



THE ROCK SPRINGS WILD HORSE HOLDING FACILITY

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management



Established in 1976, the 24-acre Rock Springs Wild Horse Holding Facility is the only federal holding and preparation facility in Wyoming.

With an annual operating budget of about \$1.2 million, the facility houses approximately 800 wild horses gathered primarily from Wyoming herd management areas. It also serves as a rest stop for wild horses being transported east or west.

Five full-time employees manage the facility's 19 corrals and several smaller pens that accommodate wild horses with special needs. Staff also coordinate the facility's adoption program and mustang versatility events.

BLM

High Desert District



FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.blm.gov/wy/st/en.html

www.facebook.com/BLMWildHorseandBurro

866-4MUSTANGS

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM/WY/GI-14/018+1060



H U M A N E C A R E



Assessment



Confirming Information

Wild horses arrive at the facility in livestock straight-deck semi-trailers. Mares and foals are sorted and placed into one pen to allow them to pair up with the least amount of stress. Younger horses may also be put in the mare/foal pen while studs are put into their own pen. Later, the horses are further separated by age and gender. Studs are gelded prior to adoption or shipment to long-term pastures.

Upon arrival, each horse is thoroughly examined by a veterinarian and vaccinated for West Nile, rabies, Tetanus, influenza, rhinopneumonitis and strep. Vaccinations are precautionary to ensure all horses at the facility remain healthy. Newly arrived wild horses are kept separate until they are vaccinated, wormed and the results of the Coggins blood test are received. A contract veterinarian also conducts weekly herd health walk-throughs as well as individual examinations when needed.

Individual horses acclimate to the facility at different rates. Other than wranglers feeding and conducting twice-daily visual health inspections from a short distance, the newly arrived horses are left alone and not subjected to unnecessary interaction. When acclimated and cleared of all health concerns, a horse is moved into the appropriate pen with other horses.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) protects the health and welfare of wild horses and burros from the time they are on the range, through the gather and removal process and through the adoption or sale programs to when the animal is titled as an adopter's own animal.



Checking Teeth for Age

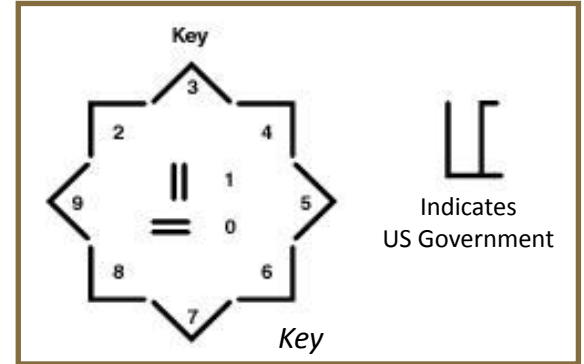


Vaccination

FREEZE MARKING

Freeze marking is used to identify all wild horses that are removed from the range. This unique, permanent and unalterable marking helps the BLM track and identify wild horses and burros. It also provides a way to trace the animal's history or help locate an owner if a horse is found. The left side of the horse's neck is shaved and prepared with rubbing alcohol. A brass freeze iron is put in liquid nitrogen, then applied to the shaved area for about 30 seconds. The application of liquid nitrogen freezes the hair follicles, which turns the hair white when it grows back.

The International Alpha Angle System is used to represent different numbers. The first symbol is the BLM brand, a stylized U; the next two angles are the year born; the next two represent the facility batch registration number; and the last four are the horse identification number, which counts from 0001 to 9999. When the facility has processed 9,999 horses under a batch number, the horse identification numbers start over at 0001 under the next batch number.

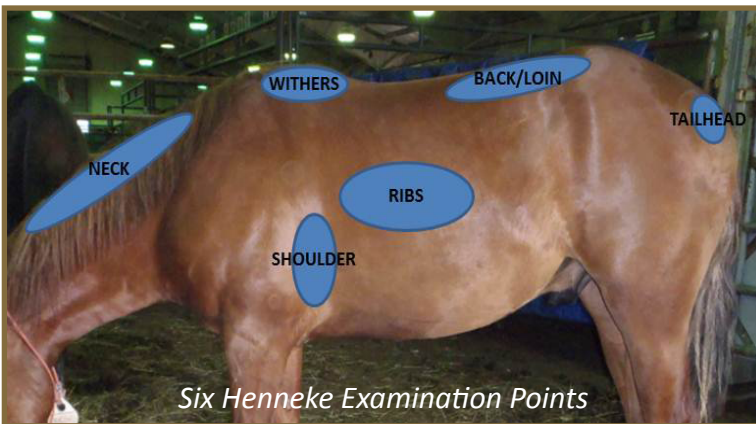


BODY CONDITION

Part of the veterinarian's initial examination includes a body condition assessment. The Henneke Body Condition Scoring System evaluates a horse's body condition regardless of breed, body type, sex or age. It is a widely used, objective method accepted in courts of law. The neck, withers, shoulder, ribs, back/loin and tailhead are checked visually and palpably for a score of 1 to 9. When a horse's body condition is scored below a 4, the facility provides supplemental grain.

HENNEKE BODY CONDITION SCORES

- Poor, Extremely Emaciated:** no fatty tissue; vertebrae, ribs, tail head and bones of withers, shoulder and neck visible
- Very Thin, Emaciated:** slight tissue cover over bones; vertebrae, ribs, tailhead and bones of withers, shoulder and neck visible
- Thin, Slight Fat Cover Over Body:** individual vertebrae and ribs no longer visibly discernible; withers, shoulders and neck do not appear overly thin
- Moderately Thin:** spine ridge and rib outline visible; tailhead visibility depends on breed; withers, shoulders and neck do not appear overly thin
- Moderate:** spine and ribs cannot be seen but ribs can be felt; tailhead is spongy; withers, shoulders and neck rounded and smooth
- Moderately Fleshy:** slight crease down spine; ribs and tail head feel spongy; fat deposits along withers, neck and behind shoulders
- Fleshy:** crease down spine; ribs have fat between them; tailhead spongy; fat deposits along withers, neck and behind shoulders
- Fat:** apparent crease down spine; ribs difficult to feel; soft fat surrounding tailhead; fat deposits along withers, behind shoulders and on inner thighs; neck is large
- Extremely Fat:** obvious crease down spine; patchy fat on ribs; bulging fat on tail head, withers, behind shoulders, and on neck; fat fills in flank and on inner thighs



HOOF TRIMMING

Hoof care is essential for wild horses to have a healthy lifestyle at the facility. Horses on the range can maintain their hooves with normal wear over long distances and rough terrain. In captivity, horses are unable to naturally maintain their hooves and hoof trimming is required.

F E E D & W A T E R



The facility provides about 24 pounds of hay per horse daily with unlimited fresh water, minerals and salt. Almost \$1 million is spent each year for around 3,400 tons of hay, depending on the number of horses at the facility and hay prices. Supplemental feed is provided for mare/foal pairs, weanlings and any animal with a Henneke score below 4.

Facility staff check and maintain water troughs daily to ensure they are working properly and to prevent sickness or diseases from spreading.

Digesting quality hay allows horses to generate internal body heat to stay warm in very cold weather. In addition, unlike on the range, horses do not have to expend energy foraging and are able to bed down on uneaten hay, which provides an insulated barrier from the bare ground.

E N V I R O N M E N T



Wind and cold are part of life in southwest Wyoming. Wild horses are acclimated to the weather, including wind, temperatures and snowfall, as well as to the wide-open, desert terrain that provides few natural windbreaks.

Horses grow a coat of long, thick winter hair (pictured left) that insulates them from the cold by trapping heat to maintain body temperature. Snow can accumulate on top of these winter coats and act as an insulating blanket without moisture penetrating to the skin or drawing away body heat. With this winter coat, Wyoming-acclimated horses are well adapted to the Wyoming winters.



On the range and in corrals, horses band together and rotate to protect one another from the wind. According to wild horse and burro specialists, facility managers and veterinarians, wind breaks at the facility are not necessary since the acclimated horses are fed and watered daily, are in good body condition and are able to band together as a herd. The BLM may require adopters to provide shelter (43 CFR 4750.3-2) because they may have too few horses to service this important herd function.



O P E R A T I O N S

QUALIFICATIONS

The Rock Springs Wild Horse and Burro Program staff are routinely relied upon to provide support and services throughout Wyoming and to the National Wild Horse and Burro Program.

Facility staff are qualified and equipped to provide help as needed in the field and receive yearly training on euthanasia procedures. They are available during the regular business day and on-call after normal business hours, including weekends and holidays, to respond to safety and animal welfare issues such as wild horses on interstates, highways or public roads, injuries or wild horses on private lands.

The staff adhere to all safety requirements, policies, standards and procedures per the guidance of the National Wild Horse and Burro Program.

DUST ABATEMENT

A water truck is used three times a week in the summer months to settle the dust in pens around the facility. Dust abatement is a safety measure when moving horses from pen to pen and benefits animal health and welfare by preventing horses from getting coughs and colic.

CLEANING

The facility staff completely clean the corrals by hauling away manure two to three times a year. Each cleaning takes two to four weeks. Cleaning helps prevent contagious diseases such as strangles, upper respiratory, snotty noses, cough, colic, pneumonia, etc. and parasites from spreading through the corrals. Cleaning also keeps odors at a manageable level.

CLOSURES

The facility is closed during cleaning operations for public safety and immediately following gathers to allow newly arrived horses to acclimate.

The facility provides opening/closing information online, through news releases (which can also be found online) and with signage on the front gate, which provides a phone number to call for more information and to make tour or adoption appointments.



Daily Water Trough Check and Maintenance



Healthy Mares and Foals

O B S E R V A T I O N

The facility welcomes the public. Tours and adoptions are conducted by appointment by calling 307-352-0292 or 307-352-0375. A public overlook is also open 24/7, year-round.

T R A I N I N G

The facility provides wild horses to two training facilities in Wyoming, the Wyoming Honor Farm in Riverton and the Mantle Adoption and Training Facility in Wheatland, as well as training facilities in other states. All trained and untrained horses are available for adoption.

Rock Springs Wild Horse Holding Facility

*From I-80, take Elk Street Exit 104 and turn north. After one mile, turn right onto Lionkol Road.
www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/programs/Wild_Horses/rs-wh-facility.html*