

For Immediate Release
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SUMMIT CHARTS HISTORIC COURSE FOR UNWANTED HORSES

National Steering Committee to be Formed

Over 25 equine-industry organizations and one United States congressman participated in the nation's first-ever Unwanted Horse Summit on Tuesday, April 19, 2005, in Washington, D.C. Hosted by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), the Summit served as a catalyst for identifying long-term solutions designed to improve the quality of life of unwanted horses.

“While participants came to the table with divergent views on many aspects of the issue, they were able to reach a remarkable degree of consensus,” said Scott E. Palmer, 2005 AAEP president. “Everyone focused on the welfare of the horse.”

Discussion surrounded the factors that contribute to unwanted horses as well as the approaches to addressing the problem. Summit participants recommended as the next step the formation of a national steering committee dedicated to addressing issues affecting unwanted horses. Working groups to tackle specific areas, such as horse owner education, also will be developed as part of this effort. A summary report of the Summit's discussions, prepared by the meeting's professional facilitator, will be released by the AAEP by the end of April.

Summit participants expressed their desire to remain committed to the process and the AAEP will help facilitate the group's future work on the issue, said Palmer. “The unwanted horse problem can not be solved by any one segment of the industry. The goal is to get as many people and organizations involved as possible.”

In addition, an educational session held as part of the American Horse Council's annual meeting preceded the Summit and provided an overview of issues affecting the unwanted horse population. Each presentation is available in the pressroom of the AAEP's Web site, www.aaep.org.

Participants in the April 19 Summit represented breed groups, sport and discipline organizations, rescue and retirement facilities, veterinary associations and welfare groups. In addition to the AAEP, the following groups and individuals participated:

American Horse Protection Association
American Paint Horse Association
American Quarter Horse Association
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
American Veterinary Medical Association
Bureau of Land Management
Carriage Operators of North America

Day's End Farm Horse Rescue
Hooved Animal Humane Society
Pennell Hopkins (Humane Officer) - Pennsylvania SPCA
Humane Society of the United States
Daniel Manzanares (Executive Director) - New Mexico Livestock Board
National H.B.P.A..
North American Equine Ranching Information Council
North American Riding for the Handicapped Association
Oak Tree Racing Association
Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association
Standardbred Retirement Foundation
State Horse Council Advisory Committee
The Jockey Club
Thoroughbred Charities of America
United States Department of Agriculture
United States Equestrian Federation, Inc.
United States Trotting Association
Congressman Ed Whitfield (KY - 1st District)

The American Association of Equine Practitioners, headquartered in Lexington, Ky., is the world's largest professional association of equine veterinarians. Founded in 1954 as a non-profit organization dedicated to the health and welfare of the horse, the AAEP's 8,000 members currently reach more than 5 million owners worldwide. The association is actively involved in ethics issues, equine welfare, practice management, research and continuing education in the equine veterinary profession and horse industry.

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