



Creating Greener Pastures for Horses

A domesticated horse has a few fundamental needs: a healthy, active life with fields to run in, good food and water, and the companionship of other equines and of humans who understand her. While many horses find owners who can fill these needs, others fall victim to abuse, neglect, or unspeakably inhumane deaths.

To protect them from these fates, we are fighting the slaughter of horses for human consumption and targeting cruel practices such as horse soring. We're showcasing rescued horses and humane training methods at events attended by throngs of horse enthusiasts. And we're providing sanctuary for hundreds of rescued equines at our animal care centers in Texas and Oregon.

The HSUS is also advocating for their wild brethren, the mustangs who inhabit the country's western plains and mountains. Pressured by ranchers, the Bureau of Land Management has managed them through inhumane roundups ending in the warehousing of tens of thousands of animals accustomed to roaming free. We're working with the agency on a new plan that focuses on humane methods such as a birth control vaccine. We're also supporting legislation to protect wild horses from being sold for slaughter.

Second Chances

After a decade of being trained to run as fast as possible, Miss Judge had nowhere left to go. She was virtually a goner, sold at the New Holland, Pa., auction to a buyer who intended to sell her for meat.

Saved in the nick of time by Angel Acres Horse Haven Rescue, the former racehorse was eventually adopted—but not before a session with natural horsemanship expert Pat Parelli. Partnering with The HSUS to hold seven training events in 2009, Parelli used his knowledge of the species to show packed arenas a kinder, gentler method of working with rescued horses.



Miss Judge (right) with her new friend Oliver.

The exhibitions are at the heart of an HSUS initiative to educate the public about the care of these animals, who all too often end up abandoned, neglected, or killed for their meat at slaughter plants in Mexico and Canada. The journey to get there is traumatic, the killing methods brutal. While slaughter facilities in the U.S. have been shuttered, a federal ban is needed to keep them closed for good and to stop the transport of American horses to plants outside our borders. An HSUS-backed federal bill to do just that, introduced in 2009, has garnered widespread support.

A Crackdown on Horse Soring

Tennessee walking horses have a unique gait, one celebrated by those who love these beautiful animals. But to exaggerate their natural movements for the show ring, some people apply caustic chemicals to the horses' ankles, causing them to step higher to avoid the pain—a practice known as soring.

The federal Horse Protection Act of 1970 prohibits the participation of sored horses in exhibitions. But as The HSUS reported in a 2009 video exposé, the industry has been poorly self-policed, the law's enforcement has long been underfunded, and USDA inspectors have never been able to make significant headway in curbing the practice.

The HSUS has been pushing for years for more frequent and stringent USDA inspections, and for the money needed to make enforcement effective. Signs that the USDA is beginning to crack down are growing. In September 2009, inspectors at the 71st Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration—the industry's largest show, held annually—found more than 400 violations of the HPA. It was the greatest number documented at any show in recent memory and more than 200 higher than the number recorded the year before.

