

# **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANUAL**



## WELCOME, AND THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!

Welcome to the South Florida SPCA's Volunteer Program. We are grateful that you have chosen the SFSPCA as the benefactor of your time and energy. Volunteers are a crucial element to our organization. It is unfortunate that horse and livestock abuse continues in Miami-Dade. Volunteering with the SFSPCA means that you are now an important part of the solution for suffering horses and other livestock.

This Volunteer Booklet provides information about what constitutes abuse, horse health and care, safety tips, and valuable information regarding horses and other animals that the SFSPCA rescues. The booklet also provides all the policies and procedures of the volunteer program.

Thank you so much for joining us in our mission to "rescue and rehabilitate horses and other hooved friends in Miami-Dade and safely rehome them across the country." The SFSPCA culture is to create an environment that makes it a privilege to work or volunteer at the SFSPCA and cultivate pride in what we do from bottom to top. We are happy to have you part of our team.

**[WWW.HELPTHEHORSES.ORG](http://WWW.HELPTHEHORSES.ORG)**

Please be sure to visit our website to learn more about SFSPCA.

### NON- DISCRIMINATION POLICY

South Florida Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SFSPCA) does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors and clients.

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## ABOUT THE SOUTH FLORIDA SPCA

The South Florida Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, horse & hoofed friends rescue (SFSPCA) is the last line of defense for abused and abandoned horses and other hoofed friends in Miami-Dade County. We are the only thing standing between them and starvation, death and even slaughter. We have rescued over 2,000 horses and other hoofed friends since being founded in 1992. SFSPCA works in partnership with local law enforcement to respond 24/7 to investigate cruelty and abandonment cases. All the horses and other hoofed friends who reside at the SFSPCA Rescue Ranch are a result of having to be seized for their own protection of having been found abandoned or at large.

SFSPCA is a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization and is not affiliated with any national organization such as the ASPCA. Miami Dade Animal Services provides a portion of our funding, with the majority coming from private donors, charitable foundation, and corporate sponsors.



*SFSPCA works in cooperation with local law enforcement*

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the South Florida Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Inc. is to rescue and rehabilitate horses and other hoofed friends in Miami-Dade and safely rehome them across the country.

- **Rescue** horses and other hoofed friends from cruelty situations and bring them to safety
- **Rehabilitate** the animals physically and mentally with proper nutrition, medical care and training
- **Rehome** to qualified adopters after health and trust are restored
- **Educate** the public on responsible equine and other rescued animals care and well-being
- **Advocate** for legislation and humane protocols governing the treatment of equines and other animals



*Sambuca rescued and rehabilitated*

## **FORMS OF ABUSE**

- Confinement of animals with insufficient space and shade
  - Abandonment or lack of food and water
  - Overworked, physically tormented
  - Mutilation or killing
  - Slaughter for human consumption
  - Psychological
- 

## **REPORTING ANIMAL CRUELTY**

- Do not call the SFSPCA first. The SFSPCA is not a first responder, law enforcement is. Law enforcement will contact the SFSPCA for intervention after they assess the situation.
  - If you see someone hurting an animal, or you see an animal that looks sick, injured, or deprived of food, water, shelter, or veterinary care, or loose or abandoned, call your local police. In Miami-Dade, call Animal Services at 3-1-1 or 305-468-5900.
  - To report a horse that is stray or appears to be a victim of cruelty or neglect, call 9-1-1 for emergencies, or 786-218-8344 for non-emergencies. Law enforcement will contact SFSPCA to help investigate, and to rescue, shelter and care for them if needed.
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## **WAYS TO HELP BESIDES VOLUNTEERING AT THE RANCH**

- Promote SFSPCA among your friends, family, and associates.
- Financial donations or annual membership.
- Donation of Wish List items such as horse supplies, tools, & equipment.
- Ask friends / family to donate as birthday / holiday gift.
- Assist with fundraisers/public events.
- Attend barn clean-up and construction days.
- Hold your own fundraiser to benefit the organization.
- Use YOUR special skills to help (writing, marketing, etc.)
- Host Birthday fundraiser on Facebook
- Share our social media posts
- Consider adding the SFSPCA in your Will or in your legacy planning

## YOUR ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

- This is your chance to help abused, abandoned, and neglected horses and other hooved friends. It is hard work sometimes, physically, and emotionally, but also very rewarding!
- Upon completion of the Volunteer Orientation / Horse Safety Class you will be eligible to start training as a volunteer for Ranch Hand duties on scheduled days of the week - Wednesday or Sunday from 9:30AM to 4:00PM.
- Volunteers must be at least 12 years old; volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.
- Please be available to assist with special events and fundraisers.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- If you are on Facebook, we invite you to join the South Florida SPCA Member & Volunteer Private Group
- Ask Michelle to add you to our Volunteer WhatsApp chat.
- Please have a happy, positive attitude.
- Be properly dressed. Wear long pants, durable closed-toed shoes (no steel toes) and be prepared to get dirty!
- Always remember to sign in and out in the notebook in the feed/break area, our grants depend on it!
- Park in designated areas out front only and **DRIVE SLOWLY!**
- Always close and latch all gates.
- Always be alert and keep your attention on the horses.
- People safety first, **THEN** animal safety.
- **DO NOT EVER** go into a pasture or stall alone.
- Know where first aid items are located.
- Be respectful of others and always follow directions for your safety.

## TYPICAL RANCH TASKS

- Help keep the barn clean by picking up trash and making sure rakes and other tools are put back in their proper place.
- Muck stalls and the turn out areas if needed.
- Assist staff with feeding if needed.
- Scrub water buckets, troughs and feed pans as directed.
- Clean fans & horse tack.
- Pull weeds and other property maintenance.

### **\*\* WARNING \*\***

**Horses are very large animals and have potential to be dangerous. Under Florida Law, an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for an injury to, or the death of, a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risk of equine activities.**

# General Guidelines & Policies

## **DRESS CODE**

Volunteers are visible to guests at all times while on the property and should dress accordingly. Long pants are recommended, but shorts are acceptable at mid-thigh length or below. Spaghetti strap or strapless tops or exposing cleavage is not permitted. SPCA T-shirts representing your achieved level in the program are required. Closed-toe shoes or boots are required to be worn at all times. We discourage dangling earrings or expensive, jewelry as the horses can grab at these items. Volunteers may get wet, muddy or dirty while working. Rain boots are encouraged during the rainy season.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA CONTACT**

Any event or inquiry from the news media that affects or is likely to affect the overall reputation of South Florida SPCA must be routed to the executive director or his or her designee. If a volunteer's social networking includes any information related to South Florida SPCA, Inc. the volunteer must not represent in any way that the volunteer is speaking on behalf The South Florida SPCA, Inc. Social Media posts must never cast dispersions on the operations, staff or volunteers of the South Florida SPCA. Content should always remain positive and share the value in participating in our mission, nor should any information private to the operations of SFSPCA be posted. Volunteers should not post other volunteers without permission.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

At South Florida SPCA, Inc., we foster a team environment. Rumor control is everyone's responsibility. The spreading of inappropriate information to fellow volunteers, staff or to the public will not be tolerated. This includes excessive questioning of the judgment or actions of staff members, executive director and/or the board of directors. Any issues, concerns or grievances of volunteers should be addressed in person or in writing to the volunteer coordinator or Barn Manager. Every effort will be made to achieve resolution. As a volunteer you are an ambassador of The South Florida SPCA, inc. Whether on the property, at an event or at an outreach opportunity you are representing the organization. With this in mind, please dress appropriately, refrain from using offensive language and please be considerate of our mission. In the event a question is posed, and you do not know the answer, please advise the supporter that you will find the answer with an "I don't know, but let's find the answer". Responding in this manner will help to dispel incorrect information regarding our mission, our beliefs and/or our actions As this can be harmful to the success of the organization.

## **Use of Force or Violence**

No volunteer may use force, hit, or use inhumane handling tactics with any animal housed at the rescue. Violence and/or inappropriate language/behavior (name calling, bullying, harassment, screaming, etc.) against other volunteers will not be tolerated. In any of the mentioned cases the Volunteer Coordinator or the Barn Manager will ask you to remove yourself from the facility immediately.

## **FIREARMS**

Weapons are not permitted on South Florida SPCA, Inc. premises.

## **SMOKING/ALCOHOL/DRUGS**

South Florida SPCA, Inc. maintains a NO SMOKING policy. Due to the fire hazard that an open flame presents in an environment filled with straw, hay and wood, smoking is not permitted on or near the sanctuary grounds. Absolutely no alcohol or drugs are allowed on the property at any time. No person shall enter the premises after having consumed any alcoholic beverages or narcotics. Any person believed to be impaired due to alcohol or drugs will be removed from the property.

# The Pillars of Animal Welfare

## The 3 F's of horse welfare are Friends, Forage, and Freedom.

Coined by experts as foundational to equine well-being, these pillars emphasize the need for social companionship, constant access to food, and the ability to move freely to support a horse's natural physical and mental health.

**Friends (Social Interaction):** Horses are herd animals that require the companionship of other horses to feel secure and mentally satisfied.

**Forage (Continuous Feeding):** Horses are designed to graze almost constantly. Providing continuous or trickle feeding is essential for digestive health and to prevent stress-related behaviors.

**Freedom (Movement and Choice):** This involves freedom of movement, ideally through turnout, allowing them to walk, run, and graze, as well as the freedom to choose their environment.

## The Five Domains

The new, updated model of the "5 Freedoms" is the Five Domains Model, which shifts focus from merely minimizing negative experiences to actively promoting positive animal welfare. Developed by Dr. David Mellor and others, it covers: (1) Nutrition, (2) Environment, (3) Health, (4) Behavior, and (5) Mental State, placing a strong emphasis on the animal's subjective emotional experience.

### Key Differences: 5 Freedoms vs. 5 Domains

- 5 Freedoms (Old): Focused on reducing suffering (freedom from hunger, discomfort, pain, fear, and freedom to act normally).
- 5 Domains (New): Recognizes that physical states (1–4) impact the 5th domain (Mental State). It aims to provide opportunities for positive emotions like comfort, pleasure, and interest, rather than just preventing pain.

### The 5 Domains Breakdown

- Nutrition: Access to fresh water and a proper diet.
- Environment: Comfortable, safe, and clean surroundings.
- Health: Prevention or rapid treatment of diseases and injuries.
- Behavior: Space and facilities to express natural behaviors.
- Mental State: The result of the first four domains, focusing on ensuring a positive emotional state.

# IDENTIFYING HORSES

**Colt:** Male horse under 4-years-old

**Stallion:** Uncastrated male

**Gelding:** Castrated male

**Filly:** Female horse under 4 years old

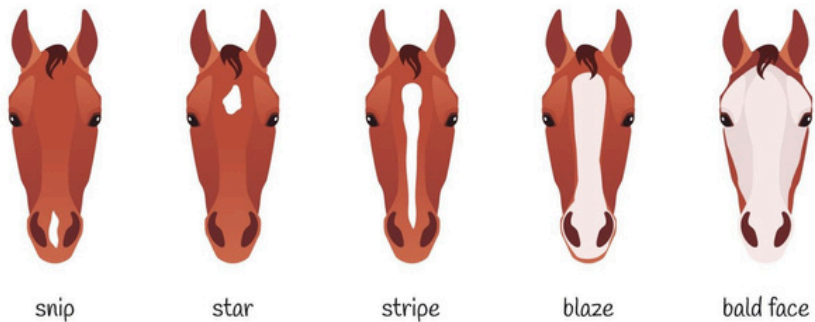
**Mare:** Female horse over 4 years old

**Foal:** Horse under 1 year old

**Yearling:** Horses between 1 & 2 years old

**Weanling:** Young horse weaned from its mother, usually 6 months to 1 year old

## Facial markings

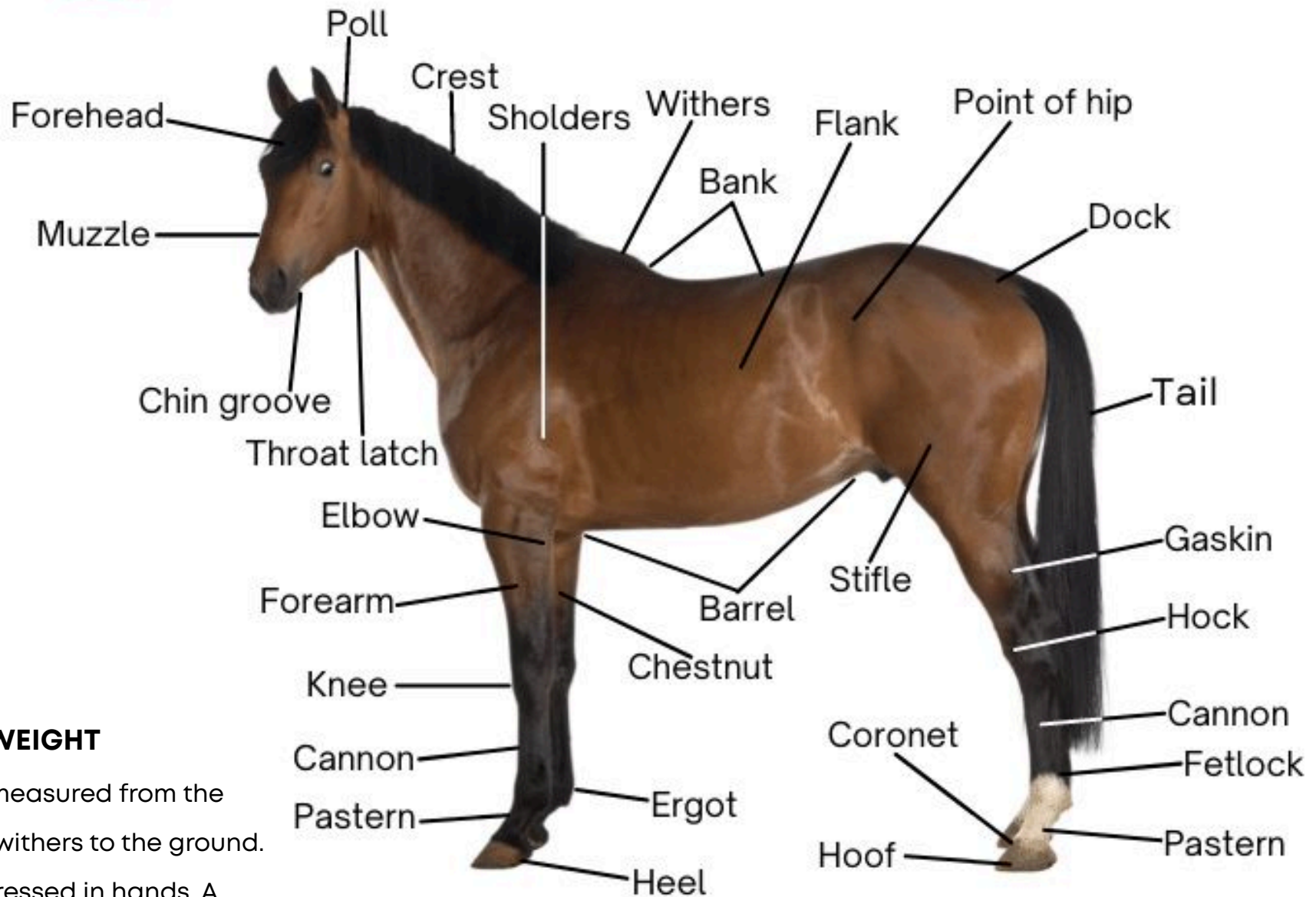


## Leg markings



## Common Horse Colors





## HORSE HEIGHT & WEIGHT

- A horse's height is measured from the highest point of the withers to the ground.
  - Horse height is expressed in hands. A hand is 4 inches. A horse that is 62 inches high at the withers would be 15.2 hands.
- Equines under 14.2 hands are considered ponies, over 14.2 hands are considered horses, under 8.5 hands are considered miniature horses.

- One method to estimate a horse's actual weight is by using a commercially available weight tape or by calculating his body weight from the heart girth and length formula

## UNHEALTHY HORSE

- Not eating
- Biting at sides or looking at the sides repetitively
- Rolling / Thrashing for more than a few minutes
- Laying down at odd times or laying down in odd locations
- Pawing the ground
- Sweating while at constant rest
- Restlessness in the stall or paddock
- Lameness
- Swelling on any part of the horses' body
- Discharge from eyes or nostrils
- Any and all lacerations / rubs / burn etc.
- Coat is dull
- Underweight



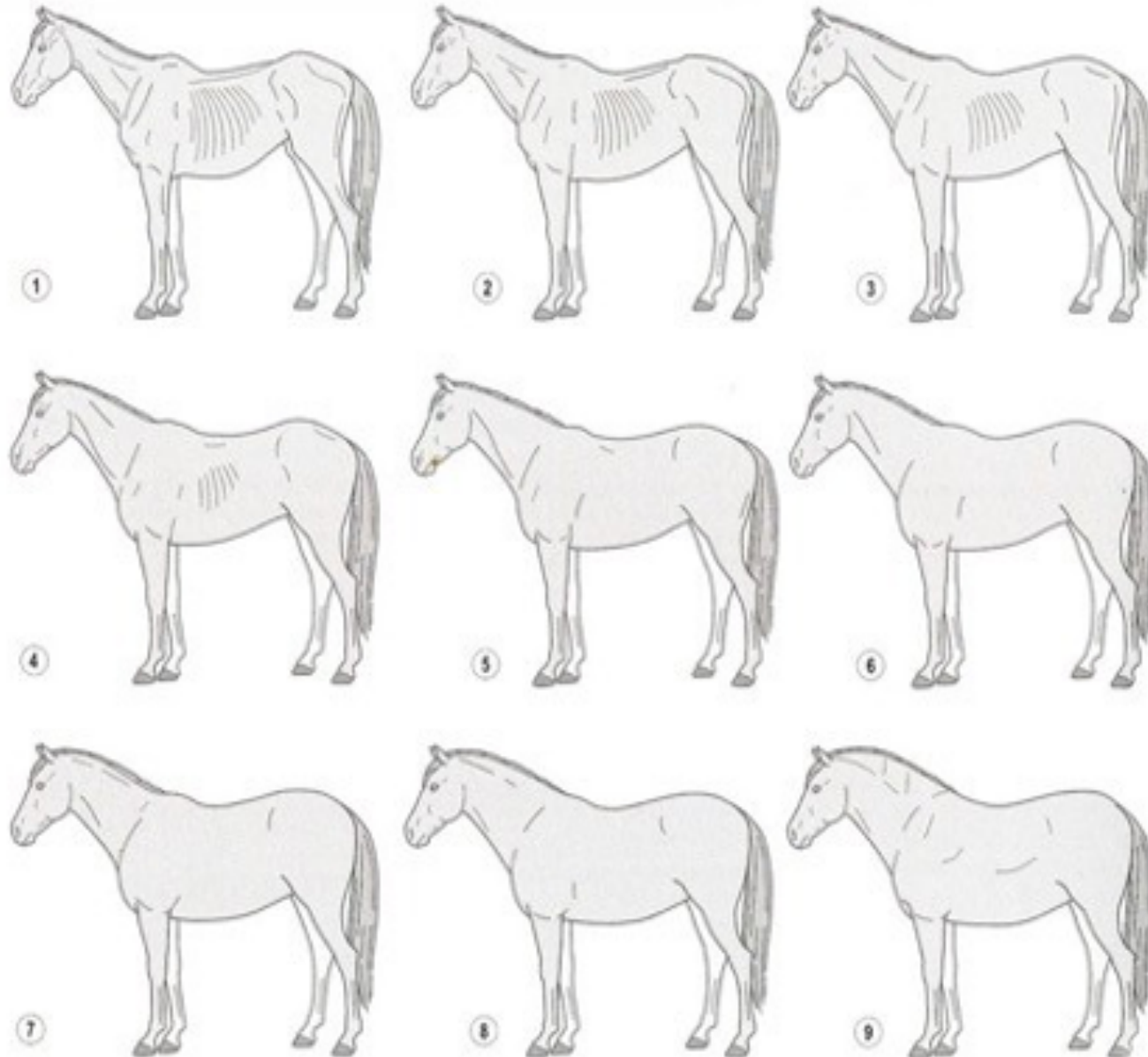
## HEALTHY HORSE

- Coat is shiny
- Muscles are well formed
- Shows signs of interest in surroundings
- Acts energetic
- Does not act tender-footed and walks normally
- Eats all food he / she is given
- Normal vital signs
- Does not act tired, sluggish, or lethargic



## HENNEKE HORSE BODY CONDITIONS SCORING SYSTEM

The Henneke Scoring System is a scientific method of evaluating a horse's body condition regardless of breed, body type, sex or age. It is now widely used by law enforcement agencies as an objective method of scoring a horse's body condition in horse cruelty cases. The Chart is accepted in a court of law



# HENNEKE HORSE BODY CONDITIONS SCORING SYSTEM

## **1 – POOR**

Animal extremely emaciated. Spinous processes, ribs, tailed, and tuber coxa and ischia projecting prominently. Bone structure of withers, shoulders and neck easily noticeable. No fatty tissue can be felt.

## **1 - VERY THIN**

Animal emaciated. Slight fat covering over base of spinous processes, transverse processes of lumbar spinous processes feel rounded. Spinous processes, ribs, tailed, tuber coxa and ischia prominent. Withers, shoulders, and neck structures faintly discernible.

## **2 - THIN**

Fat buildup about halfway on spinous processes, transverse processes cannot be felt. Slight fat covering ribs. Spinous processes and ribs easily discernible. Tail-head prominent, but individual spinous processes cannot be visually identified. Tuber coxa appear rounded, but easily discernible. Tuber ischia not distinguishable. Withers, shoulders and neck accentuated.

## **3 - MODERATELY THIN**

Negative crease along back. Faint outline of ribs discernible. Tail-head prominence depends on confirmation, fat can be felt around it. Tuber coxa not discernible. Withers, shoulders and neck not obviously thin.

## **4 - MODERATE**

Back level. Ribs cannot be visually distinguished but can be easily felt. Fat around tail-head beginning to feel spongy. Withers appear rounded over spinous processes. Shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body.

## **5 - MODERATELY FLESHY**

May have slight crease down back. Fat over ribs feels spongy. Fat around tail-head feels soft. Fat beginning to be deposited along the side of the withers, behind the shoulders, and along the sides of the neck.

## **6 - FLESHY**

May have crease down back. Individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable filling between ribs with fat. Fat around tail-head is soft. Fat deposited along withers, behind shoulders and along the neck.

## **7 - FAT**

Crease down back. Difficult to feel ribs. Fat around tail-head very soft. Area along withers filled with fat. Area behind shoulder filled with fat. Noticeable thickening of neck. Fat deposited along inner thighs.

## **8 - EXTREMELY FAT**

Obvious crease down back. Patchy fat appearing over ribs. Bulging fat around tail-head, along withers, behind shoulders and along neck. Fat along inner thighs may rub together. Flank filled with fat.

## SAFE HORSE HANDLING

- Because they are prey animals, horses can scare easily!
- Approach horses at an angle (the shoulder), that makes it easy for them to see you, speaking to them in a kind voice is also helpful.
- Be aware of objects in your horse's blind spot
- Don't run, shout, or make loud noises around horses while they are being handled
- Things that seem ordinary to you may be scary to your horse - they are very reactive to new people, places, changes and other things
- On windy days, prepare for horses to be more reactive.

## WHAT MAKES A HORSE SAFE TO WORK WITH?

- Respects you and your space
- Has been exposed to many different situations
- Is not food aggressive
- Does not rush through gates and openings
- Yields to pressure
- Leads nicely and stands quietly
- These are our rehabilitation goals

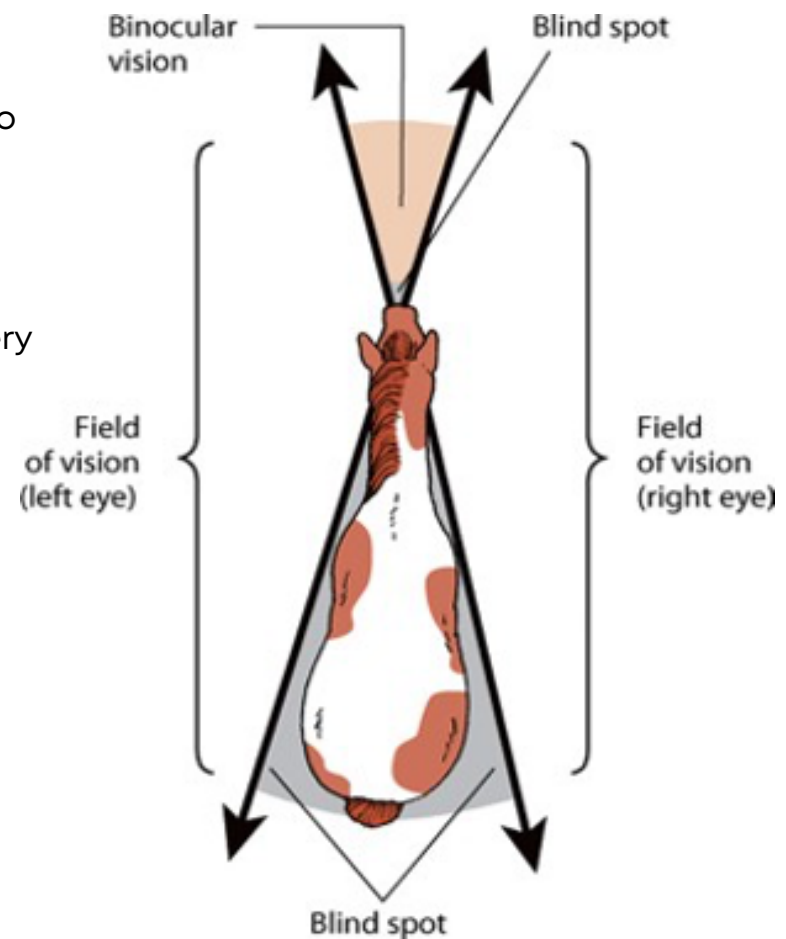
## HORSE BODY LANGUAGE

What we don't like to see:

- Head up high, "I am resistant" or "I don't want you to do this"
- Teeth showing and ears back, "I want you to yield to me, get out of my way". This is usually a warning
- Turning rear towards you, "I told you to move, now move!" This is another warning, soon to be followed by a kick
- Rearing and striking, "You didn't listen, and now I'm going to hurt you."
- Tail swishing
- Head tossing

What we do like to see:

- A soft eye
- Relaxed Ears
- Relaxed nostrils and calm breathing
- Standing in a relaxed posture
- Head down - relaxed and comfortable



# Horse Safety

**Approaching, catching.** Always speak to a horse to alert him to your presence before walking near; this avoids provoking his startle reflex. Approach from the side, to avoid his "blind" spots (directly in front of and behind him). Touch him first on the neck or shoulder, with a firm but gentle stroking motion.

Be especially careful when entering a pasture or paddock containing several horses (they can inadvertently jostle or step on you, or even kick).

Also, don't take grain or other food into a group of horses—this just entices them to crowd around you and could incite a "food fight," with you caught in the middle.

1. **Leading.** Always use a lead rope attached to the horse's halter, rather than grasping the halter itself, which provides no options if the horse were to startle. Be sure that the throat latch is closed/Snaped to the other side of the halter.

Don't coil the end of the lead rope around your hand, where the loops could tighten; instead, fold it back and forth and grasp the middle of the folds. Do not allow lead rope end to drag, because a horse could step on it.

To avoid being pulled over and dragged, never wrap a lead rope or any other line attached to a horse around any part of your body.

Don't allow the horse you're leading to touch noses with an unfamiliar horse, as this can lead the "strangers" to suddenly bite or strike at one another.

Do not follow another horse too closely to the horse in front of you, and do not let the horse you're leading sniff the butt of the horse in front of you.

2. **Grooming.** Stand near the shoulder or next to the hindquarters rather than directly in front of or directly behind a horse when grooming his head or brushing or braiding his tail.

To walk behind a horse, go either (1) close enough to brush against him (where a kick would have no real force), keeping one hand on his rump as you pass around; or (2) far enough away to be well out of kicking range.

Avoid ducking under the tie rope; you might cause the horse to pull back, and you'd be extremely vulnerable to injury if he did.

Be mindful of a horse's feet while you're working around him, as horses are often careless about where they step. When releasing a horse's foot after cleaning it, make sure your own foot isn't in the hoof's spot as it returns to the ground.

When tending to a horse's lower leg or hoof (as in applying a bandage), never kneel or sit on the ground. Remain squatting, so you can jump away in the event he startles.

## TYING A HORSE SAFELY

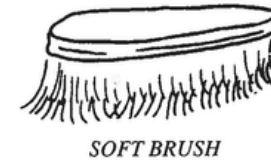
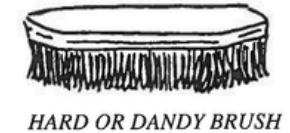
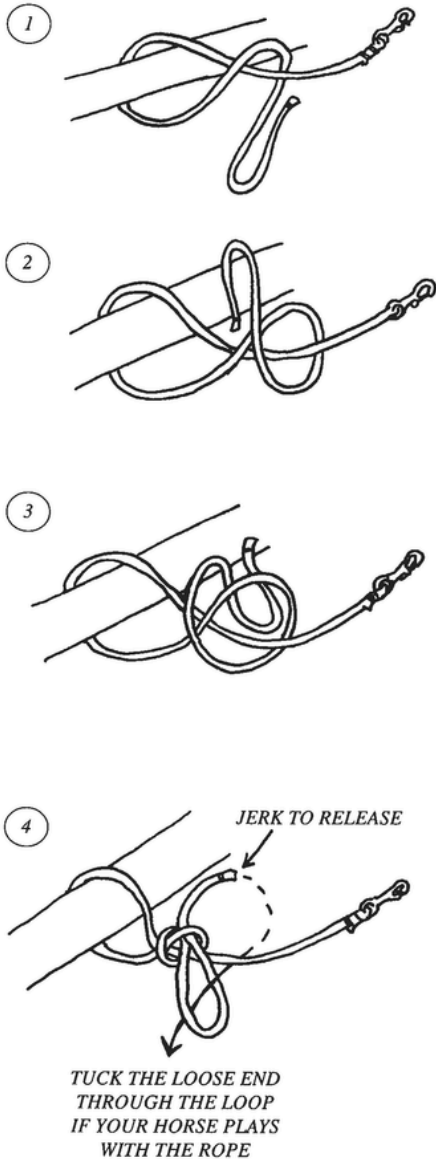
Horses should always be tied with a halter and lead rope, NEVER a bridle and reins. Horses may pull back and injure their mouth or break an expensive bridle if this rule is not followed.

- When you tie a horse up, always tie to something solid that he cannot break or pull loose. If he should pull back and break off a piece of board, he might run and drag it in a panic and get badly hurt.
- Tie a horse at the level of his back or a little higher. Tying him low may make him pull on the rope. He can get a foot over it and get hurt.
- Give him only enough rope for his nose to stretch to the ground no more or he can get hung up in the rope. A good test is to see (if you took the halter off the horse) if the top of the halter would just touch the ground when it is hanging from the tie rail. This is a safe length of rope for most tying (about 18" to 24"). For saddling, it is recommended to tie shorter.

## QUICK RELEASE KNOT

The best knot to use is a quick release knot (also called a safety knot). This is a jerk loose release knot that can be pulled loose quickly if a horse should pull back and fight the rope.

### QUICK RELEASE KNOT



### Curry Comb

Used on horse's body in a circular motion to bring the dirt to the surface. A hard curry comb should not be used on the face, legs, or any bony area on the horse.

### Hard Brush or Dandy Brush

Used in the direction of hair growth to remove the dirt. Brush in firm short strokes to remove deep down dirt. Be careful on the face with this brush.

### Soft Brush

Used on the face and body to remove surface dirt and put a shine on the horse's coat.

### Mane and Tail Comb

Used on the mane and tail to remove tangles. Start at the bottom and work towards the top, removing tangles as you go.

### Hoofpick

Used to remove dirt, rocks and manure from the horse's hooves. The hoofpick is held in the palm of your hand with the point away from your body. Always clean the hoof working away from yourself.

# Horse Handling Tips

When a horse refuses to lead, avoid pulling directly forward, which triggers an opposition reflex. Instead, use pressure and release by pulling to the side to unbalance them, or use a "driving" technique from behind with a stick or lead rope to encourage forward motion. Instantly release pressure the moment they take a step forward.

## Key Techniques for a Non-Leading Horse

- **Move the Feet Sideways:** If the horse is stuck, don't pull forward. Instead, pull the head to the side to disengage the hindquarters or pull in a circle. Once their feet move, they are more likely to move forward.
- **Apply and Release Pressure:** Maintain a steady, slight pressure on the lead rope and wait for the horse to step forward, releasing the pressure immediately as a reward.
- **Use the "Driving" Method:** Use a training stick or the end of your lead rope to tap the horse behind their hindquarters, encouraging them to move forward into the space you want them to occupy.
- **Redirect Energy:** If the horse tries to pull back or bolt, instantly turn them in a small circle around you to break their focus on resistance.
- **Check Position:** Stand at the shoulder, not in front of the horse, and make sure your body language is inviting rather than confrontational.
- **Stop Pulling:** Pulling creates a standoff. Release the tension to encourage them to move forward on their own.

## Safety Considerations

Never wrap the lead rope around your hand or wrist.

Ensure the halter is positioned correctly on the hard bony bridge of the nose, not on soft cartilage.

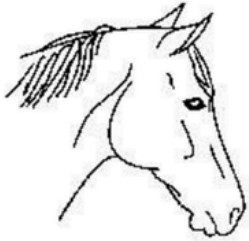
**If a horse rears**, release the hand closest to the horse's head so that you won't be jerked off the ground. If the horse doesn't calm down RIGHT AWAY just let go of the lead rope. It is easier to catch a horse that takes off and it avoids someone getting injured trying to hold on. Please remember that if this happens to let go of the horse and seek assistance.

## Releasing a Horse

1. When releasing a horse into a stall, always lead it completely through the door and turn it around to face the door before removing the halter.
2. When turning a horse out into pasture, always lead it completely into the pasture, turn it to face the gate and secure the gate before removing its halter. Always wait for the horse to be calm, and if necessary, loosely wrap lead around neck, so the horse doesn't "Bolt" from the halter as you are pulling it over the ears.
3. Never leave a halter on a horse that is turned loose. A horse may paw at its halter or accidentally get it caught on a fence or other object, which can result in severe damage and even possible death should the horse panic while he is stuck. There are too many horror stories of horses breaking their necks due to panicking from getting their halter stuck on something.

# Understanding Horse Language

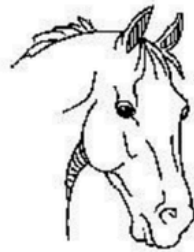
## Reading a Horse's Ears



**Ears forward but relaxed**  
Interested in what's in front of him.



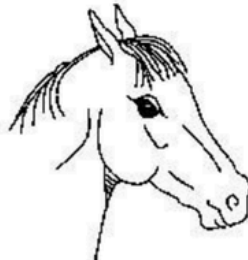
**Ears turned back but relaxed**  
listening to his rider or what's behind him.



**Ears pointed stiffly forward**  
alarmed or nervous about what's ahead. Looking out for danger.



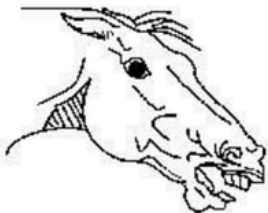
**Ears pointed left and right**  
relaxed, paying attention to the scenery on both sides.



**Ears stiffly back**  
annoyed or worried about what's behind him; might kick if annoyed.



**Droopy ears**  
calm and resting, horse may be dozing.



**Ears flattened against neck**  
violently angry, in a fighting mood.  
May fight, bite or kick.

### OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

- **Tucking the tail down tightly,**  
Danger to the rear,  
Horse may bolt, buck or kick,  
Watch out if ears are flattened too!
- **Switching the tail**  
Annoyance and irritation:
  - biting flies, stinging insects or tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- **Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.**  
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.  
Don't wake him up by startling him!
- **Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.**  
Threatening Gesture of an angry or bossy horse.  
Watch out for biting or kicking.

# What is the 20% rule?

The 20% rule is a widely accepted equine guideline suggesting a horse should carry no more than 20% of its body weight, including the rider, saddle, and equipment. It is a benchmark for preventing back pain, lameness, and fatigue. For a 1,000-lb horse, this means a total load of 200 lbs or less.

## Key Aspects of the 20% Rule

**Total Weight:** This includes the rider and the saddle (which can add 20–40 lbs).

**"Ideal" Body Weight:** The calculation should be based on a healthy, ideal weight, not an overweight, out-of-shape horse.

**Optimal Range:** While 20% is the maximum for many, some sources recommend 15–18% for long-term health and lighter work.

## Variables Influencing Carrying Capacity

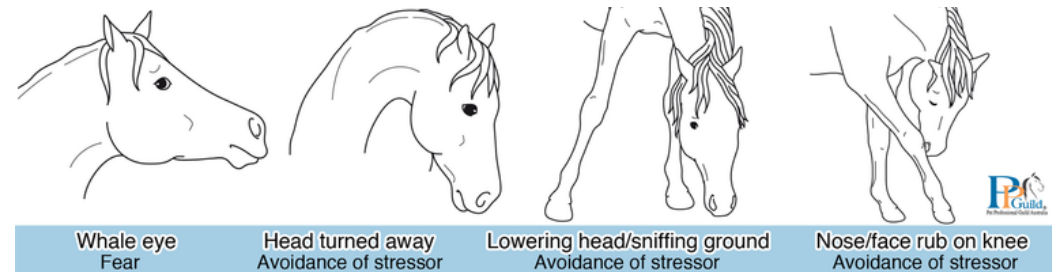
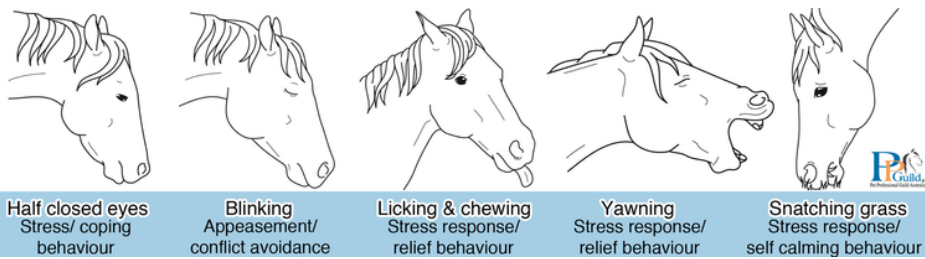
**Fitness & Conditioning:** A fit, well-muscled horse can carry more than an unconditioned one.

**Conformation:** Horses with broader loins, wider backs, and larger cannon bone circumference can handle more weight.

**Rider Skill:** A balanced, experienced rider who sits light is easier on a horse's back than a heavy-handed, unbalanced, or "dead weight" rider.

**Activity Type:** High-intensity work (jumping, jumping frequently) warrants a lighter load, while slow trail riding may allow for a slightly higher percentage.

**Breed Types:** While robust ponies and drafts often carry more, they can suffer from the same strain as lighter-boned breeds if overloaded.



## EYES HALF CLOSED, BLINKING, LICKING & CHEWING, YAWNING

These are referred to as displacement behaviours. This means they are part of normal equine body language, and are all potentially peaceful emotional states for a horse at rest. But when performed out of the context of their usual appearance, they are seen as signs of self “calming” and/or a stress response.

These are often the first signs that something is worrying the horse, and more overt behaviours such as freezing (sometimes seen as “stubborn”), bucking or bolting may follow.

Displacement behaviours are rarely seen in isolation. This is how we can know that the horse is displaying signs of stress or calming, rather than simply dozing or relaxing. Behaviours that are commonly seen to be displayed alongside each other are eyes half closed, blinking, licking and chewing, yawning, head turning away and head lowering towards the ground.

## SNATCHING GRASS

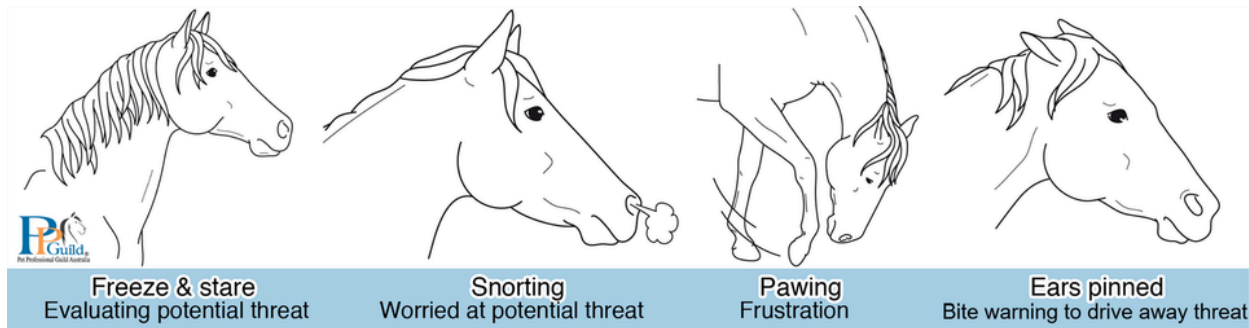
A horse experiencing stress may throw their head down and graze at an unusually rapid pace. This is often seen when a horse enters a new environment; for example, after unloading from a float. Eating is a self-soothing action when stress first exhibits, and allowing a horse to eat in these moments is not “giving in” to them, but allowing self-regulation of their stress, and a return to a more level emotional state.

## WHALE EYE

When more of the white of the eye is visible than is normally showing, due to the horse widening their eyes. Usually the head will be turned slightly away, while eyes remain fixated on the perceived threat. In breeds who naturally show some white around the eye even in a relaxed state, careful observation is needed to determine when they may be showing more than usual. In addition to the white (sclera), you can also observe tension in the face, especially around the eye and nostril areas.

## HEAD TURN AWAY, LOWERING HEAD/SNIFFING GROUND, NOSE/FACE RUB ON KNEE

A horse will sometimes display these behaviours when in a situation she finds stressful as a displacement behavior or as a conflict avoidance behaviour. These are known commonly as calming signals. A horse can display any of these when she is trying to show that she isn't a threat to the person she is interacting with. These behaviours can also be seen in potentially stressful horse-horse interactions - for example, horses meeting each other for the first time may turn their heads away after touching noses. These behaviours are often seen in conjunction with others such as blinking, eyes half closed, and licking and chewing. As with many potential stress signals, these may be seen in a different context - the horse may be scratching an itch, lowering her head to search for food, or turning her head away to look at something else. When we observe these behaviours, we should carefully consider the number and frequency of the behaviours occurring and identify any potential stressors in the horse's environment.



## **FREEZE AND STARE**

Occurs when a horse sees something that worries her. Usually combined with tense muscles and a raised head. Her gaze will fix on the potential threat, and this may be accompanied by snorting, sudden spooking, or a sequence of running (or “prancing”) and stopping again to freeze and stare as she evaluates the danger.

## **SNORTING**

Snorting can occur for a number of reasons, and the context and other body language needs to be taken into consideration when evaluating the possible ‘why’ Snorting can be used as a coping mechanism to ease tension in social situations. When new horses are meeting for the first time, it is common to hear them snort. It is a way for them to reduce any social tension when they are facing an unexpected event. Horses may snort when they are fearful of something.

Scientists have also found that the reaction of adrenaline can lead to snorting. Once their adrenaline gets flowing, it leads to a dry nose and mouth. Once the adrenaline fades, secretions of mucus and saliva form again, leading to the horse having to snort.

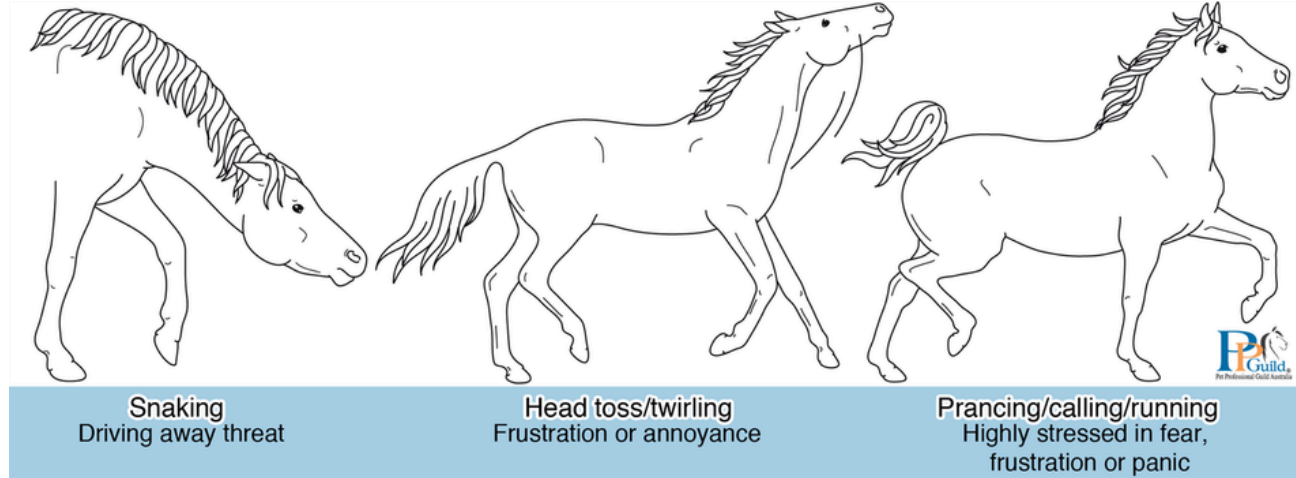
Another type of snorting occurs most commonly during calm and relaxing activities, most often exhibited along with a more relaxed facial expression.

## **PAWING**

Generally pawing is a sign of frustration, commonly seen when a horse is anxiously awaiting a meal delivery or when they’re unable to move forward naturally.

## **EARS PINNED**

Ears may flick backwards for a number of reasons, including simply listening to something behind them, but when pinned (often combined with a tense facial expression, wrinkled nose and “hard” eyes), it is generally a warning; an indication that the horse is defensive or otherwise uncomfortable. Often the warning is given in an attempt to create space: to prevent someone approaching, or cause someone to leave.



**Snaking**  
Driving away threat

**Head toss/twirling**  
Frustration or annoyance

**Prancing/calling/running**  
Highly stressed in fear,  
frustration or panic

## **SNAKING**

Snaking is when a horse lowers their head and moves it from side to side, with ears back, and often accompanied by bite threats. This behaviour functions to drive another horse, or other animal, out of the horse's space. When this is directed towards humans, it indicates the horse is feeling threatened or defensive, and in need of space.

There is a similar behaviour seen in wild and feral herds where a stallion is present; he will use this behaviour to drive the herd onwards.

## **HEAD TOSS/TWIRLING**

Head tossing may be seen in many different circumstances. It's a common 'problem' for ridden horses and a google search will find many ways to 'fix' head tossing in your horse. However, it should be noted that it is a way of your horse expressing their frustration at their current situation and should be addressed with a mind to discovering and solving the underlying cause, not simply suppressing the head toss.

## **PRANCING/CALLING/RUNNING**

Head up, ears pricked, eyes wide, prancing motion with feet. Tail is held up and often curled over the rump. Often accompanied by stop and freeze to stare at a potential threat, and snorting. Prancing can also be seen in play and when stallions are posturing, and it is important to know the difference between these so we do not mistake the horse's fear for "showing off".

Running and calling is commonly seen when a horse is distressed and fearful over another horse being taken out of her paddock, or when she has been moved to a new location away from her herd. The horse may gallop up and down the fence line, calling loudly. It is also seen when foals are weaned forcefully and abruptly. Force-free strategies involving systematic (gradual) desensitisation and positive reinforcement or counter-conditioning are recommended for both solving separation anxiety and for gradual, stress-free weaning.

# Colic in Horses

Did you know that horses are not physically able to “throw-up” or regurgitate?

**Colic in horses** is defined as abdominal pain, but it is a clinical symptom rather than a diagnosis. The term colic can encompass all forms of gastrointestinal conditions which cause pain as well as other causes of abdominal pain not involving the gastrointestinal tract. What makes it tricky is that different causes can manifest with similar signs of distress in the animal. Recognizing and understanding these signs is pivotal, as timely action can spell the difference between a brief moment of discomfort and a life-threatening situation.

Among domesticated horses, colic is the leading cause of premature death. The incidence of colic in the general horse population has been estimated between 4 and 10 percent over the course of the average lifespan. Clinical signs of colic generally require treatment by a veterinarian. The conditions that cause colic can become life-threatening in a short period of time.

Colic in horses is commonly driven by environmental and dietary factors, primarily sand ingestion, severe dehydration from heat, and sudden weather changes that reduce water intake. Other major causes include parasite infestation, abrupt dietary changes, and high-grain, low-forage diets, often resulting in impaction colic.

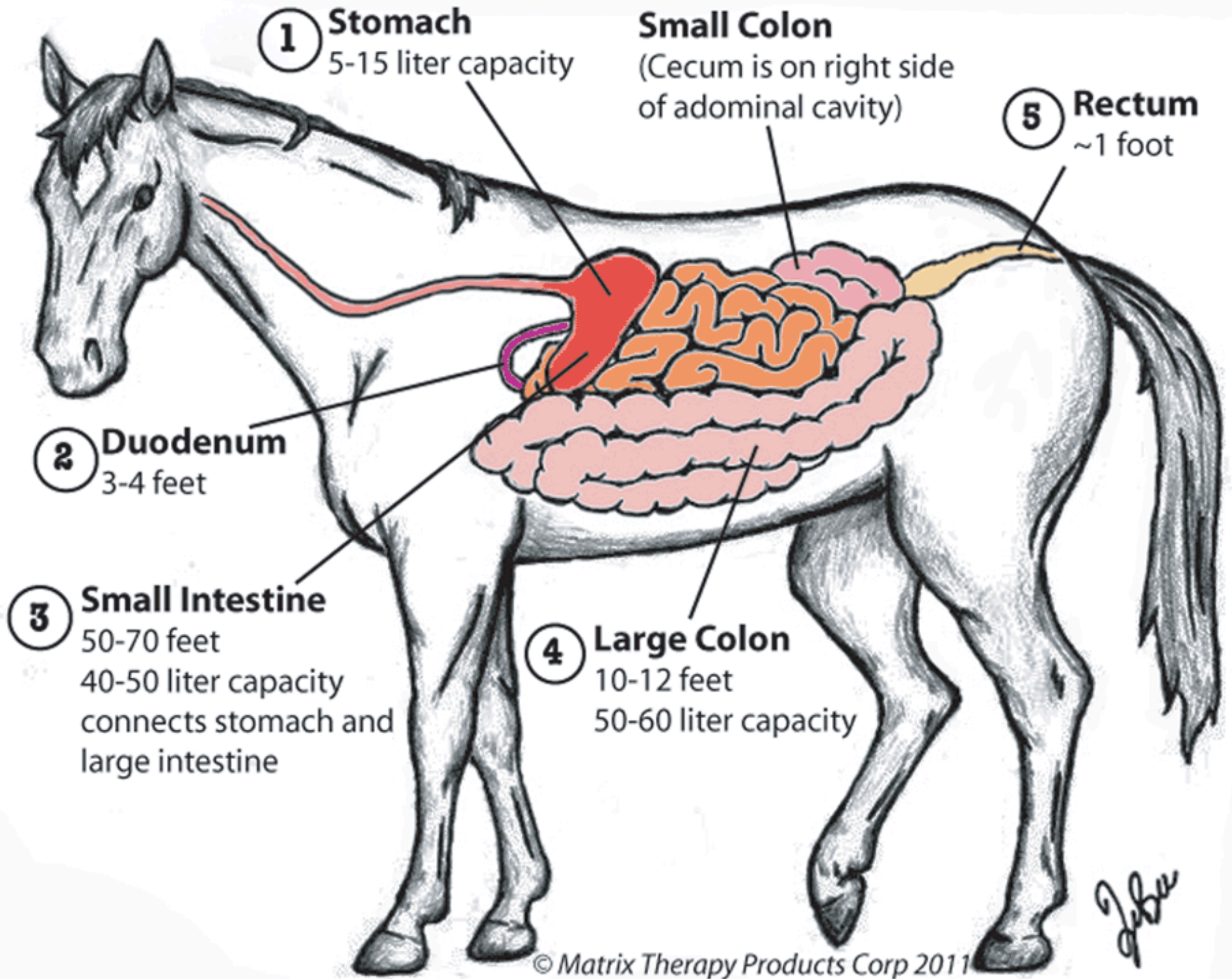
## Clinical signs commonly exhibited:

- Pawing at the ground
- General unrest
- Kicking at abdomen
- Standing stretched out as if about to urinate, but not doing so
- Biting at their belly
- Acting agitated
- Not passing gas or manure
- Turning the head toward the flank
- Repeatedly lying down and getting up, or attempting to do so
- Repeated rolling, often with grunting sounds
- Sitting in a dog-like position, or lying on the back
- Holding the head in an unusual position (e.g., with the neck stretched out and the head rotated to one side)
- Leaving food or being completely disinterested in food
- Putting the head down to water without drinking
- Lack of bowel movements or fewer bowel movements than normal
- Reduced or absent digestive sounds
- Inappropriate sweating (i.e., unrelated to hot weather (or exercise))
- Rapid breathing and/or flared nostrils
- Elevated pulse rate (greater than 40 beats per minute)
- Depression
- Lip curling unrelated to sexual interest

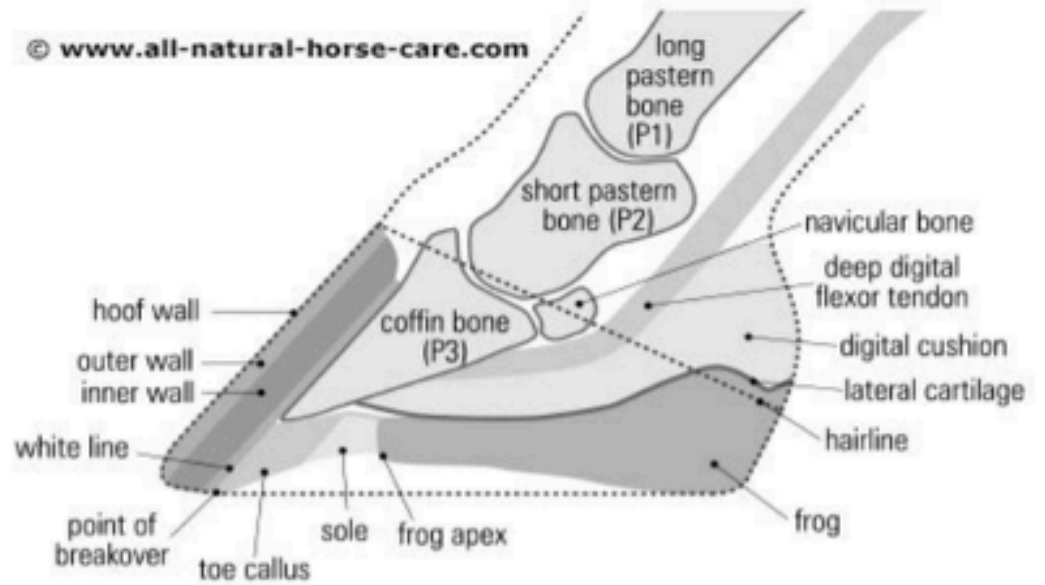
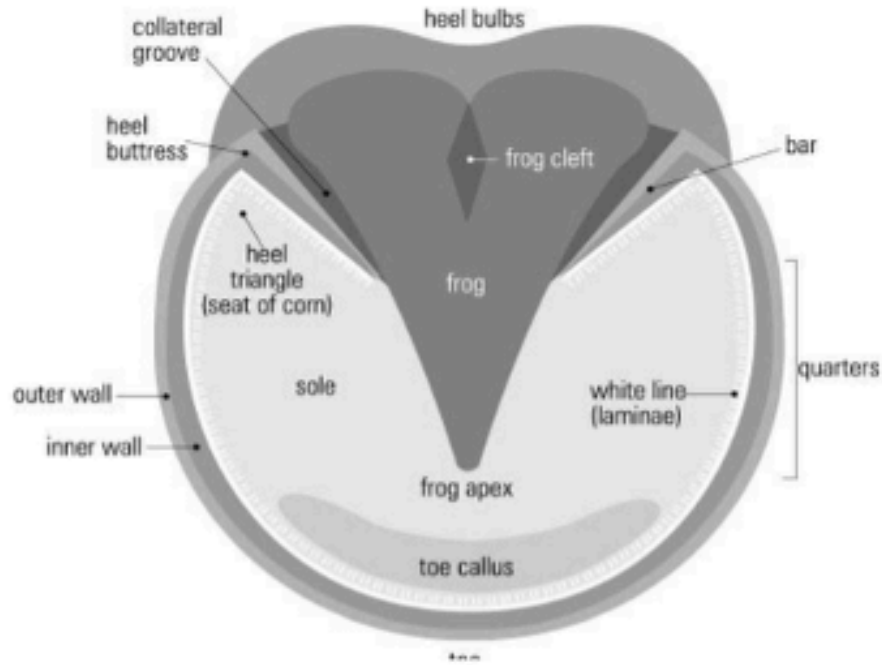
Usually, a horse shows only a few of these signs during an episode of colic. Seeing any of these signs should prompt you to take a closer look and keep a watchful eye on the horse. In general, the more obvious the signs of pain, the more serious

While some cases of colic resolve without medical care, a significant percentage of horses with colic require medical treatment. Time is perhaps the most critical factor if colic is to be successfully treated, particularly if the horse has a condition that requires emergency surgery.

**If you suspect a horse is suffering from colic: CALL STAFF IMMEDIATELY!**



# HOOF ANATOMY



## Horse teeth diagram

depending on the horse's age



2-year-old



3-year-old



4-year-old



7-year-old



11-year-old










15-year-old



20-year-old



# WHAT ARE NORMAL HORSE VITAL SIGNS?

| <b>Normal Temperature</b> <br>99.5 - 101.3°F   | <b>Normal Pulse</b> <br>38 - 40 beats/minute   | <b>Normal Respiration</b> <br>8 - 15 breaths/minute   | <b>Dehydration</b> <br>Skin takes more than 2 seconds to return to place   | <b>Normal Capillary Refill Time</b> <br>1 - 2 seconds  | <b>Normal Gut Sound</b> <br>Gurgling, sound of fluid dripping/tinkling   | <b>Other Tips</b>   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>How to check:</b><br/>The most accurate way to take a horse's temperature is rectally (dipped in lubricant), using a digital thermometer</p> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always be sure to clean the thermometer after use.</li> <li>• Exercise, stress or infections can elevate temperature</li> <li>• Leave the thermometer long enough to void a false low reading.</li> </ul> | <p><b>How to check:</b><br/>There are 3 ideal areas to take your horse's pulse - under the jaw, beneath the tail at its bone or area on the side of the foot. Count for 15 seconds and multiple by 4.</p> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't double count heartbeats.</li> <li>• Foals - 70-120 beats/minute</li> <li>• Yearlings - 45-60 beats/minute</li> </ul> | <p><b>How to check:</b><br/>Watching your horse's ribcage or nostrils for 1 minute, count 1 inhale and 1 exhale as a single breath.</p> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not measure respiration by letting your horse sniff your hand.</li> <li>• Wait for 30 minutes after exercise to check rate.</li> <li>• Respiration rate should not exceed pulse rate.</li> </ul> | <p><b>How to check:</b><br/>Pinch the skin on your horse's neck or shoulder area and it should return to its normal place within 1-2 seconds.</p> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horses need 5-12 gallons of water per day in normal environments.</li> <li>• In heat or heavy exercise, horses need 15-20 gallons of water per day.</li> </ul> | <p><b>How to check:</b><br/>Place ear or stethoscope up against horse's body, just behind the last rib, checking both sides.</p> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the vet if there is any absence of sound, as it could indicate colic.</li> </ul> | <p><b>How to check:</b><br/>Place finger against horse's gums for two seconds, creating a white mark from finger pressure. The white mark should return to normal pink tone within 1-2 seconds.</p> | <p><b>How to check:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sure to check vital signs regularly to know what is normal, so you can identify anything abnormal.</li> <li>• Do not take vital measurements on a nervous horse, to ensure accuracy.</li> <li>• Call your veterinarian if anything is abnormal.</li> </ul> |

# COWS, GOATS, SHEEP, & CHICKENS

Cows, goats, and sheep are all ruminants. They are hooved mammals characterized by a unique, four-compartment stomach (rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum) that allows them to ferment and digest tough plant-based fibers by regurgitating and re-chewing their food, known as "cud".

## **COWS:**

All Cows are Bovines

Adult Female Cows that have had a baby, are Cow's, Females who have not are Heifers

Adult Male Cows are Bulls, unless they have been castrated, then they are Steers

A baby cow is called a Calf

A group of bovines is called a herd

Bovines are intelligent animals with nearly 360-degree panoramic vision, an acute sense of smell capable of detecting odors up to 6 miles away.

Bovines have best friends that they will stress over without them, and love to play.

Bovines have 32 teeth (but no upper front teeth), spend hours chewing cud.

Bovines generally live 15-20 years

## **GOATS:**

Female goats are called a Doe or Nanny

Male goats are called a Buck or Billy

A baby goat is called a Kid

A castrated male goat is called a Wether

A group of goats is called a herd

Goats do not have teeth in their upper front jaw, but have 24 molars, and 8 incisors

You should never grab a goat horns, it will encourage "ramming"

Both Female and Male goats can have horns or beards

Goats like to eat browse- "Browse" for goats refers to the tender leaves, young shoots, twigs, bark, fruits, and vines of woody plants, shrubs, and trees. Unlike grazers (like sheep) that eat low-lying grass, goats are natural browsers that prefer to eat with their heads up, targeting forage 20 to 120 cm (or higher) off the ground.

Goats generally live 8 to 12 years

## **SHEEP:**

A female sheep is called a Ewe

A male sheep is called a Ram

A baby sheep is called a lamb

A group of sheep is called a flock

Sheep have rectangular pupils, providing a 270–320 degree field of vision, allowing them to see behind themselves without turning their heads.

Sheep have no upper front teeth, using a hard dental pad and lower teeth to eat close to the ground.

They have scent glands in front of their eyes and between their hooves, used for communication.

Sheep can recognize and remember up to 50 other sheep and at least 10 human faces for over two years.

They are social animals that form deep bonds, experience emotions like fear and joy, and grieve.

Sheep are grazing animals that prefer rich grass, clover and graze with their heads down Sheep live 10-12 years

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOATS & SHEEP:**

Goats Browse, Sheep Graze

Most goats have “hair”, sheep have “hair and wool”.

Goats have upright tails; Sheep have down placed tails

Sheep have a distinct groove in their upper lip, goats do not

Sheep cannot have copper in their diet, Goats need copper in their diet

Goats are explorers, more independent and climbers, sheep stay with their group and are more docile

## **CHICKENS:**

Chickens are highly intelligent, social creatures that can recognize over 100 human faces, dream in REM sleep, and communicate using at least 30 distinct vocalizations. They are descendants of dinosaurs, possess specialized vision to see ultraviolet light, and follow complex "pecking order" hierarchies

A female chicken is a Hen

A male chicken is a rooster

A baby chicken is a chick

Chickens chirp to their babies while they are still in the egg, and the chicks chirp back.

Because of their eye placement, chickens can see 300 degrees around their heads and can detect ultraviolet light, which is invisible to humans.

Studies show chickens can understand that objects still exist even when hidden (object permanence) and possess basic numeracy skills.

Chickens can use unihemispheric slow-wave sleep (USWS), allowing them to rest one half of their brain while the other half stays alert for predators.

Generally, a hen's earlobe color indicates the color of the eggs she will lay (red earlobes mean brown eggs, white earlobes mean white eggs).

Chickens are the closest living relative to the Tyrannosaurus rex.

Chickens can run at speeds up to 9 miles per hour (MPH).

Hens lay an average of 5-6 eggs per week

The average life span of a chicken is 5-10 years

## **What is “Zoonotic” ?**

Zoonotic refers to infectious diseases that naturally transfer between vertebrate animals and humans, caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, or fungi. We do not want to transfer any zoonotic diseases to humans or other animal residents of the ranch that may be susceptible.

The best way to prevent any zoonotic disease transmission to humans is personal hygiene, hand washing, and using disposable gloves if handling affected animals or cleaning areas where infected animals are.

Because we serve so many different species, it is important to have an awareness of Zoonotic possibilities.

## **Important Prevention Measures**

For a rescue ranch environment, the most effective biosecurity measures include:

- Strict quarantine protocols for incoming animals
- Handwashing
- Separate equipment for different species
- Routine veterinary exams and vaccination programs
- Rodent and mosquito control
- PPE for births, wound care, and manure handling
- Proper manure composting and disposal
- Limiting wildlife access to feed and water sources

## Quarantine Information:

*The SFSPCA Quarantine policy is only in effect when new intake animals arrive at the ranch. The Quarantine paddocks are also used as turn out space for existing animals in residence. Please make sure you are updated on the status of any animals within the quarantine paddocks.*

South Florida SPCA, Inc. has a written Quarantine Policy. This policy must be adhered to for the safety and health of all animals in the Rescue. All equines entering the Rescue without proper vaccination documentation are quarantined for 21-30 days. Please note the following regarding your interaction with quarantined horses and quarantine pastures/paddocks:

It is very important that each Quarantine paddocks be thoroughly cleaned immediately after any new intake animals have been in a quarantine paddock. This includes, bleaching waterers, water buckets, removing manure, removing any hay or feed left behind and cleaning feed tubs/buckets. Most transmittable illnesses are shared through contact with fluids discharge, such as saliva, nasal droplets, etc.

If cleaning quarantine paddocks after new intakes, they should be left to the last cleaning of the day, done with quarantine specific tools, and at the specific direction and supervision of knowledgeable staff.

- Quarantine Signs are posted in the most visible spots in front of Stalls/Paddocks
- Volunteers who observe any quarantined animals exhibiting any signs of illness (such as diarrhea, vomiting, sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge etc.) should immediately notify the Barn Manager.
- Do not interact with two separate quarantines at the same time.
- NO contact is allowed between quarantined equines and any other equines.
- When feeding, wear disposable gloves.
- Keep your interaction with them, including grooming, to the end of the feeding schedule.
- Do not mix halters, lead ropes, buckets, brushes or spray that are used for other horses. Use feed buckets, brushes, bug spray, washing supplies that are designated for Quarantined animals only.
- When filling their water, do not let the end of the hose hang in the water.
- Do not touch the horses and then touch anything else.
- Do not let the horses sniff at your clothing and then go in with other horses.
- After your feeding shift, wash your clothes before interacting with equines again.
- A quarantine period is ended only by the Barn Manager.
- If we all follow the same procedures the risk of having a disease problem will be greatly minimized.

## Euthanasia Conversations and Policies

Unfortunately, there are times when the only humane course of action for an animal is to release them from pain and suffering through humane euthanasia.

The determination to euthanize is based on both veterinary consultation and review by the members of the South Florida SPCA Case Review Committee. The decision to euthanize is never taken lightly.

On occasions there are circumstances where an immediate decision must be made for the benefit of the suffering animal. In these rare instances the policy is to immediately alleviate the suffering of the animal when no other course of action can.

When the euthanasia discussion comes up, all considerations for any possible treatments and options so that the animal can have quality of life, are evaluated first. If, with the input of the veterinarian of record, it is determined that all treatment options have been exhausted, and that the animal will not have quality of life, then humane euthanasia will be scheduled. **WE NEVER EUTHANIZE FOR SPACE!**

All determinations of euthanasia are evaluated and carried out in accordance with the AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners) guidelines and standards of care.

“In accordance with AVMA's position on euthanasia of animals, the AAEP concurs that euthanasia is an acceptable humane procedure once all available alternatives have been explored with the client. In certain cases, euthanasia should be regarded as a responsible treatment option. The AAEP supports euthanasia when that choice is best for the horse and in accordance with the role of the veterinarian as the animal's advocate.

The AAEP recommends that the following guidelines be considered in evaluating the need for humane euthanasia of a horse. The attending veterinarian can assist in making this determination, especially regarding the degree to which a horse is suffering. Guidelines are listed below to assist in making humane decisions regarding euthanasia of horses.”

A horse should not have to endure the following:

- Continuous or unmanageable pain from a condition that is chronic and incurable.
- A medical condition or surgical procedure that has a poor prognosis for a good quality of life.
- Continuous analgesic medication and/or box stall confinement for the relief of pain for the rest of its life.
- An unmanageable medical or behavioral condition that renders it a hazard to itself or its handlers.

## **VOLUNTEERING IN THE HEAT OF SOUTH FLORIDA:** 🔥🔥

When volunteering in South Florida, it's essential to take precautions against heat-related illnesses, especially during the hotter months. South Florida's high temperatures and humidity can pose serious health risks. Heat-related illness can escalate quickly, so early action is crucial.

Symptoms of heat related illness can include dizziness, headache, nausea, excessive sweating, muscle cramps, and in more severe cases, confusion or fainting. If you or someone around you begins experiencing any of these signs, take immediate steps to cool down and rehydrate. To reduce overheating, use cold water over the head, or a rag with cool water draped across the neck, sit inside the office with the air-conditioning turned down, eat a banana if available, and drink water with Hydrant Electrolyte packs emptied into the water as soon as possible.

Volunteers should stay hydrated, take breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas, and wear light, breathable clothing. To support your well-being, Hydrant Electrolyte packets are available in the refrigerator and may be used by anyone who needs them. These can help replenish essential minerals lost through sweat and keep you feeling your best. Please don't hesitate to take what you need—your health and safety come first!

## **TETANUS SHOTS**

We strongly recommend that you ensure you are current with your tetanus vaccine when volunteering at the South Florida SPCA, Inc. This is for your own protection.

- **Why It's Needed:** Tetanus bacteria, found in soil, dust, and manure, enter the body through cuts or puncture wounds (like from rusty nails or animal bites).
- **When to Get a Booster:**
  - Routine: Every 10 years.
  - After Injury: If you have a deep or dirty wound and your last booster was more than 5 years ago.
  - **Unknown Status:** If you cannot remember your last shot, a booster is recommended.

## **HUMAN & HORSE BONDING:** 🤝❤️

It's not uncommon for volunteers to form strong bonds with specific horses during their time at South Florida SPCA. Falling in love with a particular horse can be a special part of the experience. We understand how meaningful those connections are. Adoption is always an option for approved applicants, and we're happy to support that process.

However, please note that South Florida SPCA does not "hold" horses for future adoption, nor do we offer boarding services. Additionally, sponsoring a particular horse helps provide for the care of the horse, as well as the entire herd of horses, but does not reserve or guarantee that the particular horse will not be adopted by someone else. Our priority is finding the best permanent homes for every horse in our care.

## SOUTH FLORIDA SPCA VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

There are three levels of volunteers: **LEVEL 1 - RED** **LEVEL 2 - YELLOW.** **LEVEL 3 - GREEN**

Upon completion of Orientation, you will receive a Level 1, red t-shirt when you volunteer. You must wear your special level t-shirt whenever you volunteer. The first t-shirt is provided for free, but donations are appreciated to help defray costs.

The purpose of the levels is to ensure that volunteers are safe and have mastered barn chores and horse handling skills. The time spent on each level allows the staff to work with you and observe you as you master various skills. Once you have put in the appropriate time and mastered the required skills, you will be assessed and promoted to the next level. Moving up levels means you have demonstrated dedication, reliability, safety, and strong horse knowledge. And moving up means that you will have increased access to the ranch!

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### **LEVEL 1 – RED T-SHIRT**

All volunteers start out at LEVEL 1, Beginner's Level. This first level is the most important as it is a time for SFSPCA staff to get to know you, assess what you know and how much you are willing to learn. All new volunteers will stay at LEVEL 1 for at least 20 hours. To qualify for LEVEL 2 assessment, you must complete 20 hours of volunteer work at the ranch. After the completion of 20 hours, you will be assessed for LEVEL 2 placement. The skills required to master LEVEL 1 are set out in the South Florida SPCA Progress Sheets attached hereto.

**LEVEL 1 Volunteers have access to volunteer at the ranch on Wed and Sundays between 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. Volunteers may stay until 4:00 but must leave earlier if volunteer coordinator or previously agreed staff or green shirt mentor has an earlier day. Staying after 4:00 is not permitted. Please schedule your attendance for volunteering at least 48hr in advance – We do not monitor email over the weekend.**

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### **LEVEL 2 - YELLOW T-SHIRT**

This is the Intermediate Level. Level 2 means you have shown that you respect the staff, the rules of the ranch, as well as other volunteers. Level 2 volunteers have demonstrated that they can handle the horses in a safe manner and can take on some tasks without immediate supervision. Level 2 volunteers must volunteer 40 hours at the ranch in order to qualify for Level 3 assessment. The skills required to master Level 2 are set out in the South Florida SPCA Progress Sheets attached hereto.

**LEVEL 2 Volunteers have access to volunteer at the ranch on Wed and Sundays between 9:30 am- 4:00 pm. Volunteers may stay until 4:00 but must leave earlier if volunteer coordinator or previously agreed staff or green shirt mentor has an earlier day. Staying after 4:00 is not permitted. Please schedule your attendance for volunteering at least 48hr in advance – We do not monitor email over the weekend.**

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### **LEVEL 3 - GREEN T-SHIRT**

This is the Advanced Level. Any volunteer who has worked their way up to Level 3 has shown that they are always safe, reliable, trustworthy, and very capable around horses and people. Level 3 volunteers can take on and lead projects, work with horses and have earned the respect of staff so that they no longer require direct supervision at the rescue ranch. These trusted volunteers can handle just about any job or task they are given. While Level 3 volunteers still need to let SFSPCA staff know before they come to the facility, they are free to come and go any day during staff hours (9AM-4PM). All volunteers must leave the ranch by 4:00PM or earlier if the staff is having an early day. The skills required to master Level 3 are set in the South Florida SPCA Progress Sheets attached hereto.

**Volunteers of all levels may be called on to assist with special needs horses or to help with staff shortage**

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Safety is number one. SFSPCA recognizes the extreme importance of safety for the well-being of the volunteers, visitors, staff and animals. All volunteers and guests are expected to follow SFSPCA's rules and policies and must not engage in disruptive, unsafe, rude, or inappropriate behavior.

In the event of violations, the following action may be taken:

### **LEVEL 1, VERBAL WARNING**

Violation of SFSPCA rules and / or policies may be followed by a verbal warning from the staff or Volunteer Coordinator. The warning will be documented in the file.

### **LEVEL 2, WRITTEN WARNING**

A second violation of SFSPCA's rules and / or policies will be followed by a meeting with the Volunteer Coordinator to determine the nature of the infraction and to ensure that it doesn't happen again. The meeting will be documented in writing and placed in the file.

### **LEVEL 3, DISMISSAL FROM PROPERTY AND / OR PROGRAM**

Grounds for immediate dismissal from the property and the organization include, but are not limited to:

- Endangering the safety of others
- Inappropriate use of the facilities, mailing lists or monies
- Disruptive or abusive behavior to the animals or people
- Repeated disregard of the organization's rules, policies and procedures
- Possession of a weapon
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Theft, attempted theft, misappropriation, or unauthorized removal or use of any SFSPCA property, supplies, donations, funds, records, or assets

## **VOLUNTEER CONTACTS**

### **Kim Granato - Volunteer Coordinator**

Ph: (305) 495- 9937, Kgranato2001@gmail.com

### **Michelle Soler - Administrative Assistant**

Ph: (786) 786- 5874, Michelle@helpthehorses.org

### **Susie Martell - Outreach Coordinator**

Ph: (305) 505-9582, Susie@helpthehorses.org

### **Kleiton Pereira - Barn Manager**

Ph: (786) 928-3087, Kleiton@helpthehorses.org

### **OTHER KEY CONTACTS**

Chris Septer - Executive Director

Ph: (305) 796-9107, Chris@helpthehorses.org

### **SFSPCA SOCIAL MEDIA**

Facebook: @SouthFloridaSPCA

Private Member/Volunteer Facebook Group:

@sfspcavolunteers

Instagram: @SouthFloridaSPCA

YouTube Channel: @SouthFloridaSPCA

TikTok: @SouthFloridaSPCA

### **VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

[www.spca-sofla.org](http://www.spca-sofla.org)

### **MAILING ADDRESS & PHONE**

South Florida SPCA

P.O Box 924088, Homestead, FL 33092

Ph: (786) 786-5874

If at any time you feel that your safety has been compromised, or if there is an issue with another volunteer or a staff member, or if you have any concerns.

# RED Shirt/Level-1

## Facility Rules

Keep all gates locked

Use of tools, pitch forks, rakes, etc.

Return tools to proper locations

Visting ranch only during designated volunteer times

Stay under supervision of Volunteer Coordinator, previously approved staff mentor or previously approved green shirt mentor

Stay within designated areas with mentor

Wearing appropriate red volunteer shirt

Wearing appropriate ranch attire, no short shorts, no revealing cleavage, closed toed shoes, no steel toed shoes

Access to quarantine paddocks only if given express permission by mentor

Sign in and out in the volunteer sign in book

Park outside gate and enter through walk thru gate

Awareness of location of first aid box

Return wash rack items, such as shampoo's, brushes, etc. to proper location

Respect each other as individuals and that everyone has different reasons for being here

Available hours for volunteers are 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. Volunteers may stay until 4:00 but must leave earlier if staff mentor or volunteer mentor has an earlier day. Staying after 4:00 is not permitted.

Red shirts are allowed in stalls with horses, provided there is a green shirt or staff member with them and there is a specific purpose in being in the stall with the horse. No more than two (2) people in a stall at a time unless specifically directed by the Barn Manager.

## Facility Skills

Clean paddocks

Clean pastures

Clean stall waters

Clean Pasture big waters

Clean Hay Feeders

Clean feed buckets

Clean Chicken coops

Clean chicken waterers

Fill Chicken waterers and feed

Clean fans, ensuring they face down at horses when done

Identify any repairs needed and report to staff

Identify any supplies needed and report to staff

## Horse Skills

Safety first, human then horse

Be Alert, off phone, paying attention

Report observed injuries or behavior challenges

Feed treats in feed buckets, not from hand

Identify types of grooming tools

Familiar with what grooming tools are used when picking up and picking out horse hooves

How to bathe horses

Leading horses properly

How to put on halters properly and properly remove halters

How to bring horses out of stalls

How to bring horses out of paddocks or pastures

How to put horses in stall

Know what the horse "kick zone" is

Recognize horses' behavior that are "warnings"

Navigate safely all around the body of the horse

Know horse anatomy

Know horse colors and markings

With mentor oversight, assist feeding horses

Assist with care and husbandry of other animals

# YELLOW Shirt/Level-2

## Facility Rules

Making sure all gates are properly locked or secured

Wearing appropriate yellow volunteer shirt

Wearing appropriate ranch attire, closed toed shoes, no steel toed shoes

Staying at ranch no later than 4:00 pm

Access to quarantine paddocks only if given express permission by mentor

## Facility Skills

Assist with teaching Red Shirts

Learn how to drive Golf Cart

Familiar with locations of fire extinguishers

Understand the differences between complete feeds and feeds with forage

Understand what Zoonotic Means & common Zoonotic diseases among species

Learn where the light switches are

Learn where the fan switches are

## Horse Skills

Assist with oversight of Red Shirts

How to release horses to paddocks or pastures

Learning what to do when a horse doesn't want to pick up their feet for hoof cleaning

How to bathe horse faces

Learn how to feed horses

Learn basic wound care

Learn what to do when a horse doesn't want to go where you want them to go

Learn proper response when horse backing up on cross ties

Understand how to rate horses with Heinke Body Condition Score

Learn how to properly exercise ponies

Assist with care and husbandry of other animals

# GREEN Shirt/Level-3

| Facility Rules   |
|--|
| Making sure all gates are properly locked or secured   |
| Wearing appropriate Green volunteer shirt OR any other SPCA t-shirt  |
| Wearing appropriate ranch attire, no crop tops, no short shorts, no revealing cleavage, closed toed shoes, no steel toed shoes |
| Staying at ranch no later than 4:00 pm   |
| Allowed to mentor red and yellow shirts  |

| Facility Skills                                   |
|---|
| Understand Quarantine Protocols                   |
| Learn how to properly drive Mule and or Golf Cart |
| Learn quick release knots                         |
| Teach others how to exercise the ponies           |

| Horse Skills   |
|--|
| Learn how to properly round pen a horse                                |
| Feed Horses  |
| Learn what normal vital signs are and how to take them                 |
| Assisting with administering medications and completing medical charts |
| Understand desensitizing techniques                                    |
| Learn how to properly bandage horse legs                               |
| Learn how to properly bandage a horse hoof                             |
| Learn how to properly hand walk rehab horses                           |
| Assist with care and husbandry of other animals                        |