



Humane Alternatives to Horse Slaughter

Not every horse going to slaughter needs to be rescued. USDA determined that 92.3% of horses sent to slaughter are in good condition, so the vast majority of American horses sent to slaughter would be able to live productive lives if given the opportunity. These horses could be sold, donated, or otherwise rehomed; however, slaughter buyers regularly attend and outbid legitimate horse owners and rescues at auctions. Using USDA's own finding, when horse slaughter is prohibited, less than 1% of the entire horse population may require the help of rescues or euthanasia.

Many humane options are available to an owner looking to rehome a horse:

- **Sell to a Vetted, Private Owner.** An owner can begin by inquiring with their personal contacts—veterinarians, farriers, friends, family, co-workers. Adoption websites like [Petfinder.com](https://www.petfinder.com) and [TheHorse.com](https://www.thehorse.com) are also available.
- **Lease to Another Horse Enthusiast.** Leasing typically involves the lessee paying a portion of the horse's monthly board expenses in exchange for spending time with the horse. Leasing is a great way to relieve financial strain without giving up the horse.
- **Donate to a Therapeutic Program or a Mounted Police Unit.** More than 500 organizations across the country accept donated horses for use in various programs that benefit communities—including therapeutic riding centers for inner city kids, mentally disabled individuals, or mental trauma victims, police department mounted units, prison programs, veteran therapy programs, university riding programs, or similar programs.
- **Horse Rescues, Retirement Farms, Sanctuaries, Animal Shelters, and Adoption Websites.** There are nearly 700 U.S. horse rescues and sanctuaries that take in horses with the intention of adopting them out to new homes or providing a lifetime of care. The Homes for Horses Coalition is a group of horse rescues and professionals actively working to provide care and homes to horses in need and promote responsible horse ownership.
- **Responsible Breeders.** The Humane Society of the United States formed the Responsible Horse Breeders Council, composed of breeders that will take back any horse they have bred who becomes homeless or is at risk for slaughter. Some breeds also maintain databases for owners who want to be contacted if a horse they've owned or bred needs a home. Examples include the AQHA's Full Circle program, USTA's Full Circle program and The Jockey Club's Thoroughbred Connect program.
- **Gelding Clinics and Grants.** Backyard breeding and overbreeding are serious problems. Allowing slaughter to continue encourages irresponsible breeding practices. Horse reproduction rarely occurs by accident – these are large, manageable animals – we are able to control their numbers. Gelding clinics and grants (such as Front Range Equine Rescue's "Stop the Backyard Breeder" program) are available to provide free or low cost geldings. Limiting horse breeding saves lives.
- **Humane Euthanasia.** Very few horses may require it, but humane euthanasia is a ready option. The cost of humane euthanasia and carcass removal is equal to or less than one month's care in most parts of the country and is a part of responsible horse ownership. Companies throughout the country offer equine crematory services and rendering/carcass disposal services that will remove deceased horses from an owner's property. Euthanasia clinics and grants (such as Front Range Equine Rescue's national "Trails End" euthanasia grant program) are also available to provide free or low cost euthanasia.