

HABITAT FOR HORSES

P.O. Box 213
Hitchcock, TX 77563
1-866-434-5737



Fostering Policy

Revision Date: April 3, 2007

1.0 Policy

The Foster Policy is designed to insure that all equines in the care of Habitat for Horses, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "HfH") are placed in suitable foster homes where they will receive proper care. The foster applicant must be at least 18 years of age with no history or criminal history of animal abuse or neglect, and remain a member in good standing.

2.0 Application Process

The approval process begins upon receipt of the completed Foster Application and application fee if not a current member. The Application will be reviewed to verify that the applicant meets the requirements of HfH and the references submitted will be verified, along with a criminal background check.

After review and verification a volunteer inspector will be assigned to conduct the onsite inspection of the property where the equine will be kept. The inspector will verify that all animals on the property are properly cared for and the property is safe and adequate for the equine(s) to be fostered. If the equine will be boarded, the inspector will talk to the owner of the facility where the equine will be boarded and notify them that the equine will be owned by HfH. If the foster does not pay their boarding bill or in any way abandons the equine, HfH is to be notified immediately.

Please note: The application requires that you list information on the following references:

- a) A licensed Equine Veterinarian (DVM).
- b) An Equine Professional, such as a farrier, equine trainer, riding instructor, stable manager, equine breeder, etc.

3.0 Foster Home Standard Of Care

The following guidelines are applicable to general equine management practices and are required of all persons fostering an equine. While not comprehensive, they offer basic parameters for responsible equine ownership. The number of equines should never exceed the ability of the foster to feed and care for them properly. Such limits are dependent not only upon the physical health of the individual but also the financial ability to maintain proper management. In addition, any individual keeping equines must comply with all relevant state and local laws.

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3.1 General Management Practices

Various types of enclosure are available to confine equines, including, but not limited to: stalls, dry lots or pastures. In addition, equines shall be provided sufficient opportunity and space to exercise daily and have freedom of movement as necessary to reduce stress and maintain good physical condition. Space and provisions for exercise shall be appropriate for the age, condition and size of the equine.

Group pasturing of compatible equines to allow social interaction is encouraged. If equines are individually stalled, they must be able to make visual contact with other equines, unless otherwise directed by a veterinarian for the safety of the equine in question or other equines at the facility.

3.2 Facility Requirements

The following are requirements in order to foster an equine, however, all will be considered on a case-by-case basis:

- 1) **Pasture.** A minimum of half acre pasture per equine on the property. Exceptions may be made in those cases where the equine will be maintained at a boarding facility provided the equine, if stalled, is provided daily turnout of an adequate time and space.
- 2) **Shelter.** A recommended 12x12 foot stall per standard size equine in barn with turnout or pasture; or a three-sided run-in shelter with a recommended 12x12 feet per equine in pasture. Equines shall be provided with shelter that provides protection from extreme weather including but not limited to: prevailing wind, snow, sleet, rain, sun, and temperature extremes. Stalls and shelters shall be constructed to provide sufficient space for each equine to turn around, lie down, and move freely and to allow free air flow. Shelters may be constructed to have removable sides during the summer. All enclosures, stalls and/or shelters shall be kept in good repair and free of standing water, accumulated waste, sharp objects and debris. a) If the barn or shelter is metal, the exposed metal on the inside of the stall and/or shelter shall be covered with ¾" -1" plywood or 2"x6" boards. There should be no exposed nails or other objects that could potentially cause injury to the equine.
- 3) **Water.** The foster shall provide troughs or individual water sources to provide adequate and clean water for all equines. All water receptacles shall be kept clean and free of hazardous contaminants and be positioned or affixed to minimize spillage. Use of defroster to prevent freezing in inclement weather is recommended. Equines that are being trained, worked, ridden or transported shall be provided water as often as necessary for their health and comfort. Frequency of watering shall take into consideration the age, condition and size of the equine, activity level and climatic conditions.

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- 4) **Feed and Storage.** Equines shall receive at a minimum the equivalent of 3% of their body weight per day in high quality forage and grain. If natural forage is insufficient in quality or quantity, quality hay representative of choice grasses in the local area shall supplement the diet. Diet shall be planned with consideration for the age, condition, size, and activity level of the equine. If more than one animal is fed at the same place and time, it shall be the responsibility of the foster to ensure that each equine receives nutrition in sufficient quantity. If necessary, equines shall be separated to ensure each has access to adequate nutrition without interference from more dominant individuals. Individual feed buckets or pans should be provided for each equine. All storage and feeding receptacles shall be kept clean and free of contaminants, such as feces, mold, mildew, rodents and insects. Stored feed shall be kept in such a manner that equines cannot gain access to it.
- 5) **Fencing.** Fencing shall be of solid construction, without sharp edges and visible to equines; electric fencing is acceptable. The use of barbed wire fencing is unacceptable in any area of five or less acres or along any side of any area separating equines from one another. Use of electric wire may preclude the barbed wire provision. All t-posts shall be appropriately capped when used as cross fencing to separate pastures, along any fence line adjacent to another equine property or/and property that is less than five acres. Fencing shall be monitored on a regular basis to ensure its safety and effectiveness is maintained.
- 6) **Cattle Guards.** Cattle guards will not be permitted unless there is a gate separating the equines from the cattle guard or the equines do not have access to it.

4.0 Approved Foster Home Procedures

- 1) The approved foster will sign a Foster Home Contract.
- 2) The Foster Coordinator will contact the qualified foster home and advise them that there is an equine needing fostering. HfH will disclose all information they have (with the possible exception of the name and contact information of the previous owner of the equine) to the foster family and give them the option of fostering that equine. If they decline, the next qualified foster family will be contacted and so on. If a foster family continues to decline, they may be removed from the database.
- 3) The foster home will report via email, postal mail or telephone on the condition, health, abilities, etc. of the equine on a quarterly basis or as necessary to provide updates to the Foster Coordinator. The foster home will also be responsible for insuring that the information on the equine's webpage accurately reflects their current condition and/or abilities and, if requested, shall provide photographs.
- 4) All equines will be placed on a regular follow up schedule. The first follow up will be conducted at the end of the first six months and continue every six months thereafter. The exception will be for those equines that are an initial body score of less than a 4 on the Henneke Body Condition Scoring. Their initial follow up will be conducted at the end of the first two months in foster care and continue every six months thereafter. Under certain circumstances more frequent follow ups may occur at the discretion of HfH.

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- 5) Once the fostered equine is available for adoption, the foster home will be given two weeks in which to adopt the equine. If the foster home is not interested in adopting the equine, they must make the equine available for scheduled visits by potential adopters. In the case of an equine that is available for adoption and is transferred to another foster home, the two week adoption period will apply unless there is an adoption pending on the equine. In some cases, with an adoption pending, a foster transfer might be unavoidable and under these circumstances the Foster Coordinator or HfH will make every attempt to inform the new foster home of the pending adoption.
- 6) The foster home will be required to give HfH a minimum of thirty (30) business day's written notice if they wish an equine to be removed from their care.
- 7) The foster home will be required to immediately notify HfH or Foster Coordinator of any change in mailing and/or equine property address, phone numbers, email, or any other contact information.
- 8) Approval applies only to the equine property that is initially inspected. If a foster home changes the location of the equine property an inspection of that property will be conducted.
- 9) If after approval the foster home becomes inactive in excessive of twelve months there will be a re-inspection of the property. If their membership has lapsed, the foster home will need to renew their membership at that time.
- 10) If at any time a foster home fails to follow procedures or an equine's health declines, HfH has the authority to remove said equine from the property. On the day of the removal, notice of the removal of the equine/s will be given to the foster home stating the reason for the removal and, if warranted, the revocation of the foster home's approval status.

4.1 Breeding

No breeding of fostered equines is permissible. All fostered studs shall be gelded, except when determined by a veterinarian to be medically dangerous for the equine. If pastured on the property, all studs, whether foster equines or otherwise, shall be physically separated from pastured mares by a minimum of a ten foot buffer zone, constructed of adequate fencing at a minimum of six feet in height. Studs unable to be gelded shall be kept separate from mares at all times. Should an accidental breeding occur, the foster home must contact HfH immediately so that preventative measures can be administered.

4.2 Financial Responsibilities

Upon agreement to foster an equine, the foster home will be responsible for all maintenance costs of the equine including boarding fees, grain, hay, paste wormer, farrier, and other usual and customary costs excluding veterinary expenses. HfH will be responsible for approved veterinary expenses, approved supplements and approved corrective shoeing incurred by the equine in accordance with Section 5.1 of this Policy and the Reimbursement Policy.

4.3 Health Guidelines

Equines shall maintain a body condition score of no less than 4 on the Henneke Body Condition Scoring Chart. Exceptions shall be made for equines under the regular veterinarian care for a medical condition. If the health of an equine in foster care is in decline and weight loss occurs, the foster home must immediately notify the Foster Coordinator or HfH of such circumstances.

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4.4 Health Records

The foster home shall maintain an Equine Health Record on their foster equine that includes, but is not limited to: current diet, veterinary and farrier care. Before the equine is adopted out, it shall be halter trained and, whenever possible, easy to catch. The Health Record should be transferred with the equine, along with the original Coggins certificate, to either a new foster or adoptive home. A copy is to be sent to HfH for the equine's file upon transfer of the equine.

4.5 Humane Euthanasia

The Euthanasia Policy is designed to determine under what conditions an equine in the care of HfH is to be euthanized and how that decision is to be reached.

Only a licensed veterinarian may administer euthanasia, except in an extreme emergency when a veterinarian is not available. A veterinarian shall examine the carcass to verify, in writing, such immediate need. Carcass shall be disposed of in compliance with all relevant laws. The foster home shall immediately notify HfH of such euthanasia and provide a veterinary statement and record of the euthanasia within 24 hours of the euthanasia.

Humane euthanasia shall be employed when an equine is:

- Not mobile and a veterinarian is of the opinion that mobility will not return;
- Experiencing continual pain for which there is no medical relief or the relief is not within the financial capability of HfH;
- Affected by a degenerative medical condition for which there is no cure;
- Dangerous to themselves or other animals or humans; and/or
- Tests positive for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA)

4.6 Farrier

Within six to eight weeks of the equine's arrival or earlier if warranted by the condition of the equine's feet, the foster home at their expense shall make arrangements for a farrier to examine the equine's feet. The foster home shall ensure that the equine will receive hoof care and maintenance every six to eight weeks, or as directed by a veterinarian or farrier. An experienced person knowledgeable in standard farrier practice shall perform hoof care. Exceptions may be determined by veterinary or other expert consultation when such care is unnecessary or would endanger the equine in question and/or their caretaker(s), i.e., in the case of wild or untamed equines. In the case of horses with severe founder issues, HfH may opt to enlist the services of a "natural" trimmer in lieu of shoeing. This situation will be assessed case-by-case, taking into account the foster home's vet and farrier recommendations and at HfH's discretion.

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4.7 Parasite Control

The foster home will administer a wormer to the equine unless otherwise instructed and will maintain the equine on a rotational worming schedule of every eight to twelve weeks while in their care.

- **Rotation of dewormers.** Equine dewormers are categorized by chemical class. Different chemical classes target/kill different parasites and reduce the risk of parasite resistance. It is important to rotate between chemical classes rather than between different brand names.
- **Macrocytic Lactones.** Ivermectin products cause paralysis in parasites, including a broad spectrum of nematodes and arthropods. It affects large and small strongyles, benzimidazole-resistant small strongyles, ascarids, pinworms, bots and summer sore-causing parasites. (Products: Equell, Zimecterin, IverCare, Eqvalan, Equimectrin, Rotation 1, Morse Health Equine Ivermectin or Agri-Mectin Equine Paste.)
- **Combined Macrocytic Lactones.** Ivermectin/praziquantel produces paralyze nematodes and arthropods and breaks down the membranes of tapeworms. This class protects against large and small strongyles, benzimidazole-resistant small strongyles, ascarids, pinworms, bots, summer sore-causing parasites and tapeworms. (Products: Equimax or Zimecterin Gold)
- **Benzimidazoles.** Oxibendazole or fenbendazole products kill parasites quickly and offer broad spectrum nematode protection, including large strongyles, small strongyles, ascarids and pinworms. (Products: Anthelcide EQ, Panacure Powerpac, Safe-Guard or Benzelmin)
- **Pyrantels.** Pyrantel pamoate or pyrantel tartrate products kill parasites slowly by causing paralysis in a board spectrum of nematodes, such as large and small strongyles, ascarids and pinworms. (Products: Strongid Paste, StrongidC 2X, Continuex Daily Dewormer, rotation 2, Equi Aid CW, Strongyle Wormer, Manna Pro Foal & Horse Pelleted Wormer or Nu-Image Guardian)
- **Daily Dewormer Program** While not necessarily recommended by HfH, if using a daily deworming program equines shall be given an ivermectrin paste product (as listed above under **Macrocytic Lactones**) every six months.

Note: It is **NOT** recommended to use the product Quest when deworming malnourished or senior equines and foals. Please consult with your veterinarian before implementing any deworming program.

4.8 Training

The foster home will evaluate the equine's training level to the best of their ability. In some cases HfH and/or professional trainers may be required to assess the equines skills and abilities or assist the foster home with simple training, including halter training and handling of the equine.

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5.0 Veterinary Routine Procedures

Should HfH request that the equine be examined by a veterinarian and/or be given vaccinations, the foster home will make the necessary arrangements. In addition, all routine veterinarian procedures are subject to approval by the Foster Coordinator or HfH.

Routine veterinarian procedures include:

- 1) **Annual dental check-up and treatment** as necessary to ensure proper and adequate food digestion.
- 2) **Screening for Equine Infectious Anemia** (via a Coggins Test) is recommended for all equine and is mandated by law when equines are:
 - a) Transported across state lines;
 - b) Transferred to a new home with other equines;
 - c) Within a quarter mile radius of other equines; and/or
 - d) At shows or other gatherings.
- 3) **Vaccinations** shall be administered on an annual basis with the exception of West Nile Virus (WNV) which shall be administered bi-annually. The approved vaccinations are:
 - a) Rabies
 - b) VEWT (A combination of Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis (VEE), Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), Western Equine Encephalitis (WEE) and Tetanus
 - c) West Nile Virus (initial vaccination, booster at four weeks, then administered every six months thereafter)
 - d) Flu/Rhino (Equine Influenza and Rhinopneumonitis combination)
- 4) **Unapproved vaccinations.** The following vaccinations are not approved and are not reimbursable:
 - a) EPM (Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis)
 - b) Strangles
 - c) Strep
- 5) **Prenatal vaccinations.**
 - a) If not already vaccinated a pregnant mare should receive the full set of vaccinations as mentioned in section 5.0, paragraph 3), with the exception of the Flu/Rhino this should not be given at this time.
 - b) Pneumabort at 3, 5, 7 and 9 months of pregnancy
 - c) One month before foaling the pregnant mare should be given the full set of vaccinations as mentioned in section 5.0, paragraph 3), including the Flu/Rhino
- 6) **Foal vaccinations.**
 - a) Foals at the ages of 3 and 4 months should receive the full set of vaccinations as mentioned in section 5.0, paragraph 3). The next set of vaccinations would be administered at one year and annually thereafter.
 - b) Foals that are received that are unvaccinated should receive an initial full set of vaccinations as mentioned in section 5.0, paragraph 3) and at one month later.

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5.1 Non-Routine Or Emergency Veterinary Procedures

A veterinary professional shall be contacted immediately if an equine is known or suspected to have experienced or displayed injuries, illnesses or symptoms including but not limited to: partial or total paralysis, broken bones, inability to bear weight on limb(s), lameness, severe open wounds, abnormal discharge or bleeding, severe parasitic infestation or infection, abnormal skin condition or hair loss, marked weight loss, loss of appetite or inability to eat or drink, persistent diarrhea, shock, colic, choke, founder, tremors, swelling or abnormal temperature fluctuations.

5.2 Approval of Veterinary Procedures

All routine and non-routine veterinary procedures and/or hospitalizations must be submitted for approval via phone call or email to the Foster Coordinator or designated emergency contact.

5.3 Emergency Care

The foster home shall immediately contact the Foster Coordinator or designated emergency contact for any non-life threatening situations. In the case of an emergency, where the life of the equine is at risk without immediate action, the foster home may authorize the procedure following the veterinarian's recommendation provided the estimated costs associated with the equine will not exceed Four Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$450). The Foster Coordinator must be notified within 24 hours of any procedures authorized by the foster home.

5.4 Equine Hospitalizations

Any time an equine owned by HfH must be hospitalized for any non-emergency procedure, that equine must be checked in under HfH's name. HfH must have access to the equine, its records, veterinary recommendations, and any decisions as to the care and future of the equine that need to be made.

5.5 Veterinarian Expenses

Whenever an approved veterinary procedure is performed, an itemized list of services and costs that were provided for the equine must be mailed to HfH within sixty (60) days. If the foster home does not comply the foster home may not be reimbursed for the expense.

Direct billing to HfH by the veterinarian office or clinic is acceptable.

5.6 Veterinary Records

The veterinary records of any equine owned by HfH must be made available at the request of any member of the Board of Directors.

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