



Building a Horse Welfare Council

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Primary goals:

- provide direct assistance to animals, owners, and rescue organizations in need
- develop useful contacts among traditional and nontraditional allies
- encourage law enforcement agencies to aggressively investigate and prosecute crimes against horses, by offering logistical support for animals seized



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Suggested Horse Welfare Council Members

- Rescue organizations
- Breed organizations
- State veterinary associations
- State agriculture departments
- Law enforcement (Sheriffs Associations and DA Associations)



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Suggested Horse Welfare Council Members

- State Animal Control Associations.
- Industry groups (horsemen's associations, riding clubs, etc.)
- Boarding stables and breeding facilities
- Hay and forage grower associations



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Meeting Structure

- some of these groups may have traditionally adversarial relationship with animal welfare community (i.e. breeders, agricultural groups)
- important to include them as part of ongoing efforts to build resources and alliances
- to avoid potential conflicts during meetings, may want to discourage discussions on slaughter, over-breeding, other potentially-divisive issues



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Leader Responsibilities

- must keep group focused and goal-oriented, appoint participants to teams to tackle specific issues
- examples include hay bank team, foster care network team, website team
- Leader to follow up at subsequent meetings to ensure teams are making progress



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- need to ensure active participation of each group member and maintain an accurate feel for the situation on the ground
- Leader begins each meeting by asking group participants to describe their impressions of the current status of the problem (# neglect, abandonment cases they are seeing, any large-scale seizures)



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- various programs, and time and energy devoted to them, can be adjusted according to the level of need
- by assessing the evolving situation throughout the state, the Council can modify the agenda of that meeting and subsequent meetings as appropriate



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- one member should be appointed as “scribe” to keep minutes of the meeting
- Leader writes and circulates minutes to group with date, time and place of next meeting
- to control the message and keep a positive spin on group’s efforts, Leader should handle all media and community contacts



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- important to describe accurate extent of horse situation in the state, while emphasizing affirmative actions being taken and positive, ensuing results



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Plan of Action for Activating Horse Welfare Council:

- Identify stakeholders (potential Council members)
- Set time, date and place for meeting
- Compose announcement of meeting and purpose
- Contact stakeholders with invitation to attend (45-60 days before meeting); request RSVP for planning purposes
- Publicize announcement (30 days before meeting)



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Plan of Action for Activating Horse Welfare Council:

- Gather and organize materials regarding Homes for Horses Coalition, Horse Care Guidelines, etc.
- Contact HSUS Equine Protection for info on current status of horse issues in your state
- Compose Proposed Agenda
- Distribute Proposed Agenda to Stakeholders with invitation to revise or add as appropriate (two weeks prior to meeting)



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Plan of Action for Activating Horse Welfare Council:

- Revise and finalize agenda
- Distribute final agenda to stakeholders (one week prior to meeting)
- Hold meeting
- Appoint teams from attendees to address each agenda item



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Plan of Action for Activating Horse Welfare Council:

- At close of meeting, set date, time and place for next meeting (same day of each month; consider holding meetings throughout state)
- Record and distribute meeting minutes (one week after meeting), including team assignments
- Begin preparations for next meeting