

Dept. of Interior plans first wild horse, burro expo

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Some people call them "useless broomtails," but adopters from across the nation are invited to prove otherwise by demonstrating the talents and skills of their wild horses and burros at the first All-American Wild Horse and Burro

Expo. The combination show and adoption event will be held in Rio Grande, Ohio, from July 3 through 6.

The Expo will be a joint venture between Bob Evans Farms, a private corporation, and the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). "We

appreciate the support offered by Bob Evans and his staff," BLM Director Robert F. Burford said. "We look forward to an exciting celebration at his Farm."

All animals adopted through BLM's Adopt-A-Horse or Burro Program will be eligible to participate in the show. Ap-

proximately 64,000 wild horses and burros have been placed with individuals across the United States since the program began in 1973.

Fifteen events have been scheduled for the July 5 show. Events for adopted horses include

Western pleasure, English pleasure, a "Simon says" command class, costume, reining, egg and spoon, trail, flag race, rescue race, flat race, and barrel race. Burro classes are halter, lead line for children, novelty hitch, and costume. The adopters will be vying for cash prizes donated by Bob Evans Farm.

"We are excited about this opportunity to show that wild horses and burros can be trained and shown, just as their domestic counterparts," Burford said. "We hope to convince many more people to adopt these animals."

Approximately 50,400 wild horses and burros roam public lands in the Western States, about twice as many as can be supported by the forage and water resources available to them. Excess animals are gathered by BLM and made available to qualified individuals through the Adopt-A-Horse Program.

"We have about 9,000 excess animals—mostly horses—waiting for adoption now," Burford explained.

Approximately 200 wild horses and 75 wild burros will be available for adoption at the Expo. Qualified individuals may apply at the event, but are encouraged to complete an application in advance to obtain a first choice of animals. Adoptions will begin on July 3 and run through July 6, unless all of the animals are adopted earlier in the weekend.

Other events planned during the Expo are daily demonstrations of adopted animals, horseback riding, wild horse and burro movies, and open forums on adopters' experiences with their wild horses and burros. Food, crafts, exhibits, and other entertainment will be available throughout the weekend.

Additional information, including applications for the Expo horse show and for adoption, is available from the Adopt-A-Horse Program, Bureau of Land Management, Post Office Box 22357, Alexandria, Virginia 22304, or by calling (703) 274-0190.

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