

Options available for unwanted, unusable horses

As odd as it may seem to a person who has always wanted a horse and for whatever reason doesn't have one, there are people who do not want the horses they have.

That may be a broad analysis, because there are many factors that play into the equation, but some people have horses that are unusable, unneeded or unwanted. They do not know what to do with them.

Of course the first answer to an unknowing layperson is "sell him." That often works, but not always.

A second answer might be: "give him away." That can work too, but, again, not always.

Over time, horses become unusable because they are sick, injured or old. Others are unmanageable,

sometimes being dangerous. In certain situations, an owner's financial picture changes, whereby they can no longer afford to own a horse.

It would be ideal for every loved but unneeded, horse to live out its days in rich, green pastures, but usually that's not possible.

The American Quarter Horse Association, Amarillo, Texas, has developed a manual with options for the unwanted horse.

"Above all, we want to ensure that a horse's health and welfare are at all times paramount to every other consideration," said Ward Stutz, AQHA director of membership services and public policy.

Selling the horse to another person allows one to meet and develop a rela-

tionship with the buyer. Horses can be sold through classified ads in publications, on the Internet, with flyers in public places and by telling others that the horse is for sale.

Prices vary in each situation, and sometimes the amount is not as important as who purchases the animal, it was noted.

"In a private sale, one might have the option of a buy-back agreement, so if the buyer decides to sell the horse, it can be bought back by the original owner," noted Stutz, who along with other AQHA officials prepared the unwanted horse options manual.

An auction is a quick way to sell a horse, and there are numerous regularly scheduled horse sales, as often as once-a-week. They are advertised in Grass & Grain.

"It's important to remember that at a horse auction, unless a reserve price is

placed on the horse, the price he brings is what he sells for," Stutz warned.

A certain percentage of horses selling through public auction markets typically go to slaughter facilities, it was noted.

Leasing has become a popular form of changing a horse's address. It provides an opportunity for potential owners to see how a horse fits into their lives.

"As leasing grows in popularity, so do the forms of lease payments," Stutz commented. "Some owners will even loan the horse in exchange for boarding and care."

Rescue and retirement facilities offer assistance in caring for and finding owners for unwanted horses or

those that have been subjected to neglect or abuse.

The AQHA does not endorse a specific rescue facility, but supports the "Care Guidelines for the Equine Rescue and Retirement Facilities," developed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners. Stutz suggested reading these and checking out a facility before sending a horse to it.

"While the vast majority of rescue and retirement facilities are run honestly and with the horse's best interests at heart, there have been reports of horse abuse and neglect at such operations," Stutz warned. "In some instances, a retirement facility might require a donation to help defray

the costs of caring for a horse."

A list of rescue and retirement facilities is available on the Internet.

Some horse owners can find people who will let them retire a horse to their pasture. "It might be necessary to offer a nominal regular payment for the retirement," Stutz related. A horse with injuries and health problems probably could not go into such an environment, he added.

Nobody wants to euthanize (put to death) a horse, but the procedure is sometimes the only solution. "It does give the owner total control over the way a horse's life comes to a conclusion and is often the most humane way to deal with such situations," Stutz commented.

"The decision to euthanize a horse must be based on medical considerations as well as the horse's current and future quality of life," he emphasized.

A veterinarian should be called to handle the euthanasia process and disposal of the carcass. Laws regulate disposal of a deceased horse and will be re-

lated in an upcoming For The Love Of Horses column.

Colleges and universities use horses for their equine programs or for research programs that benefit the industry. They often appreciate horses being donated to them.

Horse owners can check with a university, such as K-State and others throughout the Midwest, to see if they would like to have a sound and useable horse donated to their program. "These horses typically receive excellent care from the students attending the college," Stutz acknowledged.

"In certain cases, we will accept unsound horses for the K-State College of Veterinary Medicine teaching herd, and specific horses that must be euthanized are sometimes accepted for training procedures," according to Dr. Elizabeth Davis, head of equine medicine and surgery.

The KSU Vet College would not accept a young, healthy horse for euthanasia or the teaching herd, while the K-State Animal Science Horse Department might welcome such a contribution.

The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association accepts donations of horses for use by the handicapped.

"These horses must meet the criteria of the group's needs," Stutz explained. "The horse has to be able to work regularly, but those with minor health issues might be acceptable."

Second careers are an option for specific horses. Retired race horses can make excellent performance horses. Show horses with impressive records can go to a beginner to help them learn with a pro.

"An older horse that one might not want for personal use could be a perfect

teacher for a young person," Stutz recommended.

Public service as police mounts, patrolling parks and assisting search-and-rescue operations are also possible use for some horses.

Of course, a final option, and unthinkable to some, is selling a horse to go for processing. There are three horse plants in the United States, where 94,000 horses are processed annually.

"Certainly, many owners would not consider this as an option for their unwanted horses, but for some, it provides a humane alternative to additional suffering or possibly dangerous situations," Stutz concluded.

Options Available For Unwanted, Unusable Horses

As odd as it may seem to a person who has always wanted a horse and for whatever reason doesn't have one, there are people who do not want the horses they have.

That may be a broad analysis, because there are many factors that play into the equation, but some people have horses that are unusable, unneeded or unwanted. They do not know what to do with them.

Of course the first answer to an unknowing lay person is "sell him." That often works, but not always.

A second answer might be: "give him away." That can work too, but not always.

Over time, horses become unusable because they are sick, injured or old. Others are unmanageable, sometimes being dangerous. In certain situations, an owner's financial picture changes, whereby they can not afford to own a horse.

It would be ideal for every loved, but unneeded, horse to live out its days in rich, green pastures, but usually that's not possible.

The American Quarter Horse Association, Amarillo, Texas, has developed a manual with options for the unwanted horse.

"Above all, we want to ensure that a horse's health and welfare are at all times paramount to every other consideration," said Ward Stutz, AQHA director of membership services and public policy.

Selling the horse to another person allows one to meet and develop a relationship with the buyer. Horses can be sold through classified ads in publications, on the Internet, with flyers in public places and by telling others that the horse is for sale.

Prices vary in each situation, and sometimes the amount is not as important as who purchases the animal, it was noted.

"In a private sale, one might have the option of a buy-back agreement, so if the buyer decides to sell the horse, it can be bought back by the original owner," noted Stutz, who along with other AQHA officials prepared the unwanted horse options manual.

An auction is a quick way to sell a horse, and there are numerous regularly scheduled horse sales, as often as once-a-week. They are advertised in Grass & Grain.

"It's important to remember that at a horse auction, unless a reserve price is placed on the horse, the price he brings is what he sells for," Stutz warned.

A certain percentage of horses selling through public auction markets typically go to slaughter facilities, it was noted.

Leasing has become a popular form of changing a horse's address. It provides an opportunity for potential owners to see how a horse fits into their lives.

"As leasing grows in popularity, so do the forms of lease payments," Stutz commented. "Some owners will even loan the horse in exchange for boarding and care."

Rescue and retirement facilities offer assistance in caring for and finding owners for unwanted horses or those that have been subjected to neglect or abuse.

The AQHA does not endorse a specific rescue facility, but supports the "Care Guidelines for the Equine Rescue and Retirement Facilities," developed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners. Stutz suggested reading these and checking out a facility before sending a horse to it.

"While the vast majority of rescue and retirement facilities are run honestly and with the horse's best interests at heart, there have been reports of horse abuse and neglect at such operations," Stutz warned. "In some instances, a retirement facility might require a donation to help defray the costs of caring for a horse."

A list of rescue and retirement facilities is available on the Internet.

Some horse owners can find people who will let them retire a horse to their pasture. "It might be necessary to offer a nominal regular payment for the retirement," Stutz related. A horse with injuries and health problems probably could not go into such an environment, he added.

Nobody wants to euthanize (put to death) a horse, but the procedure is sometimes the only solution. "It does give the owner total control over the way a horse's life comes to a conclusion and is often the most humane way to deal with such situations," Stutz commented.

"The decision to euthanize a horse must be based on medical considerations as well as the horse's current and future quality of life," he emphasized.

A veterinarian should be called to handle the euthanasia process and disposal of the carcass. Laws regulate disposal of a deceased horse and will be related in an upcoming For The Love Of Horses column.

Colleges and universities use horses for their equine programs or for research programs that benefit the industry. They often appreciate horses being donated to them.

Horse owners can check with a university, such as K-State and others throughout the Midwest, to see if they would like to have a sound and useable horse donated to their program. "These horses typically receive excellent care from the students attending the college," Stutz acknowledged.

"In certain cases, we will accept unsound horses for the K-State College of Veterinary Medicine teaching herd, and specific horses that must be euthanized are sometimes accepted for training procedures," according to Dr. Elizabeth Davis, head of equine medicine and surgery.

The KSU Vet College would not accept a young, healthy horse for euthanization or the teaching herd, while the K-State Animal Science Horse Department might welcome such a contribution.

The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association accepts donations of horses for use by the handicapped.

"These horses must meet the criteria of the group's needs," Stutz explained. "The horse has to be able to work regularly, but those with minor health issues might be acceptable."

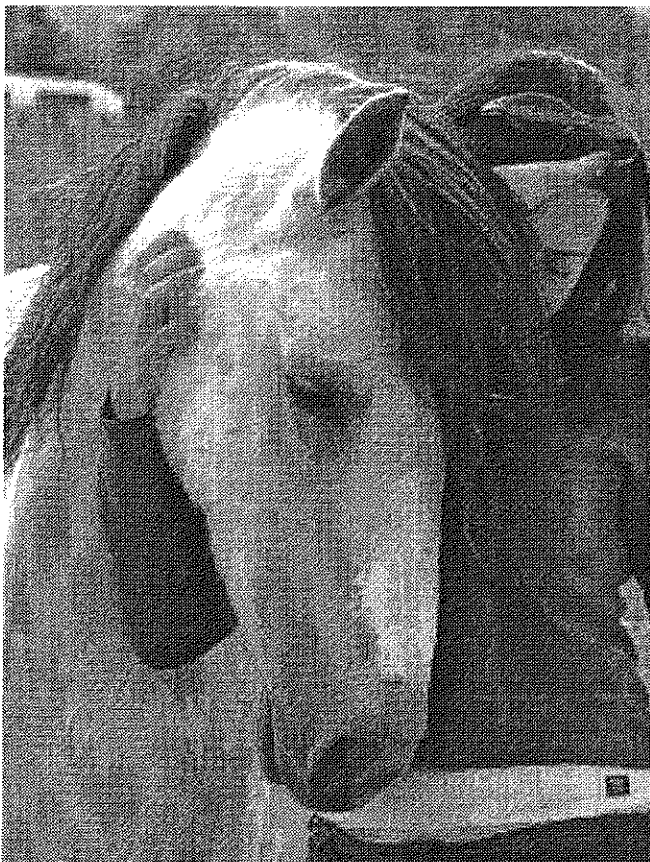
Second careers are an option for specific horses. Retired race horses can make excellent performance horses. Show horses with impressive records can go to a beginner to help them learn with a pro.

"An older horse that one might not want for personal use could be a perfect teacher for a young person," Stutz recommended.

Public service as police mounts, patrolling parks and assisting search-and-rescue operations are also possible use for some horses.

Of course, a final option, and unthinkable to some, is selling a horse to go for processing. There are three horse plants in the United States, where 94,000 horses are processed annually.

"Certainly, many owners would not consider this as an option for their unwanted horses, but for some, it provides a humane alternative to additional suffering or possibly dangerous situations," Stutz concluded.



Colorado Horse Rescue, Longmont, Colo., is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing emergency relief, shelter, care, rehabilitation and adoption services for abused, neglected, abandoned and unwanted horses. Funded through donations, grants, bequests and corporate sponsorships, it provides equine education, counseling, information and referral services.