

Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries



**Global Federation of
Animal Sanctuaries**

Standards for Equine Rescues and Sanctuaries

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Version Updates:

New and amended content released May, 2023

- V-4 Quarantine and Isolation Care and Facilities – addition of one bullet point to require posting of visible signage



INTRODUCTION

GFAS PRINCIPLES

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) will designate an organization as “accredited” or “verified” based upon its substantial compliance with the standards listed below.

Consistent with GFAS’ philosophy and the standards below, it is expected that a sanctuary/rescue does not adopt policy positions that are in opposition to the welfare of the species of animals in the care of the organization (for example, while it is not **required** that a sanctuary promote a policy against horse slaughter, it should not promote a policy in favor).

Note: Several standards make reference to a sanctuary or rescue’s “Director.” GFAS recognizes that a sanctuary may use a different title, and the term “Director” is intended to reference the sanctuary’s Sanctuary Director, who may be called an Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer, etc. Also, although the terms “rescue” and “sanctuary” are sometimes used interchangeably throughout the document, in general in the equine field, the two terms are differentiated by whether or not an organization provides for the adoption of domestic equine.

GFAS also recognizes that sanctuaries may rely on volunteers for certain functions, including some aspects of animal care (such as feed preparation). Standards referencing “personnel” may take into account appropriately qualified and trained volunteers as well as paid staff.

Further guidance/suggestions on facility design and equine care can be found on the GFAS website www.sanctuaryfederation.org. These are not requirements but rather provide rescues/sanctuaries with access to knowledge gained from experience at other equine care facilities.

ANIMALS COVERED BY THESE STANDARDS

1. Family / Genus / Common Names

- a. Family: Equidae
- b. Genus/Species/Common Names:

Genus	Species	Common Names
Equus	africanus	African wild ass, African ass
Equus	ferus	Przewalski’s horse, Asian wild horse, Mongolian wild horse
Equus	ferus caballus	domestic horse
Equus	grevyi	Grevy’s zebra
Equus	hemoionus	Asiatic wild ass, Asian wild ass, kulan, onager
Equus	kiang	Kiang
Equus	quagga	Plains zebra, Burchell’s zebra, common zebra, painted zebra



INTRODUCTION

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) will designate an organization as “verified” or “accredited” based upon its substantial compliance with the standards listed below.

GFAS notes that there may be other acceptable ways of meeting the intent of each standard, aside from those detailed below, and that in some instances there may be legal, cultural or other significant barriers to meeting GFAS requirements.

The standards are considered mandatory, but GFAS will consider specific exceptions to some of the listed requirements. GFAS encourages sanctuaries to offer feedback on the standards and to explain any reasons why it believes it cannot meet a particular standard, or why the standard is not applicable and/or appropriate to its situation. Sanctuaries are also welcome to indicate a timeline for meeting a standard if the standard is not yet met at the time of application for Accreditation or for Verification.

The exceeding of the standards is encouraged. In addition to meeting these standards, an organization is expected to comply with all applicable international, national, state/province, and local laws and regulations.

Some standards refer to written documents that a sanctuary should have. A list of required documents for GFAS Accreditation and Verification, with the corresponding standard, can be found on the GFAS website at <https://www.sanctuaryfederation.org/accreditation/how-to-apply/application-documents/>.

Definitions

Sanctuary. GFAS recognizes that some organizations operate valid rescue and rehabilitation programs with a goal of releasing wildlife to the wild pursuant to IUCN and/or other international or national standards. For those animals, lifetime sanctuary care may not be part of the organization’s mission. While the care for these animals may be provided on an interim basis only, the organization is still expected to meet the standards below with regard to all animals in its care and for purposes of these standards it will be identified as a “sanctuary.”

Director. Several standards make reference to a sanctuary’s “Director.” GFAS recognizes that a sanctuary may use a different title, and the term “Director” is intended to reference the sanctuary’s Sanctuary Director, who may be called an Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer, etc.

Personnel. GFAS also recognizes that sanctuaries may rely on volunteers for certain functions, including some aspects of animal care (such as food preparation). Standards referencing “personnel” may take into account appropriately qualified and trained volunteers as well as employees.

Adoptions. Equine adoption is a process whereby legal ownership of an animal is transferred from a rescue or sanctuary organization to a new home.

Foster Care Placements. Equine foster care placements are a process whereby legal ownership of an animal is not transferred, but the responsibilities of the rescue/sanctuary and the foster placement are specified.



EQUINE STANDARDS

EQUINE HOUSING

H-1 Housing, Pastures and Fencing

Equines are safely contained. Unless otherwise directed by a veterinarian, equines are provided sufficient opportunity and space to exercise daily and have freedom of movement to maintain good physical condition and positive welfare.

General

- The physical space provides opportunities for the equine to roam, graze, play, roll and interact with other equines.
- Facility design considers personnel and equine safety. Policies and procedures are in place such that personnel can enter enclosures without risk of having animals escape.
- The habitat provides security from predators and unauthorized human access.
- Quarantine facilities have appropriate housing for treatment of injured or ill animals. Healthy animals admitted to quarantine have as large an enclosure as possible to help maintain natural locomotion and behaviors.
- Enclosures are designed to allow for proper, safe cleaning and drainage.
- A regular program of sanctuary maintenance is in place. Any enclosure in need of repair, or any defect likely to cause harm to animals, is immediately repaired or replaced, or the animals are relocated to a secure enclosure.
- Safety signs on any electrified sections of the perimeter fences or enclosures are easily visible

Pasture and Open Space Settings

- Pasture provides primary housing, freedom of movement, and allows socializing. Grazing opportunity is provided, with some exceptions for desert terrain. Grazing up



to 20 hours per day is normal. Pastures have sufficient area per animal to accommodate normal individual and group behavior.

- Where release to pasture or open spaced areas is not possible, equines are exercised, as appropriate, through line work, riding, etc., unless a veterinarian or other expert instructs otherwise for health reasons.
- Where pasture or open space settings are the primary housing, the following are also provided:
 - Shade and manufactured/artificial shelter which provides protection during inclement and extreme weather.
 - Alternate housing for sick, injured or compromised individuals.
 - Enclosure is designed to allow all animals with physical limitations easy access to water, feed sources and shelters.

Paddocks/ Yards and Dry Lots

- Paddocks, yards and dry lots (including designated quarantine enclosure) provide sufficient space for natural activities but are also designed to allow personnel to monitor each individual animal on a daily basis.
- Many factors influence the minimum space required for a group of equines including, but not limited to; group size, group composition, and enclosure terrain. Facilities should provide as much space as is possible and/or practical.
- Rescues and sanctuaries employ additional enrichment if needed, focusing on physical and mental exercise to compensate for reduced space. The use of a rotation system, which allows groups and/or individual equines to regularly spend time in a larger or different space, is utilized to rest pasture (where applicable), increase enrichment and encourage activity.
- The design of outdoor paddocks, yards and dry lot enclosures includes:
 - Shade and manufactured/artificial shelter which provides protection during inclement and extreme weather.
 - Alternate housing for sick, injured or compromised individuals.
 - Separate area for introduction of new individual to a group or temporary isolation of an equine for health or social reasons or weight management.

Indoor Housing/Barns/Stalls

- Indoor housing provides secure shelter and protection for equines during inclement weather as needed. Indoor housing also provides alternate temporary placement for sick, injured and compromised animals. Room dimension is dependent on intended purpose and/or duration of confinement. Indoor spaces are large enough to allow all animals to comfortably move around and to lie down.



- The ability of equines to rear up on their hind legs is taken into consideration in the placement of lights, fans, plumbing, etc.
- Separated animals have visual access to group members.

Fencing

General

- All enclosures/fencing are designed, constructed and maintained to be safe, strong and visible to equines.
- Containment fencing for incoming studs, recently gelded males and aggressive or fearful equine are in good condition and able to safely prevent escapes.
- Equines do not have access to cattle guards.
- Perimeter containment of outdoor areas is constructed so as to deter predators if applicable and unwanted human intrusion.
- Fences and enclosures are inspected daily to ensure safety and effectiveness is maintained.
- Barbed wire and razor wire are not used to contain equines.
- A variety of building materials can be used provided they are able to withstand equine strength and safely contain the animals.
- The supporting posts for fences are firmly fixed into the ground. Metal T-posts used as supporting posts for fences must have safety caps.
- Fence material is sufficiently secured to supporting posts in such a way that the weight of the equines could not detach it from the support nor dislodge the supporting posts.

Electric Fencing

- Electric wire, braid or tape is visibly marked.
- Safety signs on electric wire are visible to personnel and bystanders.

Preferred Practices:

- ✓ Dimensions:
 - Maximum of 2 in. x 2 in. (5 cm x 5 cm), 4-6-gauge field fencing, if used.
 - Minimum vertical dimension of 4 ft. (1.2 m).
 - 6 ft. (1.8 m) for non-domestic equines.
 - Bottom rail is 8-12 inches from the ground surface.

H-2 Ground and Plantings

Ground surfaces indoors and out are healthy for equines. Plantings are appropriate and safe.

Vegetation

- All plant materials in outdoor enclosures/pastures/paddocks are evaluated for potential toxicity to equines before use of the area, including leaves, buds, seeds, fruit, bark and flowers.
- Any vegetation capable of harming equines is kept out of reach.
- Trees within or near animal enclosures are regularly inspected, trimmed or felled as necessary to avoid equines being harmed by falling branches, toxicity, or trauma.

Outdoor enclosures/pasture/paddocks

- All outdoor enclosures/pastures have a natural substrate (e.g. soil, sand, grass) that provide good drainage with a dry area that can be raked free of debris.
- Where possible, pasture includes safe, living vegetation free of large holes, obstructions and debris.
- Trees:
 - Shade trees within a pasture/paddock are protected from damage.
 - Trees close to fence lines are checked regularly and any removed if needed.

Indoor enclosures/barns/stalls

- Stall floor surfaces are dirt or clay. Where artificial substances replace natural dirt or clay surfaces, the surface should be smooth but not slippery; with cement surfaces, rubber mats (or an adequate alternative) is used.
- Stalls are designed to accommodate an adequate depth of bedding for drainage and cushioning.
- Bedding materials suitable for equines (including but not limited to; wood shavings, straw, sawdust, shredded cardboard and commercial bedding products) are provided in sufficient amount/depth to provide adequate cushion and absorption.



H-3 Gates and Doors

Equine enclosure gates and doors are appropriately designed to ensure both animal and human health and safety, and are maintained to ensure proper functioning.

- Gates and doors should be designed to allow personnel a clear view of enclosures and animals while operating.
- Gates and doors are of sufficient size to allow safe passage of equines and necessary vehicles and equipment.
- Gates and doors are constructed of appropriate materials to ensure safety of animals and humans. Gates and doors are at least as effective in containing equines as the rest of the enclosure fencing.
- Large enclosure/pasture fence lines include at least one drive-in access point for emergency access.
- Gates and doors are designed to remain functional under all circumstances, are maintained in good working order, and free from any encumbrances that may prevent opening and closing. Gates and doors are designed and maintained so as to prevent animals from lifting them from their hinges or unfastening the securing device.

H-4 Shelters

Equines have access to natural or manufactured/artificial shelter that provides each individual with protection from extreme weather (including, but not limited to, prevailing wind, snow, sleet, rain, sun, and temperature extremes).

- Equines have space to seek refuge from sun, wind, inclement weather, and enclosure mates.
- Shade can be created through natural and artificial means including shade trees and manufactured structures.
- Artificial or natural shelter areas provide sufficient dry space during wet weather, as well as protection from wind, to allow all equines to turn around, lie down and move freely.



Preferred practice:

- ✓ Shade and shelter are provided in multiple locations within enclosures to ensure that all animals have access to shade throughout the day

Barns/Stalls and Yards/Paddocks

- Walls are of sufficient strength to contain equines.
- Stall doors and gates are of sufficient size (at least 4 feet wide) to allow safe passage of equines.
- Stall doors and gates are constructed and engineered to prevent any protrusions that may cause injury.

H-5 Enclosure Design

Animals are provided with an appropriately complex and rich habitat to explore, to ensure the animals' physical, nutritional and stimulation needs are met.

H-6 Sanitation

Proper sanitation is practiced to reduce pathogen transmission.

General

- Local, county, state laws regarding proper waste removal are observed.
- Uneaten perishable feed is removed within a timeframe appropriate for the type of feed and size of enclosure, prior to molding or contamination.
- Enclosures are designed to promote sanitation and maintenance as appropriate for the health and well-being of the equines

Removal of Animal Waste

- Animal waste is removed from the enclosure as often as necessary, to minimize disease hazards and to reduce odors.
- Soiled bedding material and substrate are removed and replaced with fresh materials daily, or as needed.

Tools



- Tools are labeled when use is restricted to specific areas such as quarantine.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Feeding areas, automatic water devices, water and feed containers are cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Disinfectants are used in well-ventilated areas and label instructions for proper use and safety are observed.
- All hard surfaces including walls, floors, ceilings, sinks, wash stalls and work areas are cleaned regularly to the extent possible
- Cleaning and disinfection standard operating procedures are developed and followed.
 - safe disinfectant use to prevent hazards to the animals, personnel, and the environment.
 - cleaning and disinfecting protocols for feed preparation and veterinary care areas using more powerful disinfectants on hard surfaces.
 - cleaning schedules to minimize the risk of disease transmission.
 - disinfectants and other cleaning products stored separately from foodstuffs.

Preferred practices:

- ✓ Animals are transferred from enclosures prior to cleaning, disinfection and/or sanitizing.
- ✓ Where available, a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or equivalent is readily available for all cleaning products in use and all containers are properly labeled as to contents.

H-7 Temperature, Humidity, Ventilation, Lighting

Temperature, humidity, ventilation, and lighting are appropriately addressed.

- The temperature is within an acceptable range for the health and age of equines housed. Weather is considered in addition to temperature as wind and rain reduce the temperature range that can be comfortably tolerated
- Allowance is made to accommodate individual animals not able to tolerate temperatures above or below the usual range of comfort for equines. Caution is taken with elderly, young and disabled animals.



- Equines are prevented from having direct contact with heat sources. Note: Infrared bulbs or 'heat lamps' are not recommended as heat sources due to risks associated with fires and injury.
- Shade is available throughout the day in a number of areas and space is adequate to accommodate all animals simultaneously with consideration for social structure and relationships within the herd.
- Proper ventilation of indoor enclosures is maintained, yet barns/stalls are not drafty. Ventilation is provided via heat recovery ventilators, energy recovery ventilators or proper window and door placement.
- Natural lighting is optimal, and is provided via skylights, windows, roll-up doors or other means.
- Supplemental lighting is provided as needed to ensure adequate light, both day and night, for personnel to observe animals, clean enclosures and perform related animal care tasks.
- Supplemental lighting is available for use in outdoor areas in event of an emergency.

Preferred practice:

- ✓ Any climate control systems include back-up power in case of equipment or power failure.

NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS

N-1. Water

Fresh clean water is available in sufficient quantity at all times to all individuals.

- Water sources and delivery systems are assessed multiple times daily to ensure that water is available to all individuals and that high-ranking individuals do not dominate water sources.
- Where possible, potable water sources are tested for contaminants as indicated by the sanctuary director or veterinarian.
- All water receptacles (including water bowls) are cleaned at least daily and disinfected as needed.
- Where automatic water devices are used:
 - Devices are tested daily to ensure fresh clean water is available in sufficient quantities.



- Devices are easily disabled when animals must be fasted for medical purposes.
- When monitoring of water consumption is required, an alternative means of providing water is devised.

Preferred Practice:

- ✓ In colder climates, steps are taken (such as installation of heat sources) to ensure water consumption does not decrease with lower ambient air temperatures.

N-2. Diet

A properly balanced and healthy diet is provided based on the needs of each equine, following veterinary instructions for special needs.

General

- A veterinarian or qualified nutritionist periodically reviews all aspects of equine diets at the rescue/sanctuary and adjusts individual diets with consideration of species, age, life stage, size and condition (including excess weight gain).
- Diets of individual equines (including supplements) are of a quality and quantity based on age, life stage and condition of the individual.
 - Malnourished equines are provided with an appropriate, veterinarian approved re-feeding diet.
 - Diets of pregnant or lactating mares are adjusted as needed to meet their increased nutritional needs.
- Sudden changes in food consumption and other behaviors are immediately brought to the attention of supervisory staff.
- Henneke Body Condition Scoring is used to evaluate overall condition. All equines maintain a score between 4 and 7 unless:
 - Equines have been cared for at the facility for less than six months and are showing continued and documented improvements
 - Equines with certain chronic health conditions
 - Equines more than 20 years of age may have body condition scores outside this range.
- Feed is wholesome, palatable, and free from contamination and of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain all animals in good health.
- Where possible and appropriate, each equine's daily dietary needs are documented and made available to personnel.



- In open space enclosures/pastures, routine observation of feeding activity ensures all animals can access sufficient feed.

Forage

- Forage is the basis of the equine diet. Equines ingest 1.5% to 3% of their body weight each day and at least half of their diet should be forage, such as hay, pasture or hay products.
- Where natural forage is insufficient in quality or quantity, quality hay and or hay products are used to supplement the diet.

Commercially Milled Grains

- A mixed grain diet may be offered as part of a balanced diet that includes sufficient pasture, hay, and hay products, to meet the specific ration needs of an individual equine. Pelleted and extruded feeds provide an alternative to traditional grains.
- Special grain mixtures such as “complete or senior feeds” are considered for geriatric equines (greater than 20 years of age) who have difficulty maintaining body condition. All diet changes are considered in consultation with the primary veterinarian or equine nutritionist.

Supplements

- Prior to offering supplements (including vitamins and minerals), the health and condition of the individual equine, as well as the total diet, is reviewed by a nutritionist experienced in equine care and/or the attending veterinarian.

N-3. Feed Presentation and Feeding Techniques

Feed is prepared and presented in a safe and appropriate manner based on the needs of each individual equine.

General

- Feeding and drinking receptacles are placed in positions that minimize the risks of contamination from soiling by the equines themselves, wild birds, rodents and other potentially invasive species.
- Feed receptacles are appropriate for the species housed in terms of number, size and placement, and are cleaned as needed.
- Receptacles for animal feed and water are designed to minimize spillage and are not used for any other purpose.
- To reduce waste, potential contamination and the risk of colic or disease/parasite transmission, equines are not fed grain on the ground.
- Equines are offered their diet a minimum of twice daily, early morning and late in the day with sufficient hours remaining to allow necessary forage time.



Feeding Techniques

- Feed (hay and/or grain) and water is provisioned at multiple feeding sites throughout enclosures to ensure that all equines have access and to reduce or eliminate aggression that results from competition for food resources, especially preferred items.
- Where possible integrated individuals are fed together to maintain social relationships, however, it may be necessary to separate animals to prevent aggression over feed and to allow accurate measurement of feed consumption.
- Supplemental hay is dispersed widely throughout pastures and dry lots to reduce or eliminate aggression that results from competition for feed.

Diet Changes, Increases or Decreases

- Any diet changes are made or approved by the veterinarian or other qualified personnel, with any adjustments made to the entire diet to ensure continued nutritional balance.
- Underweight individuals experiencing health or behavioral problems may be separated for supplemental feeding.

N-4. Feed Storage

Feed is stored appropriately to prevent spoilage and contamination.

- Separate and secure facilities are provided for proper and hygienic storage of feed.
- Grains are stored in clean, dry storage areas in sealed containers or on pallets.
- Grass hay, alfalfa, straw, and other baled products are stored in a sheltered area on pallets or via some other means of ensuring the products will stay dry.
- Food items requiring refrigeration are stored in a clean, dry refrigerator, and/or ordered at regular intervals in amounts that can be used prior to spoilage.

Preferred practice:

- ✓ Products are dated and rotated to use oldest stock first, and expired food as well as bags damaged by pests is discarded.

N-5. Feed Handling

Feed is handled and prepared in an appropriate manner to retain nutritional value, freshness, and freedom from spoilage, invasive species or other forms of contamination.

General

- Feed is protected against dampness, deterioration, mold, and/or contamination by insects, birds, rodents or other animals.
- No feed that is spoiled or otherwise contaminated is served.
- Diets are prepared in a safe and hygienic manner to reduce the possibility of contamination or spoilage.
- Feed preparation surfaces are thoroughly cleaned after use.

Veterinary Care

V-1. Veterinary Program Personnel

The sanctuary/rescue's veterinary medical program is developed and carried out under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian and with adequate support personnel. Veterinary care is on-site or on-call at all times.

- Sanctuaries/rescues unable to employ a veterinarian as a member of staff have access to a veterinarian with suitable training and experience for the animals housed at the facility.
- The sanctuary/rescue has properly trained and qualified professional and supporting personnel as necessary to implement: (1) husbandry (caregivers) and (2) technical support (veterinary technicians, or individuals trained at the sanctuary).
- One or more personnel is trained and designated to deal with emergencies until a veterinarian arrives or is reached. He or she can, under the direction of the veterinarian, perform basic first aid, assess animals, administer prescribed medications and treatments, be responsible for administration of post-surgical care, and be skilled in maintaining appropriate medical records.

V-2. Veterinary Capabilities

The Sanctuary/Rescue has on-site and/or off-site capabilities for pathology, surgery, and other veterinary procedures and treatments, and any on-site facilities are appropriately maintained.

- If the sanctuary/rescue does not have an on-site veterinary facility, or only a partially outfitted facility, it has an arrangement with a nearby veterinary practice for off-site treatment as needed.
- The sanctuary/rescue's on-site and/or off-site facilities and services include the following:
 - Diagnostic capabilities include cytology, microbiology, parasitology, complete blood count, blood chemistry, urinalysis, serology and other appropriate laboratory procedures;
 - Surgical facilities that are clean, have adequate lighting and ventilation, and can be easily cleaned and disinfected.
 - Surgical facilities that have access to appropriate anesthetic and emergency equipment.
- If on-site, the sanctuary/rescue ensures that surgical equipment is maintained in good working order and is on a program of routine preventive maintenance.
- Only a licensed veterinarian performs surgery, using standard operating procedures. (Note: A veterinary technician appropriately trained by a veterinarian in locations where such action is permitted by veterinary practice acts can perform surgical first aid.)
- Veterinarians and support personnel are compassionate and knowledgeable about the humane aspects of animal treatment, including the proper use of anesthetics, analgesics, and tranquilizers.
- Basic physical capture and restraint equipment to facilitate medical treatment is available at the sanctuary/rescue. See also Standard W-6 "Handling and Restraint."

Preferred practices:

- ✓ Where possible, an on-site facility has separate areas for examination and treatment for any of the following functions performed on-site:
 - sterile surgery
 - necropsy
 - storage of carcasses awaiting necropsy or burial/cremation (Note: Any refrigerated area for holding deceased animals is physically separate from



- live animal holding, treatment, and surgery areas and from food supply storage or preparation areas)
- quarantine (see Standard V-4 “Quarantine and Isolation”)
- laboratory
- radiology and radiology equipment
- animal holding areas for observation and pre- and post-surgical
- ✓ Where possible, any on-site facility is located away from areas of heavy public use to minimize noise levels for hospitalized animals.
- ✓ On-site veterinary facilities have non-absorbent and non-impact resistant surfaces, floors sloping toward drains, air handling systems, ceilings, doors, hospitalized animal enclosures, and storage areas.

V-3. Preventative Medicine Program

The sanctuary/rescue has a complete preventative medicine program, pursuant to a written protocol, appropriate for each species housed.

- The veterinary medical program includes long term preventative medical protocols and disease surveillance and containment procedures, and is developed and carried out under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian with training or experience in providing medical care for the species housed at the sanctuary, and who is aware of any specific issues with the health of the animals at the sanctuary.
- Appropriate preventative medicine programs are in place to manage all animals (with special attention to geriatric, pregnant and young animals), and the sanctuary/rescue has a written preventative medicine protocol addressing the following:
 - regularly scheduled physical examinations/health assessments
 - behavioral assessments
 - quarantine procedures
 - parasite surveillance and control
 - immunization
 - contraception
 - infectious disease screening
 - dental prophylaxis - Equine receive age-appropriate and condition-appropriate dental evaluations and treatment to facilitate proper and



adequate feed digestion. Equines younger than 5 years or older than 15 years require more frequent dental evaluations.

- periodic reviews of diets
 - hoof care, maintenance and trimming every six to eight weeks or as directed by a veterinarian or qualified farrier.
- Appropriate care personnel are provided with this protocol and any updates made to it, and steps are taken to ensure compliance.
 - The attending veterinarian, in consultation with the sanctuary/rescue director, determines any schedule for routine physical examinations, including ocular, dental and musculoskeletal assessment, and implements any necessary treatment.
 - Animals are immunized as recommended by the attending veterinarian, using currently recommended procedures and products as appropriate for the country, species and individual. When animals are immunized on-site by personnel, the type, serial number, and source of product are recorded in the individual animal's medical record.
 - Where possible, each animal is weighed annually, either during a routine physical or through the use of a built-in scale, to monitor for signs of illness and to determine dosages for chemical anesthetics.
 - A veterinarian, veterinary technician, or other trained personnel record body condition for each animal consistent with any applicable scoring system.
 - A veterinarian supervises the medical care, including routine parasite treatment and re-feeding programs, of equines scoring 4 or less on a Body Condition Score scale
 - A veterinarian supervises the medical care, treatment and diet changes for equines scoring greater than 7.
 - A veterinarian, veterinary technician, or other trained personnel performs regular fecal examinations to look for pathogens (random enclosure sampling is adequate for group-housed animals). Results are recorded. Fecal examinations are repeated following treatment to evaluate efficacy.

Preferred practices:

- ✓ When circumstances permit, and as appropriate for the individual animal, physical exams include the following: blood is collected, serum banked as a baseline control, and the results are recorded.

V-4 Quarantine and Isolation Care and Facilities

Appropriate quarantine and isolation policies and facilities are in place for the protection of animals and personnel.



General

- All animals undergo quarantine according to the protocol established by the attending veterinarian and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Animals previously housed together may be quarantined together.
- If the sanctuary/rescue does not have an adequate quarantine facility, steps should be taken to have animals undergo quarantine under these guidelines prior to their arrival.
- Where possible, personnel working in quarantine areas does not work with other sanctuary/rescue animals. If this is not possible, work is done in the quarantine areas last.

Quarantine Areas and Equipment

- Quarantine areas should be located such that they are removed from permanent residents so as to reduce direct contact, contact by aerosolization or drainage, or potential fomite transmission.
- Quarantine areas have adequate ventilation, heat and air conditioning, which are used to ensure optimum conditions, particularly in the case of young, elderly or sick animals who may be more sensitive to environmental changes.
- All utensils, equipment, supplies, and outer clothing used in quarantine are restricted to that area. Where this is not possible, items that the sanctuary does not have duplicates of and which cannot be restricted to quarantine areas must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to being moved to or from quarantine areas, and movement between areas should be minimized.
- Protective clothing, boots and footbaths are used by all personnel entering the quarantine area or areas containing quarantined animals. Quarantine clothing is not removed from the quarantine area, except in a sealed container for cleaning. Footbaths are changed regularly.
- Caregivers wear protective clothing and equipment (e.g., gloves, masks, boots) when cleaning or handling anything with which the quarantine animals come into contact.
- The quarantine area allows for daily cleaning and sanitation, and waste is removed and disposed of properly.
- In enclosures housing animals carrying infectious or transmissible diseases, to the extent possible, all surfaces of the enclosure are properly sanitized.
- Quarantine animal waste is handled separately from all other manure or compost at the facility. Because of the risk of disease transmission, quarantine waste is not spread on pastures or composted.
- Clearly visible signs indicating areas of quarantine are displayed as needed, with particular consideration for placement at entry/access points.

Quarantine Care



- As soon as possible upon arrival, animals should be weighed and inspected for injuries or disease.
- During quarantine of incoming animals, the following procedures should be performed as applicable: examination, vaccination as appropriate, clinical and laboratory tests, treatment for external and internal parasites as needed, evaluation of psychological well-being, verification of identification.
- Paddock/pasture turnout is ideally available for quarantined animals.

Isolation Enclosures

- The sanctuary/rescue has enclosures for animals who need to be isolated for close monitoring, such as following injury or recovery from surgery.

Preferred practices:

- ✓ Quarantine staff cares for newly admitted animals in their quarantine area before caring for sick animals, which are housed in separate isolation enclosures.
- ✓ Animals that die in quarantine receive a complete postmortem examination including histopathology.

V-5. Medical Records

Complete medical records are maintained, and equines have permanent identification.

- Complete medical records for all animals are maintained under the direction of a veterinarian or trained caregiver.
- Medical records are dated, legible and indicate care and procedures including the following: examination findings, body condition scoring, diagnoses, treatments (types of medication, dosage, duration), surgical procedures, anesthetic procedures, laboratory test results, pathology reports, immunization records, animal identification (e.g., microchip number, tattoo, photo) and nutrition/diet information, and, where applicable, necropsy reports.
- Records of individual animals include both behavioral and veterinary history.
- Copies of medical records accompany any animal transferred to another sanctuary or other appropriate facility.

Preferred practices:

- ✓ Statistics are tabulated regularly on the rates and nature of illness and mortality in the sanctuary/rescue.



- ✓ Where possible, duplicate record sets are stored at another site, or in a fireproof or theft proof safe on site or an online storage system.
- ✓ Records are maintained in an electronic format.

V-6 Medication Handling and Storage

All medications are purchased, prescribed and administered under the guidance of the veterinarian, and controlled substances are prescribed and stored legally.

General

- Medications are maintained and used in accordance with local, state/province, and national laws and regulations and are administered in accordance with the applicable veterinary practice acts.
- The sanctuary has pharmaceutical storage on-site where routinely used drugs, such as emergency resuscitative medications, antibiotics, anthelmintics, fluids, anesthetics, analgesics, tranquilizers, etc. are maintained. Medications are stored according to label directions and, when necessary, in a safe for controlled substances that meets the standards set by applicable regulations (e.g., the Drug Enforcement Administration in the United States). Medications and vaccinations are stored appropriately, refrigerated as needed, and with access limited to essential personnel.
- All medical treatments and drug prescriptions are documented in the animal's medical record.
- Medications are regularly checked to determine expiration dates and discarded under the guidance of the veterinarian.

Controlled Substances

- Only a licensed veterinarian prescribes controlled substances used at the sanctuary.
- Controlled substances are stored securely, with only key qualified personnel having access.
- Use of controlled substances is recorded in accordance with any applicable laws.
- Expired controlled drugs are marked as such and stored separately until they can be discarded consistent with applicable laws.

V-7 Breeding/Contraception Policy

No intentional breeding of equines occurs in sanctuary or rescue.

- The rescue/sanctuary has equine-appropriate contraceptive programs in place with the method of contraception used based on current best practice and attending veterinarian recommendations. Stallions are gelded unless otherwise suggested by a licensed veterinarian.
- If mares arrive at the facility pregnant, the sanctuary/rescue provides necessary care.

V-8 Zoonotic Disease Program

The personnel and sanctuary/rescue veterinarian are knowledgeable about zoonotic diseases that may affect equines at the facility and implement appropriate policies and procedures as needed to mitigate risk and deal with any exposures that occur.

- The sanctuary/rescue has emergency procedures and a defined process to avoid transmission of all potential or emerging diseases through bites, scratches, body fluids, direct contact with animals and other means. (Note: Additional precautions may be necessary for personnel classified as increased risk of disease, including those who are immune-compromised, and for personnel working with animals known to be carrying zoonotic diseases.)
- Personnel have adequate training to understand the potential risk of disease transmission, including potential sources of disease, modes of disease transmission, and clinical signs associated with disease. Records of any in-person training are maintained. All personnel are informed when a zoonotic disease occurs at the sanctuary, and relevant personnel are trained in how to safely care for animals with disease.
- When a reportable disease is identified, all local, state/provincial, and national regulatory officials are contacted, as required.
- All areas in which personnel have direct contact with animals have hand-washing facilities available in the immediate vicinity (or an equivalent, e.g., bactericidal hand-wipes).
- Human food consumption by personnel does not occur in the immediate area of animal contact.



Preferred practices:

- ✓ Attendance logs are maintained for any training sessions.
- ✓ When possible, a necropsy is performed on deceased animals known or suspected to carry zoonotic disease.

V-9 Euthanasia

Euthanasia is governed by an ethical written policy that includes identification of appropriate personnel and procedures.

- The sanctuary/rescue has a written policy addressing the circumstances surrounding euthanasia decisions and procedures, including the following:
 - Euthanasia is performed in compliance with any national or local law, administered under the strict supervision of a licensed veterinarian. The veterinarian, his/her authorized representative, or a trained staff member who is knowledgeable and skilled in performing euthanasia in a professional manner and ideally with an established relationship with the sanctuary and the animal, recommends and performs humane euthanasia. Euthanasia is in the best interest of the individual animal and is only used as a final option and is not used as management tool (such as a means to create space for more animals).
- Acceptable reasons for euthanasia include:
 - incurable medical/behavioral health status that is likely to cause unmanageable pain or suffering.
 - medical/behavioral health status where treatment is likely to cause unreasonable pain or suffering.
 - medical/behavioral health status where available treatment will not be effective in restoring the animal to an acceptable quality of life.
 - medical/behavioral health where treatment is beyond the normal community standards of monetary expenditure and would cause an excessive burden on the sanctuary resources, and no other facility/placement provides a reasonable alternative option.
 - the process of aging has resulted in an unacceptable quality of life.
 - in the event of presenting an infectious disease risk to some or all of the residents.
 - in the event of presenting a high risk of harming themselves, other animals and/or humans.



- Euthanasia is performed so that it avoids distress to the animal, and unless impossible, is performed out of view of other animals.
- The species and ecosystems are carefully considered during disposition activities.

Well-Being and Handling of Equines

W-1. Physical Well-Being

All equines are routinely monitored to ensure their physical well-being, and any unusual activity is reported and recorded, with the appropriate response.

General Well-being

- The welfare of each individual equine is the overriding consideration in all rescue/sanctuary actions.
- Qualified personnel conduct daily observations of each animal to monitor for signs of physical abnormalities.
- Consideration is given to nutritional, physical and social conditions.
- Physical abuse, deprivation of food or water, and other forms of negative reinforcement or punishment-based training are never used to train, move or otherwise care for animals
- Equines are able to fully express their natural behaviors. This is achieved by adopting husbandry and management procedures, including appropriate housing and enclosure design, positive reinforcement training programs and a balanced diet to meet nutritional requirements.
- Compromised equines are assessed on a regular basis for fitness, strength and muscle tone prior to the commencement of any training program with a goal to restoring or maintaining maximum physical function.

W-2. Social Housing and Herd Management

Equines are grouped so that they are compatible, with consideration to their natural social groupings and individual history, and with the safety of animals and personnel in mind.

- Equines are housed so that:
 - those in the same pasture/paddock are compatible,
 - they are not housed near animals that interfere with their health or cause them physical or psychological discomfort,
 - there is appropriate space between individuals within and between social groupings and to allow for temporary isolation from others,
 - no individual endures constant harassment or suffers physical injury, nor do social behaviors prevent any individual from maintaining proper nutrition and hydration.
- The sanctuary/rescue has the ability to separate and isolate equines to address behavioral concerns. If animals are isolated from a group for social reasons, all efforts are made to find another suitable social group within the facility or at another accredited institution.
- Solitary housing is generally reserved for situations including, but not limited to: quarantine; medical assessment and/or care; lack of appropriate pasture mates; or social tension resulting in disruption to the social group or physical aggression leading to injuries. Ideally and when appropriate, individuals in solitary housing should have access to visual and auditory access to conspecifics as well as regular caregiver interaction.
- Equines are pastured in natural bonding groups, appropriately managed for social compatibility as well as dominance and aggression, with space to exercise, play and interact socially with other equines.
- Close attention is paid to equines in social housing, with age, species, and sex of animals housed together considered.
- Singly housed equines have visual access to other equines and are closely observed for distress at separation from pasture mates. Steps are taken to mitigate such distress.

Herd Management

- Rescue/sanctuaries strive to house no less than two equines wherever possible. Equines are allowed to graze together and form natural bonding groups.



- Equines pastured together are monitored to ensure that more dominant equines do not prevent others from accessing shelters, water or feed.
- Equines are kept outside as much as possible, ideally with 24-hour access to a pasture, (or an outdoor paddock or enclosure supplemented with exercise) unless otherwise recommended by the primary veterinarian. This provides opportunity for each equine to move freely and interact with other equine.

W-3. Introduction of Unfamiliar Individuals

Introduction of any new equine to a social group is done safely and according to appropriate introduction techniques under the direction of designated personnel.

- The sanctuary/rescue has the ability to manage introductions and separations of an equine from a herd.
- As appropriate or needed, benchmarks or desired outcomes are identified for each step in the introduction process, such as the physical location of animals and behavioral goals during visual contact and tactile contact periods.
- All personnel have a clear understanding of the plan including contingencies for problems that might occur and are empowered to take appropriate action in the event of perceived emergency.

Preferred practices:

- ✓ Professionals with experience in social introductions, if not sanctuary personnel, are consulted whenever possible during these considerations.

W-4. Behavioral/Psychological Well-Being

The behavioral well-being of each equine is monitored and evaluated.

- All personnel are trained to recognize normal and abnormal equine behavior and clinical signs of illness. Measures of well-being assessed include:
 - Natural equine behavior and interaction with other animals;



- Response to variable environmental conditions, physiological states, developmental stages, and social situations as well as adverse stimuli.
- Stereotypic behavior, self-injurious behavior, and inappropriate responses to various stimuli are documented and a welfare plan to address concerns is developed.

Preferred practice:

- ✓ Where possible and appropriate, a behavioral/psychological profile is maintained for each individual equine and updated annually. A copy of the report is kept in the animal's permanent file.

W-5. Equine-Caregiver Relationships

Positive relationships between equines and caregiver personnel are maintained.

- Prior experiences of equines are considered when handled to ensure well-being and safety.
- Where possible, all new caregivers accompany a trusted caregiver until the animal becomes comfortable with the new individual.
- Negative interactions are avoided. However, when they occur, efforts are made to recover trust and a positive relationship.
- Where possible and appropriate, equines become familiar with the veterinary staff, allowing close observation.

W-6. Handling and Restraint

Any necessary handling, catching and restraint are done safely and appropriately, with minimal distress to equines, and personnel are trained in safe handling techniques/practices.

- Direct physical interaction with some equines, e.g. feral and wild equines, may pose a risk to personnel.
 - In these cases, the sanctuary director, veterinarian or animal care manager determines the appropriate restraint methods to be used to perform essential veterinary or management activities.
 - Only fully trained personnel participate in these activities.



- Chemical sedation/immobilization is performed only by a licensed veterinarian or by trained staff under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian, or other qualified individuals authorized by the sanctuary director or veterinarian, following the laws and regulations of country where the animals are housed. Specific anesthetic protocols, including record-keeping, are followed.
- Chemical sedation is not used when multiple animals are in an enclosure except in an emergency situation. In such cases, all possible precautions are taken to prevent danger to personnel and the animal being sedated.

Preferred practices:

- ✓ Where possible and appropriate, operant conditioning is used to minimize the need for chemical immobilization and to reduce stress during procedures.

W-7. Animal Transport

All necessary equine transport is conducted to maximize safety and minimize stress and in accordance with all applicable laws.

- Where possible, health examinations are conducted prior to an animal's arrival at the sanctuary/rescue or prior to transfer to another facility. These examinations may include a complete physical exam with attention to parasite checks, necessary vaccinations, and completion of any tests required by regulations of the receiving state/province or country.
- Health certificates and any required transport permits (e.g. negative Coggins test in U.S.) accompany the equines when being transported interstate or internationally. All transport abides by local, state/province, federal and international law. A veterinarian is responsible for preparing and signing the health certificate.
- Prior to transport, the rescue/sanctuary ensures that adequate facilities are available at the receiving end and feed items that are familiar to the equine are available.
- Where possible and appropriate, equines are acclimated to the transporting trailer prior to transport. Transportation methods (including methods of catching) consider the animal's temperament and behavior in order to minimize injury and distress.
- Transport trailers and vehicles are in good condition, readily available for use and meet federal and/or international standards.
- Any equine taken outside the sanctuary/rescue are kept securely at all times and managed in such a way that the equine is under control and not likely to suffer distress, cause injury or transmit or contract disease

Adoptions and Fostering

P-1. Adoptions

Equine adoptions are accompanied by appropriate legal documents that, specify the transfer of ownership within an agreed time frame, provide a lifetime safety net for the equine, and ensure humane and responsible care.

- A documented adoption policy/process is in place that includes at a minimum:
 - Evaluation of each equine's health, temperament, physical abilities and training.
 - A recorded, detailed, legal description of each equine including any identifying marks, tattoos, brands, microchips, etc.
 - An application and thorough screening process that ensures each adopter has the equine skills and resources to manage and care for the intended equine to be adopted.
 - Sufficient organizational liability insurance to cover the risks of adopters handling/riding equines on the rescue/sanctuary property as part of the screening process.
- Adopted equines are provided with appropriate living environments (including appropriate food, water, shelter, and safe fencing), veterinary, hoof care, and preventative care, all in accordance with GFAS Equine Care Standards. The adopted equine's social, behavioral and companionship needs are also met.
- All equine adoptions are accompanied by a legally binding document that includes at a minimum:
 - A safety net for the adopted equine by specifying the recovery of the equine should the adopting party fail to abide by outlined duties and expectations.
 - Prohibiting the adopter from breeding the equine in question; selling or transferring the equine for slaughter; transferring the equine to a livestock auction; or any other prohibited uses such as racing.
 - The conditions under which an adopted equine can be returned to the original adoption organization or rehomed to a placement equal to or better than the current adoption placement, in accordance with GFAS Equine Care Standards.
 - Specifying that the rescue/sanctuary organization be notified in the event of the death of an adopted horse. Equines are humanely euthanized only on the recommendation of the attending veterinarian.
 - Specifying the methods and time period(s) wherein the primary equine rescue/sanctuary facility may follow up on the adopted equine's health,



welfare and progress and to ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement.

- For a definition of 'Equine Adoptions', see 'Definitions', page 3.

P-2. Foster Care Placements

Equine foster care placements are accompanied by legal documents that do not transfer ownership but specify the responsibilities of all parties for providing humane and responsible care.

- Equines in foster care placements are provided with appropriate living environments (including appropriate food, water, shelter, and safe fencing), veterinary, hoof care, and preventative care, all in accordance with GFAS Equine Care Standards. The equine's social, behavioral and companionship needs are also met.
- All equine foster care placements provide physical facilities and levels of care equal to or above that of the primary equine sanctuary/rescue facility in accordance with GFAS Equine Care Standards.
- All equine foster care placements are accompanied by a legally binding document specifying the duties and responsibilities of each party.
- All foster care agreements contain wording related to the recovery of the equine should the foster home fail to abide by such duties and expectations, or if the foster home can no longer keep the equine.
- Equine foster care agreements specify the methods and time period(s), wherein the primary equine rescue/sanctuary facility may follow up on the fostered equine's health, welfare and progress and to ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement.
- Equine foster care agreements specify how potential adopters will be able to visit the equine and under what circumstances and conditions.
- Equine foster home caregivers have access to veterinarians able to make emergency calls, and the names and telephone numbers of those veterinarians are kept on file with the primary sanctuary/rescue facility.
- Equine foster care agreements instruct caregivers to seek professional advice regarding potential tax benefits, if any, of fostering an equine.
- The rescue organization has sufficient liability insurance to cover all equines which ownership of has been retained.

Rescue Policies

R-1. Rescue of Equines

The rescue/sanctuary has developed guidelines for rescue work, taking into account personnel and animal safety, contingencies for caring for the animal once rescued, and any local, state or national regulations or agency cooperation required.

- Rescues and sanctuaries that assist in law enforcement investigations and seizures of equine neglect and abuse have knowledge of laws concerning abuse and neglect in applicable state and understand which city, county and state authorities are authorized to act.
- The rescue/sanctuary has developed working relationships with appropriate law-enforcement officials including; police departments, animal shelters, animal control officials and humane societies.
- Staff/volunteers are trained to assist in a seizure, investigate neglect complaints and provide detailed reports as required by local law enforcement.
- The rescue/sanctuary has facilities, space and resources to hold seized equines until a hearing or trial which could be for an undetermined time period.
- The rescue/sanctuary has emergency funds readily available to provide veterinary care and rehabilitation of seized equines.
- A euthanasia policy is in place to address situations where the animal's prognosis for survival based on the advice of the attending veterinarian, is too low to warrant attempting treatment.

Physical Well-being

The following links provide an overview of the Henneke Body Condition Scoring system and a copy of the scoring checklist.

<http://www.gerlltd.org/Education/Equine%20Body%20Condition%20Score%20Presentation.pdf>

http://www.trfinc.org/mc_images/category/4/henneke_scale.pdf

APPENDIX I

Security and Emergency Coverage

Clarification: The purpose of this standard is to protect animals to the extent possible and reasonable from emergencies associated with primarily fire and intruders. Some equine and farm animal rescue/sanctuary organizations may not have personnel actually living on the premises but living nearby. In order to make a determination that animals are protected to the extent possible, the following criteria (which are elements of other standards) will be taken into consideration for each unique situation:

- A fire detection system exists that is directly connected to the senior caregiver and/or emergency personnel.
- Existing fire suppression system in the barn.
- A neighbor in close proximity has expressed willingness to respond to an emergency alarm that can be heard from this residence.
- Fire prevention is advocated on the property by: nonsmoking policy; hay or bedding is not stored in barn where animals reside; electric wire is in conduits; no extensive use of extension cords; dust and cobwebs removed regularly etc.
- Senior caregiver/volunteer lives within a 2 mile radius of the facility or can respond within 15 minutes.
- All access points to the property are securely locked after hours.
- No trespassing signage at all access points.
- A neighbor in close proximity has expressed willingness to report an intruder.