

Homes needed for wild horses and burros

LANCASTER — The Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, is looking for people who would like to give a wild horse or burro a good home.

Qualified applicants can adopt a wild horse and burro for less than it costs to buy one commercially. The horses can be trained to work, ride or to be pets.

These are no ordinary horses and burros. These are living symbols of the history and the pioneer spirit of America's West. Some are descendants of animals that escaped Indian attacks on wagon trains, cavalry attacks on Indians, or Indian-cavalry battles.

Others are descendants of stock released by the cavalry when U.S. Army outposts were closed, of animals abandoned or lost by early prospectors, and of horses and burros turned loose by farmers during the Dust Bowl conditions of the 1930s. Some are possibly descended from mustangs introduced by Spanish conquistadors in the 16th Century.

"The wild horse and burro adoption program," says BLM Director Robert L. Burford, "is a partial solution to the problem of overpopulation among wild horse and burro herds on western public rangelands. These herds have expanded in most areas since approval of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act in 1971. They compete for very limited forage and water with both native wildlife and domestic

livestock that graze the public rangelands. In order to maintain a proper ecological balance BLM rounds up excess wild horses and burros and makes them available for adoption."

Burford adds that approximately 32,000 wild horses and burros have been adopted since the national Adopt-A-Horse Program began in 1976. Adopted horses and burros are now found in every state except Hawaii and Delaware.

What sort of people adopt wild horses and burros? Just about anyone with an interest and affection for the animals, Burford says. "Most of our adopters want to see wild horses and burros protected, not just as a reminder of our Nation's western heritage, but as animals worth owning and enjoying."

BLM screens potential adopters for proper facilities and experience to care for the animals, which are unbroken when adopters pick them up. For the first 12 months following adoption, wild horses and burros remain the property of the U.S. Government. Adopters may apply for title after providing proper care and treatment for that period.

Since 1979, BLM has operated a wild horse and burro distribution center in the town of Cross Plains, Tennessee — about 30 miles north of Nashville. "The Tennessee center has been a huge success," Burford says, "primarily by making it easier than ever before for people in the states east of the

Mississippi River to pick up adopted animals.

"Based on that success — nearly 3,000 adoptions in two years — BLM opened a midwestern distribution center last summer near Omaha, Nebraska and plans to open another eastern distribution center next April.

We've chosen the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, area for the next center primarily for its proximity to so many potential adopters in the Northeast and its accessibility via the interstate highway system."

Members of the public who would like more information about the adoption program should write to Adopt-A-Horse, Dept. 618-K, Consumer Information Center, Pueblo Colorado 81009. Along with a brochure on the adoption program, the writer receives an application form to be completed and returned to the Bureau of Land Management. The applicant is asked to specify on the form the age and sex of the horse or burro desired, and to describe the kind of facilities available for the animal's care. An individual can apply for

up to four animals a year.

Once BLM approves an application, the name of the potential adopter is placed on a register. As horses and burros become available, the approved applicant is notified where and when to select and pick up the animal. How long an applicant has to wait for an animal after application has been accepted depends upon the number of animals available and the number of prior applicants who want the same sex, color, or age animal. The most requested animals are three-to-five-year-old mares and (female burro).

Currently, there is no charge for these wild horses and burros. An adopter pays only a veterinarian's fee, the cost of transporting the animal from the state in which it was captured to the distribution pickup point, and a portion of the adoption center's handling charge. Starting January 2, 1982, there will

be a fee of \$200 per horse and \$75 per burro, plus transportation costs. The veterinary cost will be included in the adoption fee.

Burford explained that the adoption fee is necessary to help partially reimburse the U.S. government for what it spends to remove the animals from the rangelands, process adoption applications, provide medical examinations and vaccinations, and feed and handle the wild horses and burros during the adoption process. Adopters are advised of the exact costs when animals become available.

BLM estimates there are currently over 70,000 wild horses and burros on public rangelands in 10 Western States, with more than half concentrated in Nevada and Wyoming. According to BLM range specialists, the optimum number the ranges will support for good management is approximately 25,000.

Fertilize via irrigation

NEWARK, Del. — Soil and tissue tests from a University of Delaware extension demonstration project involving about 7000 acres of irrigated corn have shown that nitrogen, sulfur and boron are often deficient. These nutrients are all subject to loss by leaching—a problem frequently encountered on sandy Coastal Plain soils.

One solution to the problem is to apply these materials through the irrigation water at appropriate intervals. The Cooperative Extension Service, in cooperation with local farmers and fertilizer dealers, tested the feasibility of applying a blend of nutrients through irrigation systems last summer.

According to Delaware extension agronomist Dr. William H.

Mitchell, the test formulation included 30 percent nitrogen solution, Solubor, ammonium sulfate and water. At each application of 20 pounds of nitrogen, two pounds of sulfur and 0.4 pound of boron, premixed with water, were applied to each acre. In most cases, five separate applications were made.

Tissue samples were collected from corn plants before and after the fertilizers were applied. "Field data from these tests are not available," says Mitchell, "but it is significant that no difficulties were encountered in formulating and applying the blended fertilizer."



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