

Wild horse transportation costs dropped

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Wild horse and burro adopters no longer will be charged transportation costs for excess animals shipped from one adoption center to another, Bureau of Land Management Director Robert Burford has announced.

Burford said transportation costs are being eliminated to encourage greater participation in the Bureau's Adopt-A-Horse Program, a 10-year-old effort that finds foster homes for excess wild horses and burros removed from public lands in the West.

"Transportation costs added to our nationwide basic adoption fee were discouraging adoptions," Burford said. "Thus ultimately

resulted in increasing costs to taxpayers due to the expense of feeding large numbers of horses already in corrals for extended periods of time. We want to do everything possible to find good homes for these excess wild horses and burros."

Elimination of the transportation charges means the cost of adopting a horse or burro will be the same anywhere in the Nation, \$125 per horse and \$75 per burro. Previously, with transportation costs added, the adoption cost of a wild horse ranged up to \$215, and for a burro, \$140.

The change in policy coincides with the beginning of a substantial increase in the number of excess

animals removed from public and private lands in the West. As part of the Fiscal Year 1985 Appropriations Act, Congress is requiring BLM to remove more than 17,000 excess wild horses and burros during the year.

Although the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 requires the Secretary of the Interior to "immediately remove excess animals," BLM has found it impossible to keep up with population increases. Approximately 60,300 wild horses and burros roam public (and in some cases, private) lands today. Based on land use planning completed to date, an estimated 24,000 animals can be maintained on the forage

and water resources available to them.

"Costs of feeding and maintaining captured animals average \$2.00 per day," Burford continued. "We feel that dropping transportation costs will increase adoptions in the Midwest and East significantly so that animals remain in our corrals for shorter periods of time."

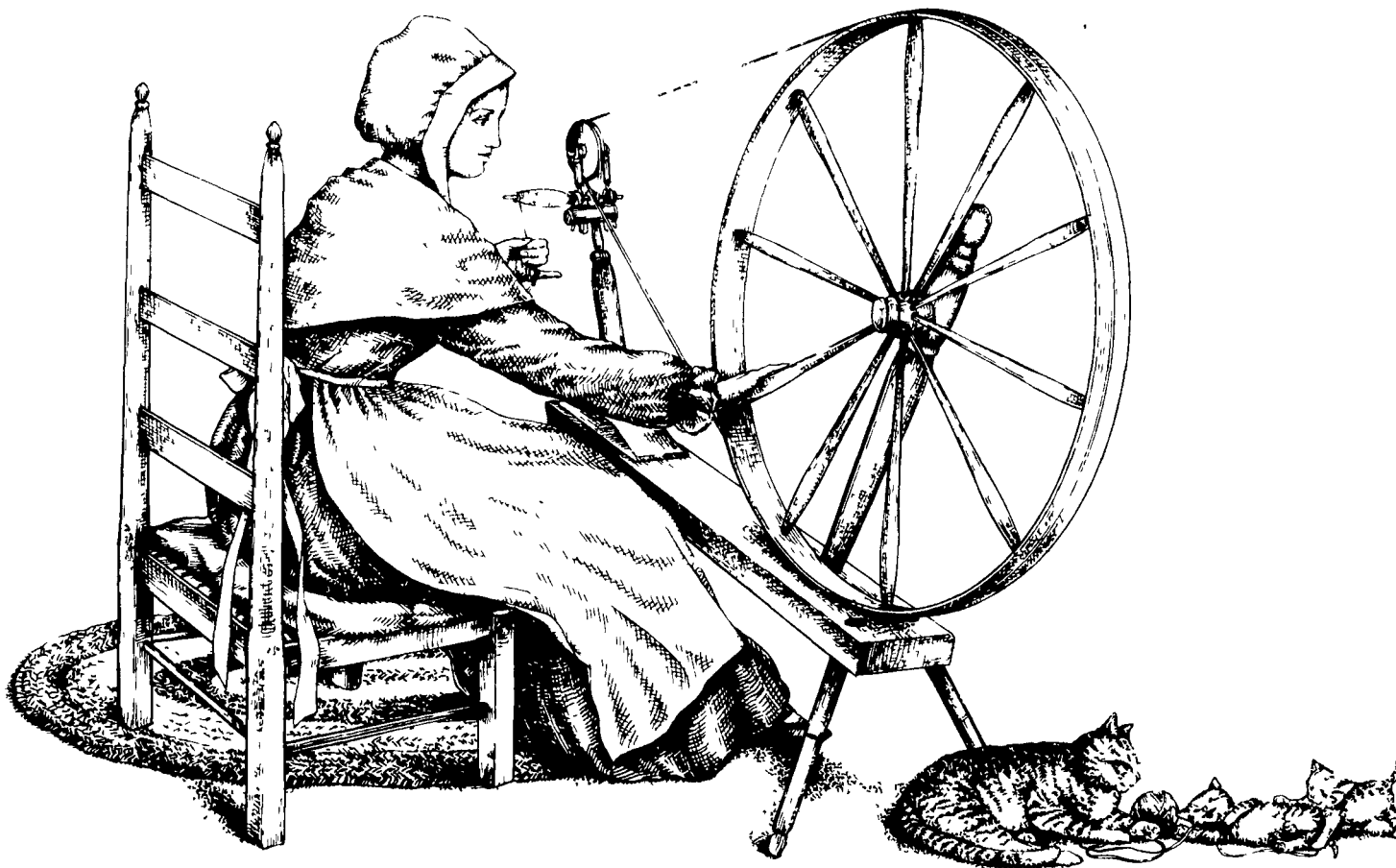
BLM's Adopt-A-Horse Program has placed more than 50,000 animals in private hands. The Bureau maintains 11 year-round adoption facilities across the Nation, including centers in Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania,

Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming. It also frequently operates temporary adoption centers in areas some distance from its permanent facilities.

Wild horses and burros can be tamed and trained for most of the same purposes as domestic animals, such as riding, showing, farm work, and packing. Adoption information and applications may be obtained by writing Adopt-A-Horse, Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.



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