control over air pollution. As the ashes pose no environmental threat, they may be returned to the owner and buried or may be sent to a landfill.

RENDERING:

Rendering is an effective, affordable and environmentally safe method of livestock carcass disposal. The carcasses are "cooked" to destroy pathogens and produces end products such as bone meal that can be used in animal feeds. Rendering companies will normally pick up the remains and charge a fee ranging between \$75 and \$200, again depending on location. Only 50 percent of the states have rendering plants, the majority of which are concentrated in the Midwest.



DISPOSAL OPTIONS FOR EQUINES:

COMPOSTING:

Composting, a controlled, sanitary decomposition of organic materials by bacteria, has recently gained popularity. It is performed in covered trenches or piles that must be located away from runoff and drinking water supplies to avoid contamination. The combination of vegetative material and moisture results in temperatures reaching at least 130°F, which, over the course of time, kills most pathogenic viruses and bacteria. It takes approximately 9 to 10 months to compost an intact horse carcass, and the end product is a spongy, odorless substance that can be used for soil supplementation.

Livestock composting is legal in every state except California, but even in states where the practice is permitted, it can be limited by carcass weight. Information on composting and its availability in your area may be obtained from your respective state's Department of Agriculture.

BIODIGESTERS:

First developed in 1992, the biodigester is a machine similar to a pressure cooker. Using alkaline hydrolysis, biodigesters rapidly kill any potentially harmful wastes in the carcass. The machine can turn a 1,000-pound horse carcass into an aqueous solution of peptides, amino acids, sugars, soaps and powdered bone, all free of harmful pathogens. The remains are, in fact, sterile, and pose no environmental hazards and can therefore be disposed of at a local landfill or be used as fertilizer.

This method is becoming a popular method of carcass disposal with veterinary colleges and industrial research facilities. The veterinary colleges at the University of Florida, Texas A&M University, Colorado State University, and the University of Minnesota are just some schools that own and use biodigesters. The US Department of Agriculture also owns a machine. While the initial purchase price is costly, the operating costs offer significant savings over time and are more environmentally friendly than using commercial incinerators. For example, the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory purchased a biodigester for \$900,000 but estimates that they can dispose of a carcass for \$0.25 per pound, as opposed to \$0.75 per pound using an incinerator.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Plan ahead. It is important for all horse owners to think about and plan for the day their horse's life comes to an end. It is not something fun to think about, but death is inevitably part of life and dealing with it cannot be avoided. Enlisting the help of your vet and barn manager and relative, close friend, or neighbor, come up with a plan in the event your horse becomes ill or debilitated, or an emergency arises. Write it down and make sure it is easily accessible if you are unavailable should anything occur. Planning ahead may spare your horse needless suffering. It will also help you make sound decisions during what will be a very difficult time.

Insurance: If your horse is insured, be sure that you know your policy's requirements regarding euthanasia. For an insurance claim to be valid, companies often require prior notification and permission (except in extreme cases). Most insurance providers require that they be kept informed from the start of a horse's medical condition, especially if euthanasia is a potential outcome of the illness. In case of an emergency, it is up to the policy holder to notify the insurance provider. Some policies even require a second opinion before a horse is euthanized, but it is always up to the owner and veterinarian to decide what is best for the horse.



CONCLUSION:

OWN RESPONSIBLY, OWNING RESPONSIBILITY:

Regardless of how a particular horse reaches a state of being at-risk, or in transition, it is the responsibility of every owner, and the industry at large, to ensure that we are doing everything possible to prevent horses from becoming at-risk of abuse or neglect. Luckily, this issue is recognized by equine organizations, businesses, and individuals alike, and is one for which numerous industry groups are currently working towards a solution.

The **United Horse Coalition** is one of them.

This discussion of a complex and sometimes troubling issue should be concluded by simply pointing out that you are not alone. You have many options, and advice may be obtained from many organizations or individuals who will be willing to help you when you can no longer be the steward of your horse's life.

Visit www.unitedhorsecoalition.org for a variety of resources that may help you ensure that your horse will be cared for through the balance of its natural life, or properly euthanized if necessary.

The United Horse Coalition's encourages all involved in the horse industry to "Own Responsibly," and will be happy to help you live up to that very promise you made on the day you decided to become a horse owner.

NEED HELP?

UNITED HORSE COALITION
EQUINE RESOURCE
DATABASE

Know a horse owner in need of assistance? **Find support services and safety net programs today.**

WWW.UNITEDHORSECOALITION.ORG