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The Unwanted Horse – Factsheet

National :

Over 100,000 horses yearly are deemed 'UNWANTED"

Currently the BLM's designated wild horse herds are 50-100 % over range allocation

- ⇒ BLM is feeding more than 36,000 horses, at a cost of over $37 million yearly.
- ⇒ Efforts by BLM to reduce excess populations are being thwarted by legal injunctions
- ⇒ BLM is advertising for private lands to place excess 'Mustangs'-$40 million has been allocated.

Feral bands, not to be confused with designated wild horses, exist on public, private and tribal Lands. These herds are expanding rapidly, as no control measures exist. These bands are expanding unchecked to the detriment of the eco-system, wildlife, and ultimately to the health of both wild and feral herds.

The GAO reports that the welfare of the horse has significantly declined since the halt of horse slaughter in the U.S. Also, the GAO reports increases in abandonment, abuse and neglect.

New Mexico:

Over 20,000 horses are estimated to exist currently in the state.

According to the Navajo Nation, gathering of feral horses has cost Tribal Governments $100/ head or more.

Under current economic conditions, NMLB is witnessing increasing numbers of owners unable to care for their horses.

Horse rescue facilities in New Mexico are at or over capacity.

- ⇒ Each rescue depends on donations, which are declining
- ⇒ The cost of maintaining a horse at a rescue can be as high as $3000/yr.
- ⇒ According to an NMLB survey of New Mexico rescue facilities, rescues receive 3-50 calls per month for requests to take in horses.

Livestock Markets are finding there is virtually no market for old and young horses, resulting in the market unable to recoup expenses.

Any solutions?

Presently, slaughter remains the only feasible response to excess populations of horses. Because processing was forced outside the United States by animal rights groups, we have forfeited the regulatory oversight and control that would assure safety and humane treatment. Alternatives to slaughter, such as humane euthanasia & disposal, or birth control, presently lack sufficient resources and financial support to bring the population down to a manageable size. Such a level of resources would necessarily be massive, given the size of the problem.

Possibilities:

- Assist tribes with gathering of Feral horses to reduce populations. Once populations are at manageable levels, then stabilization through fertility control is feasible.

- Educate the potential horse owner on the financial investment needed to own a horse.

- Establish a clearing facility to take in unwanted horses, rehabilitate or terminate as conditions dictate

- Assure availability of funding necessary to care for and dispose of large numbers of horses if and when they are presented to the Livestock Board under Chapter 77-13 NMSA (The Livestock Code).