

# HORSE AROUND

New Mexico

FREE!

Dec 2016 / Jan 2017

# 31

ways to be  
cold-weather  
safe

blanket

# ON? OFF?

why not  
ask a  
horse...



'tis the season to

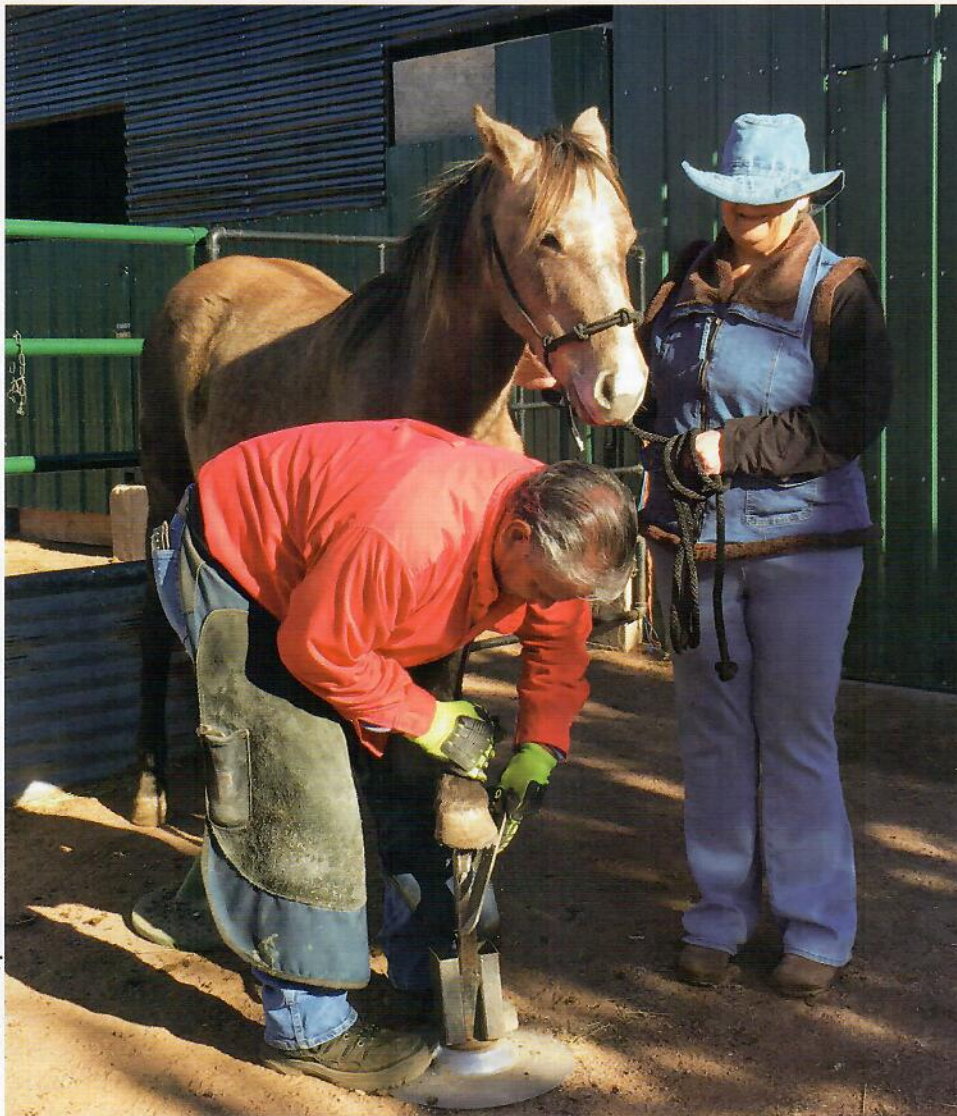
# GIVE

& HELP  
HORSES,  
HUMANS,  
THE LAND

# &

WINTER RIDE IN THE OJITO WILDERNESS  
LAST-MINUTE HORSEY GIFT IDEAS

# ACQUIRING A HORSE IN NEED? GET RESCUE HORSE SAVVY



BY  
TACIE G. BOSWELL,  
DVM, DACVS-LA

Many people observe the heart-wrenching situation of a post-career racehorse, a horse sold for slaughter, or a captive mustang and are spurred into acquiring a rescue. But acquiring and owning a rescue horse is

very different than buying a healthy, sound horse that has had excellent care throughout his life. Your rescue may surprise you behaviorally, and it is possible he or she may never be restored to full health. An owner of a rescued horse recently put it this way, "I guess that is the hard thing about rescue. You never know what is going to happen."

If you are interested in adopting a rescued horse, or rescuing on your own, the first thing to consider is the background of the horse and how he has been handled since he was surrendered or sent to a rescue organization.

#### Look for a rescue organization that:

- Has a physical examination performed by a veterinarian at intake and

establishes a health record. The horse should be permanently identified by microchip, lip tattoo, or branding. Legal ownership documentation is an absolute necessity.

- Quarantines new arrivals so contagious diseases are not spread.
- Has a fecal evaluation performed to identify and quantify intestinal parasites. Deworming can be a risk factor for colic, as can a change in food, a change in location or housing, and a change in paddock size. Under-nourished horses are more likely to ingest bedding, so sand in their gut is a special consideration and should be identified and eliminated as well.
- Performs pregnancy checks at the time of intake to all mares of breeding age. This should be repeated at 30 days, in

Cinnamon, an 18-month-old QH filly, spent time in a "kill pen" in Louisiana before coming to New Mexico and finding a home with Linx Lawless, who lives in Eldorado. She had her first hoof trimming in November by Richard Candelaria, Natural Balanced Trimming and Shoeing Farrier. Linx had spent time handling Cinnamon's hooves prior to the big event. "I was so proud of her. She was so trusting," said Linx.

case there was very recent exposure to a stallion before rescue. It is surprising to see how emaciated a mare can be and maintain a pregnancy.

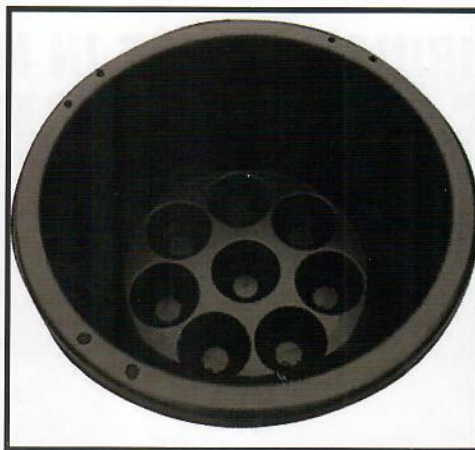
#### Other medical and training factors

##### rescued horses may face:

- Lack of nutrition: The Body Condition Score (BCS) is a standardized and convenient way of assessing and documenting the fat and muscle coverage a horse has. It is also useful for legally documenting that a horse has had inadequate nutrition. Standard of care is that a horse should be between a BCS of 4-6. Less than 3 is considered malnourished, with 1 being a state of severe starvation. Horses that are 7 or above are considered overweight or obese.
- Refeeding syndrome: Horses that have experienced extreme starvation can develop respiratory, heart, and kidney failure after being fed concentrated calories. This usually occurs three to



Check the hooves of the horse you are considering. Some may be damaged and need care. Know that the horse may need patience and time for you to pick up their hooves for care, trimming and shoeing.



MIDDLE: Feeders that will slow down eating can be purchased at some feed and supply stores. ABOVE: A home-made slow feeder will prevent a horse from bolting hay. It allows them to eat smaller amounts spread over time.

five days after good food is reintroduced. When a horse has a BCS of 1-3, a veterinarian should be contacted before beginning to feed the horse. Extremely slowly, these horses are re-fed starting with 1 pound of alfalfa six times daily. Feeding grain or weight-building supplements too early can have very serious adverse metabolic consequences, including death.

- **Vaccines:** Any individual that has suffered from malnutrition may have a compromised immune system. A horse with a BCS of 1-2 cannot be expected to mount an appropriate response to vaccines. It is more appropriate to wait until the horse has a BCS of 3 before vaccinating.

### Working with a rescued horse

The first order of business is to gain the horse's trust – daily food and water goes a long way for this. Set your horse up for success by doing things and making new requests with the lowest stress possible. Consistency and kindness is key! Always stay safe and aware as a rescued horse may over-react unpredictably.

A rescue horse (well, any horse, really) should accept haltering and having their feet and legs handled. If you cannot touch a horse, getting him to accept treatment is impossible. Training is as critical for these horses' future as their health is. They should be able to accept injections, load into a trailer, enter and stand quietly in stocks, and be willing to go in and out of barns and stalls. Rescue groups often work with professional trainers to train and evaluate their adoption prospects. Many of these trainers essentially re-start the horse in the same way that a young

horse is started. Slow and methodical progression is critical for earning a horse's trust, no matter what the age.

### Meal time safety

Safety for all involved – handlers and horses – is of paramount importance. A rescue horse may be worried about his next meal, and may feel insecure. He may do best in a quiet place, where he is near other horses, but is safe in his own space and does not need to defend his share of food.

Horses that have experienced starvation may bolt their food, ingesting it as fast as possible in an effort to ensure that they eat as much as possible. Horses that do this may be prone to medical consequences. The main one is that if feeds are not chewed adequately before the horse swallows, esophageal obstruction, more commonly known as choke, can occur. Some strategies to combat this problem are to use a large bin or old plastic water trough as a feeder. If grain is fed, add it on top of the hay so that they must pick through and eat the grain more slowly.

Slow feeders are a great addition to helping slow horse's eating process. Be cautious when choosing these. Plastic ones tend to become worn out or break, slow-feed nets or bags can be dangerous if they are shredded, and metal grates can damage teeth. Sharp edges are a hazard to gums, lips, eyes, and other soft tissues of the face. Grain may also be fed out of a plastic feeder with contours. Bricks or very large rocks added to a feeder slows the horse down as he eats around the objects, thus preventing bolting.

It may be safer to place the food in the stall and then bring the horse to it. For some horses, this can eliminate pawing, aggression, stall kicking, and other

unwanted behaviors that can occur with the impatient horse. Finally, it should be acknowledged that many animals who have had a severe starvation episode are mentally changed forever. Extreme meal time anxiety can be reduced, but for some it is never eliminated. These individuals are more likely to remain motivated to eat indiscriminately, and may be prone to obesity if allowed free-choice food.

### When is a horse healthy enough for full work?

A horse that has a body condition score less than 3 should not be asked to do any active work or forced exercise. As a horse is gaining weight, turnout and hand-walking is appropriate for helping the horse re-build muscle. This time period is also critical for kind and consistent handling with the goal of developing a horse that has respect and trust for humans.

A horse that is less than a body condition score of 4, especially one that is unfit and lacking muscle, cannot be expected to comfortably wear a saddle and carry a rider. The horse should be at his new foster or rescue home for at least 6-8 weeks so that he is settled in socially and has the chance to develop trust for his caretakers. He should also have any lameness or foot problems addressed.

When these criteria are met, a horse should be asked to progress through groundwork before riding. It is critical for his training and mental status as well as his physical fitness, muscle building, and will also serve as a soundness trial. The horse

should be re-evaluated by a veterinarian for soundness after he has progressed through ground work before he is ridden.

### How can you help or get help?

Obtaining a rescue horse may require a significant investment in time and money. Nursing care and re-training is an intensive process. The end result can be extremely rewarding, but the commitment is not to be taken lightly. If you need help, The Animal Protection Fund of New Mexico provides financial assistance to horse owners in need for gelding, veterinary care, or emergency feed. <http://equineprotectionfund.org/>

The New Mexico Livestock Board oversees, inspects, and recognizes eight official Equine Rescues in New Mexico. More information is available at [www.nmlbonline.com/rescue](http://www.nmlbonline.com/rescue). These organizations are in need of donations. This can be a donation of money, but many also need volunteer time to care for the horses, supplies, tack, or hay. They are listed below – please contact them to see how you can help!

- FOUR CORNERS EQUINE RESCUE, [fourcornersequinerescue.org](http://fourcornersequinerescue.org)
- PERFECT HARMONY ANIMAL R&S, [perfectharmony-nm.org/home.html](http://perfectharmony-nm.org/home.html)
- THE HORSE SHELTER [thehorseshelter.org](http://thehorseshelter.org)
- NM HORSE RESCUE @ WALKIN' N' CIRCLES RANCH [www.wncr.org](http://www.wncr.org)
- END OF THE ROAD RANCH [endoftheroadranchnm.com](http://endoftheroadranchnm.com)
- EQUINE SPIRIT SANCTUARY [equinespiritsanctuary.org](http://equinespiritsanctuary.org)
- SKY MOUNTAIN WILD HORSE SANCTUARY [skymountainwild.org](http://skymountainwild.org)
- MCKINLEY COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY EQUINE AID [sfitz@wildblue.net](mailto:sfitz@wildblue.net)

Stacie G. Boswell, DVM, DACVS – I am an equine veterinarian in Edgewood, New Mexico. I welcome your stories and snapshots of your rescued horses! [stacieboswell@gmail.com](mailto:stacieboswell@gmail.com)

# EVENTS:

## Dec - Jan

### DECEMBER

3-4  
North Fourth Holiday  
Stop & Shop - Support your  
local businesses in Rio Rancho



3-4 and 10-12  
John Baird Horsemanship  
Beth Beymer & Patty Wilber  
4 Winds Equestrian Center  
[www.4windsequestriancenter.com](http://www.4windsequestriancenter.com)  
Reserve your time for Private  
Lessons @ 505-384-1831  
Estancia.....See ad page 33

17  
Veryl Goodnight Raffle  
NM Ctr. for Therapeutic Riding  
505-577-1895 HIPICO Santa Fe

Horse Around New Mexico  
DEADLINES  
February/March Issue

Articles & Events  
Dec. 20th

[editor@HorseAroundNM.com](mailto:editor@HorseAroundNM.com)  
[EventsHorseAround@gmail.com](mailto:EventsHorseAround@gmail.com)

### JANUARY

7  
Ranch Sorting  
[www.bosquefarmsrodeo.org](http://www.bosquefarmsrodeo.org)  
Bosque Farms

8  
All Breed Training Shaggy Show  
NM Buckskin Horse Assoc.  
[www.nmbha.com](http://www.nmbha.com)  
Bosque Farms



14-15  
Skijoring Winter Rodeo  
[www.redriverskijoring.com](http://www.redriverskijoring.com)  
Red River.....See page 40

21-22  
SW Quarter Horse Assoc. Show  
[www.swqha.com](http://www.swqha.com)  
Las Cruces

Ads  
Jan. 5th

[ads@HorseAroundNM.com](mailto:ads@HorseAroundNM.com)  
[www.HorseAroundNM.com](http://www.HorseAroundNM.com)

To submit your event for listing consideration, send information to: [EventsHorseAround@gmail.com](mailto:EventsHorseAround@gmail.com).  
Listings are at no charge.

# 4 Winds Equestrian Center

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