

The Unwanted Horse

Funding the Teaching and Research Mares at the Rutgers University Equine Science Center.

Tag Words: Unwanted horse; Equine euthanasia; Horse rescue; Equine industry; Equine research; Rutgers University Teaching and Research Mares; Rutgers Horse Heroes

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Summary: A horse can be unwanted for various reasons, including illness, injury, inability to win in shows, or because of the financial burden they may cause on their owner. Some of these horses are being starved, neglected, or transferred to slaughterhouses because there are so many that are unwanted, and nowhere else to send them. Our “Horse Heroes” at the Rutgers Equine Science Center were all unwanted before being donated to the university to be used in teaching and research. By helping to raise funds for these horses, they will continue to stay at Rutgers and help with research and education that will advance equine care.

Video Link: http://youtu.be/yYZ1-_GTVys

The Unwanted Horse Issue (CF)

The unwanted horse issue is one that has been a very hot topic within the horse industry over the past several years. Although there were multiple different bills passed to try to deal with the issue, there is still not enough being done to address all of the aspects of the issue in an effective way. People within the industry are becoming increasingly more aware of the issue; however, the scope of the issue is one that a lot of people do not completely understand. The American Association of Equine Practitioners defines an unwanted horse as an equine that is no longer wanted by its owner due to illness, age, injury, mentality, inability to satisfy the owner's expectations, or because the owner is no longer able to financially support the animal (1).

Looking into the definition surrounding the issue, one can see that there are many parts to deal with.

The sick, ill, or injured horse, one category mentioned in the definition of the unwanted horse, could be classified as unwanted because the owner cannot afford the medications or surgery to save the horse. The injured horse could also be one with a substantial injury that the owner is not willing to spend the time or money to fix, or one with a chronic lameness issue that the owner does not want to manage. Many owners have dreams of being in the show ring, and once the horse they have is in a position where it cannot help satisfy those dreams, it is no longer seen as useful, so the owner rejects it and goes off to find a horse that can help with one's aspirations. Some of these horses find homes where they are used for research if they have a condition that a research facility is studying, and others find homes where they are able to do jobs that the horse can handle, but many more join the ranks of unwanted horses in the country. Rather than spending the time and money to rehabilitate the animals, owners give their burdens to others, and while some find good homes, others are passed from owner to owner until they find themselves in less than accommodating circumstances.

As horses begin to age, they sometimes are unable to keep up with the workload they had previously, or the owners do not want the burden of paying to retire their horses because they want to be riding. They don't want the hassle of dealing with all of the ailments that old age means for a horse, between arthritis, along with other physical conditions, not to mention mental changes that might occur, or even the increased chances of health problems as their immune systems become more compromised. Metabolic changes also can occur, and as the list gets longer, many owners shy away from the idea of keeping an older horse around when it can no longer keep up. Many of these older horses do not find a safe retirement home to live out their final years peacefully, but rather are exposed to the hectic auction experience and eventually may end up at slaughterhouses or at facilities where they do not get the attention and care that they need and deserve.

More horse people turn away from horses when their mindsets are not fitting to the job that they want the horse to perform. Some people buy a horse thinking that it's calm, and bring it home to find out that it was drugged when they tried it, and it is in fact the exact opposite of calm. Other horses end up being too spooky, or too fast and others have "bad habits" known as vices, which the owners or trainers do not want to deal with on a daily basis despite the fact that the horse may be very fitting in every other way. Some horses simply do not feel comfortable doing the job they are being told to do even though they may be very good or very willing to do a different job given the opportunity. Because owners and trainers do not want to take the time to find a job the horse is willing to do, they look to get rid of the horse and find something more fitting to their needs. Many trainers are also not knowledgeable in multiple disciplines and could therefore be unable to recognize the individual horse's potential in a different environment or with a different type of training. Unfortunately for the horse, because there are so many disciplines and trainers rarely have the connections to facilitate the horse's potential, many horses do not get the opportunity to move on to a job where they are more willing to participate.

Another area not always looked at is the issue created out in the western states with the wild mustangs. The issue out there extends to the fact that the number of wild horses exceeds the amount that the land and its resources can sustain. Ultimately there is not enough food to sustain the numbers of horses. The Bureau of Land Management is trying to regulate them by capturing horses every year with the intention of finding them homes through auctions or other means, but many of these horses are rejected for multiple reasons. Mustangs can be very good horses, but people are skeptical because they do not know a lot about them or do not like the idea of trying to tame a feral or wild horse. The government is working hard to address these horses and to control the issue while making sure none of these horses get sent for slaughter. The Bureau of Land Management has done a lot of work to assure the survival of the wild herds, but that does mean having to gather and capture around 10,000 horses and find homes for them, which cannot always be an easy task.

The last two categories created by the definition of the unwanted horse come completely down to the owner. Any horse can be "branded" as unwanted just because the current owner decides that the horse does not meet the criteria the owner has for his or her horse. This could mean that the horse is the wrong color, the wrong size, not comfortable enough, or any number of other things the owner decides that prevent him or her from wanting to keep the horse. This is

where many heartbreaking cases come from, between the racehorse that just does not have it in him to win on the racetrack – but may make a very fancy hunter or jumper – to the show pony that doesn't want to jump around – but might take very kindly to the idea of a therapeutic riding program where it doesn't have to jump, but might give hope to a disabled child. Looking into any horse that is sent to auction or determined by any means to be an unwanted horse, there is likely a story to tell about where it came from, but the story that one wants to be able to tell is the one where the horse found a job it could handle or a peaceful end when life has become painful or difficult to bear.

The final part of the issue that is important to mention is the area where horses become unwanted because the owners can no longer afford to keep them. In this instance, it is not that the owner does not want to keep the horse, but rather that the owner has no other option due to lack of funds. In the case of the Rutgers University Teaching and Research Mares, also known as "Horse Heroes," they are very much wanted; however, lack of funding puts them at risk of losing their homes because they are expensive to keep at roughly \$5,000 per horse per year. This is a base price, but many areas, especially in New Jersey can cost upwards of \$20,000 per horse at more private facilities. While this is a different category of unwanted horse, this is still considered part of the problem despite the fact that the owners do in fact wish they could keep their horses.

Legislation (CF)

Back in 2001, the unwanted horse issue was first brought to light, and within a few years Congress passed legislation banning the slaughter of horses in the United States. With that, the slaughterhouses closed, and the main "solution" for a lot of the country's unwanted horses was eliminated. For several years, despite laws against transporting a horse with the intention of slaughter, hundreds of thousands of horses were transported over the borders into Canada and Mexico because there was no other place to take the horses that did not make the cut at auction or just happened to find themselves a little short on luck. The drawback, however, was that these animals were now spending days on trailers – sometimes without food or water and often times in very tight quarters – just to make it to a slaughterhouse across the borders. There were trips through the cold and hot weather, and in many cases some of the horses did not make it to see the final destination because they passed away during the long journey. But as their carcasses continued on the journey, they were trampled by other horses on the trailers because of the lack of space.

This past summer, however, Congress tried to relieve the pressure put on by many professionals in the field by passing a new bill to allow slaughterhouses to reopen in the United States. While this bill helps to solve the issue of transporting the horses for such long distances, many people are still not completely satisfied with the outcome. It provides a quick way to get rid of a problem horse, or a horse one can no longer afford to keep, but most horse owners would cringe at the thought of sending their horse for slaughter, despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of horses end up there.

The Numbers (CF)

It was estimated that nearly 100,000 horses were being processed per year by United States slaughterhouses prior to the ban on slaughter approximately ten years ago. Although the numbers had decreased since the 1980's – where numbers reached over 330,000 in some years – there was still a steady number coming through or being shipped to other countries to be processed there. In more recent years the numbers have decreased slightly, but the solution for these horses is much less defined because of the cost to keep a horse and the lack of funds and facilities available to take on such a substantial number of horses each year. The economy is another factor as well because people are having a harder time finding the money to support the number of horses that have become unwanted, in addition to the numbers of horses that are added to those ranks each year.

Current Solutions for Unwanted Horses (CG)

There are solutions for the unwanted horse issue that are already in effect. The solutions are intended to find a horse a new home or humanely euthanize the horse. These solutions include euthanasia, euthanasia funds, horse rescue organizations, and animal auctions. Despite providing a decent effort in addressing the issue, even these current solutions do not provide enough resources to accommodate the numbers of horses that join the ranks of unwanted horses each year.

Euthanasia and Euthanasia Funds (CG)

One way of dealing with an unwanted horse is to have a licensed veterinarian humanely euthanize the horse. This is done by giving a lethal injection of barbiturates. Many horse owners take this route when they cannot afford to care for their horse or just do not want to keep the horse anymore. This method allows the owner to get rid of the horse while the horse has a humane passing. When euthanizing a horse, carcass disposal is also a factor that must be taken into account since many states have laws governing the burial of animals. It is illegal to bury a horse on your property in New Jersey, so a renderer must pick up the carcass for disposal. The cost of euthanasia varies depending on the state, but costs \$400 on average and carcass disposal costs \$300 on average. Cremation is also available for an average of \$1,000 (2,3).

Additional methods of euthanasia include a gunshot to the brain or a penetrating captive bolt. A gunshot must be done by an experienced person to ensure proper bullet penetration into the brain and because of the dangers to the surroundings due to bullet ricochet. The penetrating captive bolt method involves the same concept as the gunshot, but does not have the same dangers to the surroundings (4). These two methods can help alleviate the cost of euthanizing a horse, however, the cost of carcass disposal or cremation still applies.

Due to the high costs of euthanasia, there are various euthanasia funds that are set up to overcome the costs of euthanizing a horse. These funds were created to alleviate the financial burden of euthanizing a horse for owners that cannot afford it. However, they are usually only for horses that are in need of euthanasia because of sickness or injury, not for healthy unwanted horses. Additionally, most of these programs are only offered in the Midwest, with very little funding available in the East.

One organization that assists in euthanasia funding is the Equine Protection Fund in New Mexico. They offer a Trail's End program which assists in some veterinary costs and disposal of a suffering horse to help low-income horse owners (5). Another organization is the Horse Plus Humane Society Euthanasia Clinic in California. A horse that is considered for euthanasia through this program is evaluated by a veterinarian to judge if the condition of the horse is serious enough for euthanasia. If the horse is in bad condition, the clinic will euthanize it (6). Equine Voices Rescue and Sanctuary in Arizona offers a euthanasia fund to help horse owners that cannot afford to euthanize their horse. Their mission is to educate individuals on the difference between humane euthanasia and horse slaughter (7). Another organization in California is the Equine Welfare Grant Program, which offers a euthanasia fund for equine welfare organizations that demonstrate a need for assistance. The goal is to offer euthanasia services to individuals who cannot afford to euthanize a horse that is suffering from an injury or illness that is untreatable or has a significantly diminished quality of life (8).

Horse Rescue Organizations (CG)

Horse rescue organizations are a major solution that is in effect to overcome the unwanted horse issue. There are many organizations throughout the United States that offer horse owners an alternative to euthanizing their horse when they can no longer keep them. These organizations are created to provide horses with a home that are in need of retirement, retraining, and rehabilitation. Depending on the specific rescue organization, they will take a horse that is unwanted due to financial burdens, is a retired racehorse, or because the horse is sick or injured. Many organizations take horses for any of these reasons, where some are specific to which types of horses they will take. Some will only take horses of certain breeds and others will only take racehorses. However, there is most likely a limited amount of horses that these organizations can house at one time, and there may not be room for as many horses as they would like to take in. Although there are differences between these organizations, they all have a common goal of rescuing unwanted horses.

One of the largest horse rescue organizations is the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation. They are committed to the rescue, retirement, rehabilitation, and retraining of Thoroughbred racehorses no longer able to compete on the track. They are specific to thoroughbred racehorses and have adopted out over 1,000 horses. This organization is different than most due to their staff of prison inmates in many of their facilities, who work to care for and retrain these horses. In addition to providing the horses with care, the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation allows inmates to learn valuable life skills for when they are released from prison. This organization thrives on its ability to save horses from neglect, abuse, and slaughter (9).

A rescue organization in New Jersey is the Manes and Tails Organization, which rescues commonly slaughtered horse breeds, quarterhorses, standardbreds, and thoroughbreds. They also find homes for retired Mounted Police horses from New Jersey and New York police forces. They are devoted to protecting and promoting equine welfare by preventing these horses from being sent to slaughterhouses (10). Another organization is the Arabian Rescue Mission, which helps rescue horses in 13 states, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. Their mission is to rescue and rehabilitate Arabian horses, as well as educate the public about the responsibilities of being a horse owner (11). Another breed specific rescue organization is the

Standardbred Retirement Foundation, which cares for and rehabilitates retired standardbred racehorses. Additionally, they find lifelong homes for these horses, and ensure the home is a good fit by following up with the care of the horse that was adopted out (12).

Horse Auctions (CG)

Another current solution to the unwanted horse issue is horse auctions. Auctions are held in virtually every state and are held to sell and trade unwanted horses. These horses may be sold to someone looking for an inexpensive riding horse or a companion horse; however, many of these horses are bought from “killer buyers” who buy horses with the intent of selling them to slaughterhouses. Once the horse is slaughtered, the slaughterhouse will sell the horse meat, by pound, to countries other than the United States, where horse meat is allowed to be used for human and pet consumption. However, the use of horse meat for human and pet consumption is outlawed in the United States.

One animal auction that holds horse sales is the Middleburg Livestock Auction in Pennsylvania. They hold horse auctions once a month, and allow anyone to purchase or sell a horse (13). Another horse auction is the NJ Feedlot Horse Rescue, which sells horses to willing buyers. A great thing about this particular auction organization is that they require all horses that are to be purchased to have Health Certificates. This ensures that a horse is in suitable condition to be purchased (14). The issue with horse auctions is that anyone can buy a horse, regardless of whether they are aware of how to care for a horse or if they have the available land to keep the horse. If this is the case, these horses that are bought may return to the ranks of unwanted horses.

Horse Donations (CG)

Another viable solution that many people wouldn't think of is donating their horse to a research facility. This option is available to individuals who have a horse that is suitable for the research being conducted. One facility that accepts horse donations is the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. They accept donated horses to conduct research related to the well-being of horses. However, the acceptance of a donated horse depends on the availability of funds (15). The Equine Science Center at Rutgers University has also accepted donated horses for research involving exercise physiology and aging, as well as laminitis studies. Their mission is to advance the well-being and performance of horses through research and education (3).

In addition to donating horses to research, they can also be donated to various equestrian organizations to be used as show horses. These horses must have training and experience specific to what the organization is looking for, and must also have a calm temperament. One equestrian organization that accepts donated horses is Texas A&M Equestrian Team. They accept western horses that have training and showing experience for their equestrian team to ride in competitions (16). Another university that accepts donated horses is the Cal Poly Pomona Horse Show Team. They also accept horses with training and show experience, and accept horses with various abilities (17).

Slaughter (CF)

While many people view slaughter as a problem, in the situation where the unwanted horse is being neglected or abused or just not cared for, slaughter can be viewed as a solution. It is not something that people want to address, but hundreds of thousands of horses that were unable to find good homes have found their way through the doors of slaughterhouses. After long and uncomfortable trailer rides and what some people might consider being a very scary walk through corrals, horses finally reach the point where they are killed using the penetrating captive bolt method usually followed by exsanguination, or bleeding out. When done properly, the horse should be restrained so that the captive bolt device penetrates the skull and into the brain, to “stun” the horse and make it insensible. It is suggested to use exsanguination to ensure death rather than captive bolt alone which does not always kill the animal in a short enough time to be considered humane. This solution to the problem has been very controversial, and is not widely accepted, but it does provide an end to horses that might otherwise suffer for longer periods of time.

Kentucky Equine Humane Center (CF)

The Kentucky Equine Humane Center (KyEHC) was developed in April of 2007 in an effort to provide for the unwanted horses of Kentucky. Their mission is to “provide humane treatment and shelter while working as a clearinghouse to seek adoptive homes for all of Kentucky’s unwanted horses, regardless of breed; to educate the public and raise awareness for responsible horse ownership so that fewer horses end up in crisis; and to work with and serve as a model for organizations with the same mission; to save America’s equines from inhumane treatment” (18). The entire goal of this facility is to put an end to the pain and suffering that unwanted horses often endure. This is a facility that provides a place for unwanted horses to go, whether they are given up by their owners, or rescued from insecure situations. Not only does the facility teach responsible horse ownership, but it is also a place where people from the public can go to volunteer their time to helping these horses and working with them hands-on. The facility provides care and shelter for a number of unwanted horses while also providing them with training and rehabilitation so that the horses can eventually be put up for adoption.

The KyEHC works with four racetracks in the area and has stalls available at each for Thoroughbreds that have been surrendered. The KyEHC, a charitable organization “sustained solely through grants and private donations, is the only equine organization in the state of Kentucky with an open-door policy where no equine in need of shelter is ever turned away and no fee is required to surrender an equine” (18). This means that the facility not only makes enough money through grants and donations to sustain itself, but enough to support any number of horses that are surrendered. The fact that they do not turn down any horses in need of shelter means that they are making sure that no horse suffers from a neglectful environment.

Since their opening, they have successfully found new homes for over 400 horses, a fact showing that the program has been very successful (18). The beauty of the program that KyEHC runs is that no owner has to face the cruelty of neglecting a horse because there are no repercussions for turning a horse over to them. They make it a point that the most important thing is being a responsible owner by doing what is right for the horse, and make sure you know that they will do the same. This also means that if they are unable to find a permanent home for

the horse in the future that they will provide it with a humane end of life. Throughout their website they make it obvious that the most important thing to them is doing what is best for the horse's interests, which includes making sure that a humane option is always available – an option that can only remain by supporting this organization and others like it (19).

UC Davis College of Veterinary Medicine (CF)

The Unwanted Horse Assessment Station is a facility described by the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine designed to take unwanted horses and evaluate them to determine what they would be best suited for, first and foremost determining whether the animal would be adoptable or not. If the horse is determined to be adoptable, it would then be put into one of four categories: immediately useable, rehabilitation required, permanent housing retirement, or outreach education. The horse put in these categories then go on to determine exactly what to do with each particular horse. If the horse is determined to be unadoptable, it is then euthanized and either the carcass is salvaged or disposed of (20). This facility is meant to make the best use of every unwanted horse by providing each one with a job based on each individual horse's capabilities and limitations. Here, the fact that euthanasia is sometimes the best alternative for a horse is taken into account.

What this program also addresses is the fact that there are other uses for carcasses than putting them into landfills. This program realizes that sometimes horses can be rehabilitated and learn new skills, while other horses may never be able to recover from what they have been through, in which case the best option is to put an end to the pain and suffering simply by euthanizing the animal. The Unwanted Horse Assessment Station provides three main options for horses depending on the individual animal, an important factor because it recognizes each horse as an individual. The three main categories of options are adoption, shelter, and humane euthanasia. In this case, horses that are deemed adoptable put up for adoption and provided with any education necessary to make them as easy to adopt out as possible. Horses that are in need of shelter, but not adoptable, are put into sanctuaries to live out the rest of their days in a healthy, welcoming, safe environment free from abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Finally, the horses that are in too poor a condition to put into shelter or up for adoption are provided with a humane end of life through euthanasia. This provides an option for horses that are in very critical condition and have been suffering for a long period of time or are in enough pain that it is unreasonable to do anything but put them out of their misery.

“Horse Heroes Project” (CG)

To combat the unwanted horse issue, we decided to work with the Equine Science Center at Rutgers University. The mission of the Equine Science Center is to provide “better horse care through research and education.” The Equine Science Center houses about 45 retired standardbred racehorses on the Rutgers University farm where these horses assist in research conducted by faculty as well as provide a great resource for student learning. These research projects mainly center on equine physiology and the effects of exercise on equine athletes. Before arriving at the university, all of the horses that are cared for at the Center were at one time unwanted. The reason for most of these horses becoming unwanted is because they were no longer able to perform to the expectations of their owners in races. These horses were saved by

being donated to Rutgers University to help further our knowledge of providing the best possible horse care. They are a valuable asset for teaching students of the university as well as for research.

In order for these horses to stay at the university and continue assisting in equine research, funds must be raised to care for them. It costs roughly \$2,000 a year to keep a horse if you do the labor yourself, not including farrier and veterinary costs. The “Horse Heroes Project” was started as a way to prevent our Rutgers horses from returning to the ranks of unwanted horses. The Rutgers University Teaching and Research Horses are all very much wanted, but without support from outside sources, they may not be able to keep their homes and jobs due to decreased availability of funds. To overcome this concern, we have started the “Horse Heroes Project” to raise funds for these horses. By teaming up with the Equine Science Center, we created a program brochure that outlines the Unwanted Horse issue and discusses how the public can help. A fundraiser was created to collect funds from students and the equine community who are passionate about the issue and are dedicated to supporting equine research. The program brochure can be viewed in Figure 1 of the Appendices below.

Awareness for the project was spread by visiting various student organizations, clubs, and classrooms to discuss the issue and let them know how they can help. Since it was known that many students could not donate much to help these horses, we suggested that they can donate money to the Center as a holiday gift to friends and family. By allowing the donor to donate money in someone else’s name, the gift receiver can be recognized for their support to the horses at the Equine Science Center. In recognition for their support, the donor or gift recipient will receive a Thank You letter as well as a picture and information on a Teaching and Research mare of their choice. The amount of the donation will allow these horses to be cared for in various ways as shown below:

\$10 Feed a Horse for a Day
\$20 House a Horse for a Day
\$30 Vaccination for a Horse
\$50 Trim a Horse’s Feet
\$100 Horse Care for a Week

Although these specific amounts tell you what can be done with your donation, any amount is accepted and appreciated. Donations are accepted by checks made payable to Rutgers University Foundation and sent along with the sign-up form to the Equine Science Center.

Additional awareness for the “Horse Heroes Project” was spread by a presentation made at the Equine Science Update which discusses what’s being done at the Equine Science Center to advance equine health, improve horse management practices, and their solutions to issues in the equine industry. We introduced the Unwanted Horse issue and proposed our solution for keeping the Rutgers horses and allowing them to continue their job. This was a great opportunity to spread awareness on the issue and ask for support from students as well as people of the equine community.

We also wrote a letter to the editor to two different newspapers to find more support from the equine community as well as students. The student population was targeted by writing an article for the Daily Targum, the Rutgers University newspaper. A letter was also written to the Asbury Park Press to reach out to the equine community. In addition to the letters to the editor, a letter was also written to New Jersey Assemblyman Ronald Dancer who is on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee asking to support increased funding for the Equine Science Center. In response, he said that he has already drafted and is preparing to introduce legislation that will enhance and preserve the equine industry, which includes the Equine Science Center. All three letters can be found below in the Letters to the Editor section below.

Solution for Unwanted Horses in the Equine Industry (CG)

In addition to our service project, we drafted a solution to the Unwanted Horse issue that can be applied to the entire equine community. A fund could be set up that will provide money for any horse owner that cannot afford to continue caring for their horse. This fund can be overseen by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) to ensure that this fund can be made available to any horse owner in need and be regulated to make sure everyone is taking advantage of this protocol. This solution will prevent healthy horses that are unwanted from being euthanized or sent to slaughterhouses. It will also help horse owners that cannot afford to help their sick or injured horse that is suffering and needs to be euthanized or treated.

Many horses that become unwanted are retired racehorses or show horses that no longer win in competitions. Their owner will usually pay to have their retired horse euthanized even though the horse is perfectly healthy. Since the owner is willing to pay the euthanasia fee, their payment can be sent to the equine fund instead of paying for the euthanasia of their healthy horse. Their horse can then be sent to a Horse Rescue Organization that will take the unwanted horse, such as the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF). The money in the equine fund can then be used to help horses that are in need of euthanasia or treatment due to injury or illness if their owner cannot afford it. This will help prevent the suffering of these horses in need by providing a fund for their care. In addition, if the owner who utilized the fund to euthanize their sick/injured horse would like to adopt another horse who is healthy, the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation can adopt one of these horses to the owner at a reduced cost. A diagram outlining the process can be viewed below in Figure 2 of the Appendices below.

Although the TRF can only accept Thoroughbreds, it is a good starting point for this proposed solution, and can eventually be applied to many different horse rescue organizations and include all horse breeds. If the AAEP oversees the use of this fund for sick/injured horses, and ensures that healthy horses are not being euthanized or slaughtered; healthy horses can be saved while unhealthy horses are put to rest. The application of this proposed solution will prevent many unwanted horses from being slaughtered or euthanized. Additionally, horses that are unwanted due to injury or illness can also be saved by ending their suffering.

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Appendices:

Figure 1: Pamphlet created for the “Horse Heroes Project” in conjunction with the Equine Science Center.



(2nd page of pamphlet located on next page)

**Rutgers University
Teaching and Research
Horses: Have a
Preference on a
Specific Horse Hero?**

*** If you would like to receive information on a specific horse, please list their name on the line given on the order form. Their names are:

- Allie
- Baby
- Biscuit
- Bonnie
- Camy
- Cascade
- Epi
- Faxme
- Frankie
- Jackie
- June
- Lady
- Maggi
- Marcie
- Marge
- Molly
- Queenie
- Snowdrift
- Stardust
- Winnie



***A Little Bit About The Issue:
It costs roughly \$5,000 a year to keep a
horse in the state of New Jersey.***

The "Horse Heroes Project" was started as a way to prevent our RUTGERS horses from returning to the ranks of Unwanted Horses.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners defines unwanted horses as "horses that are no longer wanted by their current owner because they are old, injured, sick, unmanageable, or fail to meet their owner's expectations" or because the owner can no longer afford to keep them. Each year tens of thousands of horses become unwanted in the United States.

The Rutgers University Teaching and Research horses are all very much wanted, but without support from outside sources, they may not be able to keep their homes and jobs due to decreased availability of funds.

Sign-Up Form

Sign up for:	Qty:	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Feed a Horse for a Day	_____	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> House a Horse for a Day	_____	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Vaccination for a Horse	_____	\$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Trim a Horse's Feet	_____	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Horse Care for a Week	_____	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Amount	_____	\$ _____
Total:		_____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Horse Preference

*Please make checks payable to
Rutgers University Foundation.*

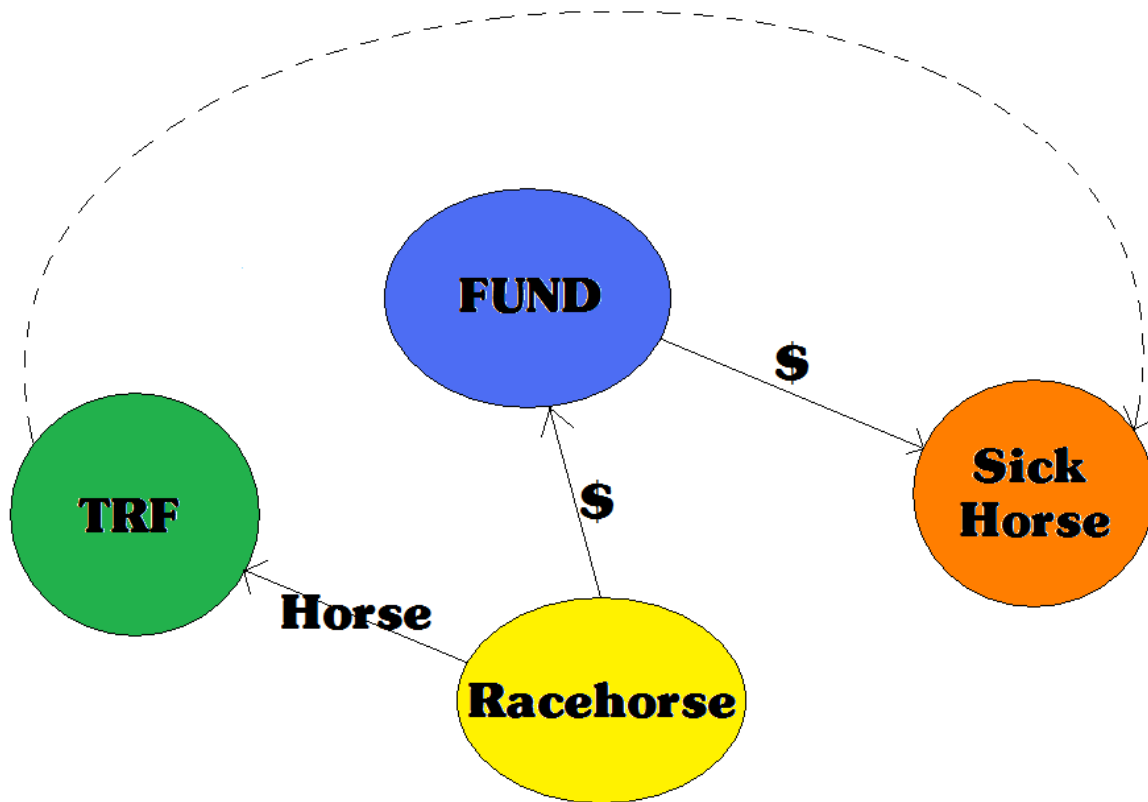
*For more information on the
Horse Heroes Program, please visit
esc.rutgers.edu/HorseHero/index.htm*

Equine Science Center

Administrative Services Building II
57 U.S. Highway 1
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8554

Phone: (848) 932-9419
E-Mail: esc@aesop.rutgers.edu

Figure 2: Proposed Solution for the Equine Industry



Letters to the Editor

Sent to The Daily Targum:

Raising Money for the Teaching and Research Horses at Rutgers

By Chelsea Goodwin

The Equine Science Center here at Rutgers University houses many retired racehorses which were donated to the university to assist in research conducted by faculty as well as providing a great resource for student learning. These research projects mainly center on equine physiology and the effects of exercise on equine athletes. In order for these horses to stay at the university and continue assisting in equine research, funds must be raised to care for them. It costs roughly \$2,000 to care for a horse when you do the labor yourself, so to combat the costs of horse care, a "Horse Heroes" program is being implemented to help raise money to continue supporting the teaching/research herd. This program offers a great alternative gift idea for the holidays by allowing people to donate money to the Center in someone's name. Upon donating, the donor and gift recipient receive a "Thank You" card and information on a specific horse of their choice. For more information about how to donate to a research horse in need, please visit esc.rutgers.edu to view the flyer under the "Horse Heroes" link. Any donation amount is accepted, so it is a great opportunity for students to support an extremely worthy cause. Your

support is needed in order to keep these horses at Rutgers, allowing them to continue to assist in teaching and research projects to provide better horse care.

Sent to Asbury Park Press:

Project to Support Rutgers Teaching and Research Mares

By Kate Felter

The American Association of Equine Practitioners defines unwanted horses as “horses that are no longer wanted by their current owner because they are old, injured, sick, unmanageable, or fail to meet their owner’s expectations” or because the owner can no longer afford to keep them.

Each year, tens of thousands of horses become unwanted for a variety of reasons. The Rutgers University Teaching and Research Mares, also known as “Horse Heroes” are known as heroes because of their efforts in research projects as well as their contributions towards student experiences in a research facility. The “Horse Heroes Project” was started to help fund these mares because of the decreasing budget provided to care for them. These horses are very much wanted, and with the help from outside sources we can make sure that they keep their homes and continue to help the Equine Science Center with its contributions to the equestrian community.

It is a small thing to ask that you help support these mares so that they can continue their work in ensuring better horse care through research and education. For more information, go to esc.rutgers.edu.

Letter to Assemblyman Ronald Dancer

Dear Assemblyman Dancer,

My name is Chelsea Goodwin and I am a senior at Rutgers University, majoring in Animal Science. I am writing to you to discuss a concern I have regarding the “Unwanted Horse Issue.” This is an issue that is important to me, as well as many others in the equine community. Based on your support regarding the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, I am sure this issue is of concern to you as well. There are a large amount of horses becoming unwanted for many reasons which may include: no longer winning races or competitions, injury or illness, financial burden, or the unanticipated labor associated with owning a horse. As you know, many horse owners would like to send their horse to a slaughterhouse to alleviate these burdens that their horse is causing. However, this is not a moral solution to the problem.

I want to propose a solution that will help some unwanted horses retain a permanent home. The Equine Science Center at Rutgers University currently has over 60 horses which were all unwanted before arriving at Rutgers. These horses are a valuable asset to the Center, as well as the community, where they assist in research which results in better horse care and education to both students and horse owners. In order to keep these horses from being unwanted, funding is a necessity to provide the horses with food, shelter, and veterinary care.

Due to the high costs of providing horse care, I am asking for your help to increase state funding to the Equine Science Center. Without this funding, these horses cannot be cared for and may

become unwanted yet again. In order for these horses to have a home and prevent them from reaching the slaughterhouses, your help is essential. Please try to make this happen for the sake of the horses that have found a home where they are wanted and where they are a valuable part of the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Goodwin

Response from Assemblyman Dancer:

Chelsea,

I have drafted and am preparing to introduce legislation that will provide the statutory authority for funding to preserve, advance and enhance the overall economic viability of the Equine Industry. The Equine Science Center will qualify for this type of funding.

Thanks for your email.

Ron