

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program

Wild Horse and Burro Program Animal Welfare Priorities





1. Water

Water is the basis for all life, without water living organisms can't survive. Wild horses and burros will not survive or thrive without water. Regardless of where they are living, on the range, or once they have been gathered and removed from public lands.

Fresh clean water must always be available to wild horses and burros. Wild horses can easily consume 12 to 15 gallons of water per day, and burros can easily consume 8 to 10 gallons per day.

Snow is not a substitute for water in winter months, you must ensure that wild horses and burros have water in winter months.





2. Forage/Feed

Having adequate forage in a natural setting a key to having healthy wild horses and burros on healthy public lands. Wild horses and burros must be managed in a manner that protects the native vegetation from being overgrazed. Overgrazing leads to long-term damage of native vegetation that can take many years to recover if not managed properly.

Having adequate feed is key to having healthy wild horses and burros once they have been removed from public lands.

Generally wild horses and burros should be provided with 2-3% of their body weight daily, by providing this wild horses and burros should be maintained in a body condition score of 4 or greater. Animals is body condition scores greater than 6 could be at risk for health issues.





3. Cover/Shelter

Wild horses and burros use natural cover such as topography, shrubs, and trees to protect themselves in harsh environments, and especially in wind. In the wild this should be part of your considerations from managing wild horses and burros within a herd management area.

Shelter requirements vary once wild horses and burros have been removed from the range. BLM has worked with to develop what is required by regions of the US for shelter requirements. Sometimes it is more important to have the shelter option in case it is needed.





4. Space

Wild horses and burros need to have the ability to move, this helps to allow for them to interact with other wild horses and burros, play, and the ability to get away from danger.



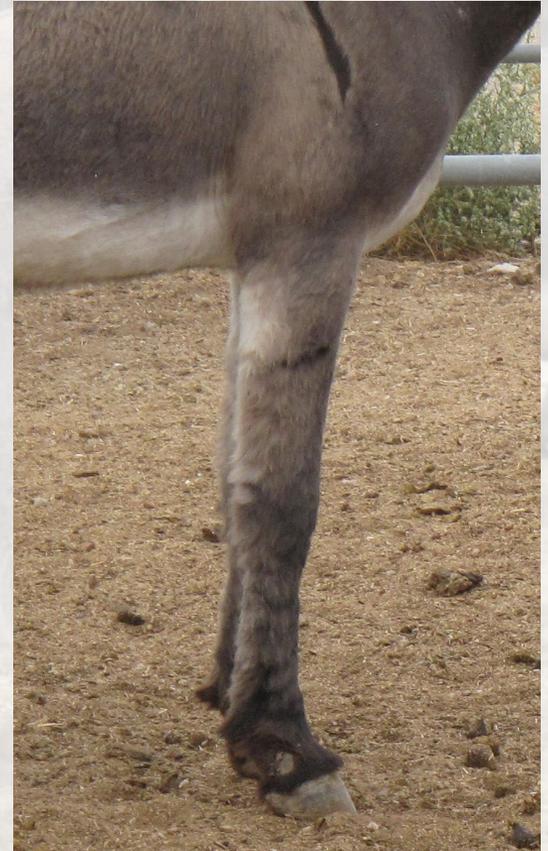


5. Sound/Healthy Legs & Hooves

Wild horses and burros need to have legs and hooves that will allow for them to move and have normal flight responses, they also need to be able to move from water and forage/feed to remain healthy.

Defects that cause lameness are not healthy for any of our wild horses and burros. Wild horses and burros that have long hooves can cause long-term issues with soundness of the animal.

Improper hoof care is the most common cause of lameness in horses and burros. Establishing a regular program for preventative hoof care and maintenance before animal's feet are too long.





6. Biosecurity Plan

Having a plan on how we are going to help prevent biosecurity concerns including disease transmission is instrumental in having healthy populations of wild horses and burros on the range as well as once they have been removed from public lands.

Prevention:

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Benjamin Franklin
“Intellectuals solve problems; geniuses prevent them.” Albert Einstein
“Treatment without prevention is simply unsustainable.” Bill Gates
“Prevention is the best medicine to stop disease before it starts.” GSK
“Prepare and prevent, don’t repair and repent.” Unknown
“A culture of safety is a journey, not a destination, it requires our continuing diligence.” Terry J. Moulton

Prevention

- Vaccination
- Sanitation
- Risk Assessment
- Monitoring

Responding

- Quarantine
- Sanitation
- Monitoring
- Communications



7. Handling

- Using pressure and release methods when moving and handling wild horses and burros.
- Allowing wild horses and burros to move at their own pace when its safe to do so.
- Recognizing differences in handling wild horses and burros.
- Taking the time needed.
- Use of handling aids.





8. Vaccination Program

Protecting naïve wild horses and burros once they are confined in large groups is essential for the long-term health of the animals. Staying current with your vaccination program also helps reduce the risk to all wild horses and burros from potentially life-threatening diseases and helps reduce the spread of disease within animals. Additionally, if a vaccinated animal gets sick, the disease may be less severe, and the sick animal may be less likely to spread it to other animals.

BLMs vaccination policy requires vaccinations for:

- Eastern and Western Equine Encephalomyelitis
- Influenza
- Equine Herpes (RHINO)
- Tetanus
- West Nile Virus
- Rabies
- Strangles





9. Timely Healthcare

It is vital that we make timely healthcare decisions and treat conditions that can be treated in a timely manner. It is also important that, when it is time to make the decision about euthanasia, we also do so promptly. Delaying those decisions is not fair for the animals and can cause greater issues or injury. Making the decision to euthanize an animal can be difficult - we all know that. If you are unable to make those decisions, ensure that someone on your team can do so.



10. Enrichments

Recognizing the enrichments that are already use.

