

# Own Responsibly



*Unwanted horse  
update.*



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I JUST RETURNED FROM THE ANNUAL AQHA Convention where a major topic of discussion, not only in committee meetings but also in casual conversation, was the issue of the unwanted horse.

If you remember, we talked about this issue in the fall. Since then a number of events have developed that make the unwanted horse a bigger problem than ever.

As the name implies, unwanted horses are those that for one or more reasons are no longer wanted by their owners. They may be old, lame, dangerous, not athletic, not fast enough, or merely do not meet their owner's expectations. Traditionally, these horses were either retired, rescued or sold. Many ended up in new careers but some, roughly 90,000-100,000 per year, traditionally ended up being euthanized at processing plants in Texas or Illinois and shipped primarily to Europe for human consumption.

For the past several years, federal legislation has been introduced to make it illegal to process horses in the United States for human consumption. None of the bills have ever been passed by Congress. However last year, state laws in Texas and Illinois closed down the plants in those states and horse processing in the United States for all practical purposes

has been stopped. As a result, the number of horses being exported to Mexico increased to more than 45,000 head last year.

In addition, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, the number of mares, stallions, and geldings exported to Mexico for riding and breeding has also increased.

## Equine Exported to Mexico

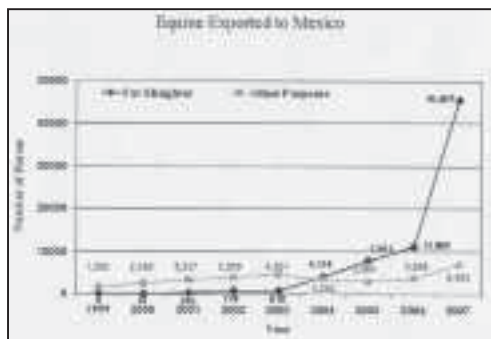
Purpose	2006	2007	Increase
Slaughter	11,080	45,609	34,529 (311%)
Breeding Stallions	559	1,285	726 (130%)
Breeding Mares	738	1,679	941 (128%)
Riding Geldings	2,373	3,837	1,464 (62%)
Burro/Mule/Pony	4	124	121 (3025%)
Total Horses	14,754	52,534	37,780 (256%)

Add this to the 30,00-35,000 horses exported to Canada last year for processing, and it is obvious that the prediction that the well intentioned actions of those pushing to stop horse processing in this country have resulted in some very serious consequences that have worsened the plight of this subset of the horse population.

AQHA, the American Association of Equine Practitioners and the American Veterinary Medical Association have predicted this for years. Many of the animal rights groups, including the Humane Society of the United States, have contended that the "unwanted horse" is a myth. They claim that if processing is stopped in the United States, rescue and retirement facilities will easily be able to absorb these horses and incidents of neglect and abuse will not increase.

I have newspaper and magazine articles from across the country sent to me weekly that discuss the huge increase in starved, neglected and abused horses that are starting to surface. For a compilation of these articles, go to: [http://www.avma.org/issues/animal\\_welfare/unwanted\\_horses\\_news\\_articles.asp](http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/unwanted_horses_news_articles.asp).

To be fair, the dramatic increase in the price of fuel, hay and grain has also added to the cost of horse care and has resulted in many horse owners in [CONTINUED ON PAGE 94]



For more information on keeping your horse healthy, consult an American Association of Equine Practitioners-member veterinarian in your area. For a list of members, log onto [www.aaep.org](http://www.aaep.org).

## QUARTER CHATTER

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(RG3), is scheduled for July 20. Last year's Silver Dollar, won by George and Judy Weldon's JW A Royal Trip, was worth \$57,119.

Business-wise, Wyoming Downs is coming off of one of the most successful seasons in its 23-year history. Its 2007 meet reported a 4-percent increase in on-track attendance, and an expansion of the track's simulcast network resulted in a 44-percent increase in handle.

### Janie Hernandez

**T**rainer Janie Hernandez, 46, died in an auto accident in Houston on February 20.

Hernandez was born in Missouri and began training in 2001. Based in Texas, she saddled 164 winners from 1,563 starters, and her horses earned \$1,868,073. Hernandez's 13 stakes winners included Moon Shake, a Royal Shake Em colt who won the 2002 Longhorn Futurity (G2) and '03 Manor Downs Derby (G2); 2005 TQHA Sires' Cup Futurity (RG2) winner Featuring A Rockette; and graded stakes winners MB Boots Magic, Gray Invasion, Flor De Lirio and Splendid Sam Perry. Hernandez also trained eventual Grade 1 winner This Snow Is Cold during the mare's 3- and 4-year-old seasons.

Hernandez's survivors include her husband, Erasmo Hernandez; son, Jaime Hernandez; daughters, Jamie Lee Tienda, Erica Cisneros and Judy Gonzalez; her mother, Dominga Estrada; and several brothers, sisters and grandchildren.

### Shortliners

- **Voters in California** on February 5 approved four ballot measures that would allow four Southern California Indian tribes to more than triple the number of slot machines they currently operate. The passages of the measures – Propositions 94, 95, 96 and 97 – upheld compacts negotiated between the tribes and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, and revenues paid to the state would be used help curb the state's budget deficit. Several racing industry groups opposed the measures, which would allow the four tribal casinos to operate approximately 25,000 slot machines, up from the current 8,000.

- **Jiffy Lunch**, a winning daughter of Reb's Policy (TB) who foaled four stakes winners and the earners of \$566,233, died February 11. She was 28. Bred by S.J. Agnew of Centralia, Washington, and own-ed since 1990 by Rodney and Sharon Jensen of Mountain View, Wyoming,

Jiffy Lunch produced eight winners from nine starters, including Lil Bit a Brunch, a Lil Easy Cash gelding who won the 1994 Sooner Trailer Challenge Championship (G2) at Los Alamitos, and Speedy Lunch, a Grade 3-winning gelding by Speed Doctor who won 16

870-yard stakes from 1990-96 and was the sport's champion distance horse in 1995.

- Longtime owner and breeder **Gerald Magee** died in his hometown of Bloomfield, New Mexico on February 16. He was 76. Magee bred Letmeliteurfire, a gelding by Pyromaniac (TB) who ran second in the 1996 Lineage Championship (R) at The Downs at Albuquerque, as well as multiple Thoroughbred stakes winners Macho Ego (TB) and Dusk Patrol (TB). Magee owned and operated Magee Transportation for 22 years, and he also developed and built Lee Hi Mobile Home Park and numerous other properties. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to a charity of choice.

- **Winners Federation**, a coalition of industry members committed to combating addictions at the racetrack, has recently completed its first directory of services at tracks in North America. The directory is available in a brochure and will soon be available on the organization's Web site, [www.winnersfederation.org](http://www.winnersfederation.org).

## HORSE HEALTH

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middle to lower salary brackets having to choose between caring for their families or their horses. But this economic slump only emphasizes the fact that we have an unwanted horse issue in this country that we must address.

A recent survey conducted by the Colorado Unwanted Horse Council found that 91 percent of horse owners and people who don't own horses are aware of the unwanted horse issue and its causes. The vast majority think the horse industry is responsible for finding solutions. Fewer than 5 percent of those surveyed think the federal government is responsible for dealing with the problem and finding solutions.


Fortunately, AQHA and a number of other leading horse organizations have joined together to form the Unwanted



**Grade 3 winner Speedy Lunch was one of eight winners produced by Jiffy Lunch.**

Horse Coalition, which is dedicated to finding solutions to the unwanted horse problem as well as educating horse owners and potential horse owners on the issue, potential solutions, and end of life decisions.

The key to solving this problem is responsible horse ownership. If everyone who purchased or bred a horse accepted the responsibility of caring for that horse throughout its entire life or finding another person to do so, there would be no more unwanted horses. If the responsible person can no longer care for the horse and cannot find another home or career for it, that person should consider euthanizing it rather than dropping it off at a sale barn and hoping someone else will buy it. This will require a shift in the way we view and handle unwanted horses, but it may be the best solution for the future.

What can you do to help solve the unwanted horse issue? Talk to other horse owners, your club or organization, as well as people who don't own horses about the issue and possible solutions. Consider buying a horse rather than breeding your mare, and give some thought to end-of-life choices for your horse when it becomes old or unusable. And own responsibly. 

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