



ANIMAL
WELFARE COUNCIL



Lessons About the Unwanted Horse

A project of the Animal Welfare Council

prepared by
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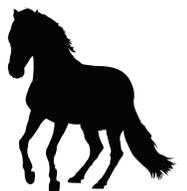
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Preface

Horse ownership and equine activities are keenly rewarding, especially for youth. The bond that develops between a human and his or her animal can be life-changing as it motivates personal growth and achievements.

As a life-long equine enthusiast, I don't need a study to know that the outside of a horse is good for the inside of a human; however, there is ample scientific evidence documenting the positive effects of the human-horse bond on the physical, mental, and emotional health of those who participate in equine activities. As the project manager for this lesson series, I can cite my own and others' research demonstrating that equestrian activities develop a youth's skills in decision making, communication, goal setting, thinking, and problem solving; they also teach responsibility and engender good citizenship. Horsemanship can be a never ending journey of education, enjoyment and satisfaction for participants of every age.

Horse ownership can bring great rewards, but it also carries tremendous responsibility—the decision to own should not be made casually. When one acquires a horse, one takes on the care and nurturing of a completely dependent animal, of a species with unique behaviors and physical needs, neither a bulky dog nor an oddly friendly cow. The Animal Welfare Council hopes, as do this series' creators, that these lessons will inform the would-be horse owner (or horse buying parent) about the immediate duties, costs, and expectations of horse ownership.

The horse owner also belongs to a larger community—the horse industry—where individual and collective decisions and accepted practices shape the present welfare and future outcomes for these remarkable animals. The Animal Welfare Council believes that the horse owner's second responsibility is to be knowledgeable about the greater issues of the industry and therefore make informed decisions about its direction. The unwanted horse issue is at the forefront of today's industry concerns; everyone in the equine community has a duty to know the facts and address the issue honestly. Furthermore, these lessons recognize that the unwanted horse is a concern not only for the industry itself, but also for the general public whose role should be to encourage legislators to create equine law based on facts rather than emotion.

The goal of these lessons is to provide a realistic look into the issues surrounding the unwanted horse, in material shaped appropriately for children between 10 and 12 years old, the age at which many children first engage seriously with horse ownership or equine activities. The Animal Welfare Council believes these lessons can contribute to the development of a number of important academic skills and that the content will benefit not only the children studying it but the horse industry as a whole: Better informed youth will make wiser decisions about their equine participation, and they will mature into knowledgeable adult voters making thoughtful decisions about horse industry legislation and regulations.

This series comes from a group of people who have great love and admiration for horses and who believe the solution to the unwanted horse issue requires cooperative efforts from those in the horse industry and those in the general public. It is the hope of the Animal Welfare Council as well as the series' creators that the lessons will inform and encourage knowledgeable equine participation, raise awareness of the unwanted horse issue, and engage those the lessons touch in actively seeking solutions, so that thoughtful, deliberate and responsible ownership becomes the universal practice of the horse industry.

Jill Montgomery
Author, *Lessons About the Unwanted Horse*





Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

Introduction

The face of animal welfare is changing as is our society's perception of animals and their roles in our lives. The growing gulf between agriculture and the end consumer distances the daily realities of food production, and this encourages the general population to embrace as companion animals those previously considered livestock, such as horses. In addition, the tendency of humans to anthropomorphize (attribute human characteristics to animals) is reinforced by movies, television and books. These trends coupled with the influence of animal rights ideology are creating real changes in the United States regarding industry practices for the traditional use of livestock. A new category of horses has emerged, the "Unwanted Horse," that is now the focus of much discussion; as their numbers surge in a time of economic hardship, the need is great to educate the public in general, and horse owners specifically, about the issue from a factual and historical perspective. The AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners) has defined unwanted horses as "horses which are no longer wanted by their current owner because they are old, injured, sick, unmanageable, fail to meet their owner's expectations (e.g., performance, color or breeding), or their owner can no longer afford them." The Animal Welfare Council developed this set of lesson plans to provide tools and resources to assist teachers and horse industry youth leaders to explain this trend and its impacts on horses and animal welfare.

Animal Welfare Council members support the use of animals in recreation, entertainment, industry and sports. The organization is dedicated to advancing the responsible and humane use of animals in these activities. Visit <http://www.animalwelfarecouncil.com> for more information about the Animal Welfare Council.

This six-lesson program guides students through key elements contributing to the rise of unwanted horses in the United States, with the goal of stimulating understanding and potential solutions for the issue. Each lesson includes a teacher's guide with goals, background material, resources for further reading, alignment with Common Core State Standards, presentation outline, hand-outs in reproducible format for the students, and a reinforcing group or independent activity that can be completed either as part of the lesson or as a field exercise. The lessons may be presented in series, as might be used in traditional classrooms or home schooling programs, or independently in youth activity settings such as 4-H, Girl Scouts, or Boy Scouts. A bonus lesson has been included as an overall evaluation tool with questions that can be used in a Jeopardy-style quiz game.



Objectives:

These lesson plans use activities grounded in standards and benchmarks to help learners acquire, integrate and apply knowledge. This is accomplished by having participants do an activity to create an experience with the information introduced in the lesson, then share their reactions to that information publicly (“Herd Time”), reflecting on how it is relevant to them, then apply the knowledge to their lives through the field exercises (“Pasture Time”). The overall objective for the learner will be to examine trends and impacts being brought to bear on the larger horse industry by the “Unwanted Horse” phenomenon. Individual topics use exercises that can be applied to building skills specified in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts; Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects; and Math.

Target Audience: The lessons plans are suggested for youth 10-12 years of age. The materials could be presented to an older audience with adjustments in presentation tone and expectation for more in-depth discussion in the group and individual activities.

Included materials re-enforce key information and encourage student interaction:

Teacher’s Guides:

- Content summary
- Learning goals
- Common Core State Standards curriculum alignments
- Background information
- Resources for further reading
- Presentation outline
- Answer keys for each student handout game, worksheet, and vocabulary builder

Students Handouts:

Student Background Information (to be read independently or as a group)

“Herd Time” Group Discussion:

- Discussion questions
- Games, worksheets, and/or vocabulary builders

“Pasture Time” Field Exercises:

- Activity description with suggested resources
- Games, worksheets, and/or vocabulary builders





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Lesson Series Evaluation Game:

This group activity is an interactive 7th session for the group to demonstrate the cumulative knowledge they acquired through the "Lessons About the Unwanted Horse" series.

You can choose to add:

- DVD / Computer player to view resource materials on DVD or the internet
- Live horse(s) for demonstrations
- Photos of horses from trade journals or magazines
- Model horses to enhance your presentation
- Booklets and other resources

Delivering your Lessons about the Unwanted Horse

- Step 1.** Review the entire session. Begin by familiarizing yourself with the "Lessons about the Unwanted Horse" background information. Look for ways to use the reference materials. Draw on your group's experience.
- Step 2.** Deliver the Lessons about the Unwanted Horse by using the Presentation Outline. This point by point document covers the key information for the group to use in their activities and learning process.
- Step 3.** Pass out visual aids, background and other handouts, and other supporting material for the lesson. Explain which materials will be completed independently (and when), and which will be done as a group.
- Step 4.** Encourage your group to have fun discussing the Herd Time questions and activities.
- Step 5.** Explain to the group how the Pasture Time questions and activities will be completed (individually or as a group) and what the expectations for completion of the activities will be.
- Step 6.** Provide multiple opportunities for your group to demonstrate their knowledge by checking for understanding in the discussion. Allow the group to check their work with answer keys provided for worksheets and games.
- Step 7.** Evaluate what your group has learned using questions found in the evaluation game.

