

# Recognizing a Legitimate Equine "RESCUE" (part 2)

**The only way to charge an owner with neglect is under Iowa Code 717.2 Livestock.**

*Neglect* is partially defined as:

*A person who impounds or confines livestock, in any place, and does any of the following, commits the offense of livestock neglect:*

- a. Fails to provide livestock with care consistent with customary animal husbandry practices.
- b. Deprives livestock of necessary sustenance.
- c. Injures or destroys livestock by any means which causes pain or suffering in a manner inconsistent with customary animal husbandry practices.

## How can you help IERAL?

#1 - The best (and easiest) way to help IERAL is to recognize that IERAL is not out to take equines from their owners. If the equines are not in immediate danger, or there are no dead animals on premise, (c. *Injures or destroys livestock by any means which causes pain or suffering in a manner inconsistent with customary animal husbandry*

*practices*), and before law enforcement takes any animals, IERAL works with the owner to help them understand the minimum standards guide\* and educates them on how to take care of their horses properly.

#2 - Share the knowledge that you gain from reading this article with everyone you know.

#3 - And, if you can, please consider donating to this worthy cause. IERAL does receive some support from local authorities during livestock rescues; however, that support only covers the time from when the animals are seized until the time the civil case is decided. This process takes anywhere from 30-90 days. These equines are not available for adoption within that time period. They need proper nutrition (both concentrates and roughage), plenty of water, and a 30-day worming program to get them back on the road to better health. The cost that we bill for the care of most horses is \$10.00 per day/per head. The TRUE cost to take care of these horses is \$34.00 per day/per head. Most require additional veterinarian care. Most equines are not available for adoption for 120-150 days after authorities

have rescued them, simply because they are not in good physical condition. Some may need more immediate care than others do; either nutritionally or because of their feet, teeth or eyes. This alone usually falls under the neglect laws as, (a. *Fails to provide livestock with care consistent with customary animal husbandry practices and b. Deprives livestock of necessary sustenance.*)

Educating county officials to the fact that they are responsible for the maintenance (cost) of these animals during their stay with the equine rescue is never an easy battle. According to Iowa law, the county is responsible for covering the maintenance costs of rescued equines until the civil case is decided, but few counties have established a budget for this sort of rescue. *Do animals suffer because of this important issue? Absolutely.* Why? IERAL is not financially capable of supporting neglected equines when large numbers of equines are seized; not without help from local governmental agencies. Our long-term goal is to become independently supportive, so there is NEVER a question of whether we go in and help equines in Iowa. But we have not reached

---

---

## Dirty Little Secrets

I think I came out of the womb with a gene for being nuts for horses - and this seems to be true for the majority of us who have found all kinds of ways to spend our lives involved with these wonderful creatures. I am most fortunate to have been able to spend my life with them in various ways. The more I learn, the more I realize how much there is to learn, and the more I study, the greater my enjoyment and the richer my experiences.

However, I can't say the same about my experience with horse people, in general. There are many terrific ones out there and they are some of my very best friends. But over the years I've become more and more cynical and disappointed as I learn over and over about the dirty little secret in our equine related world: abuse happens. Neglect happens, as well as the placing of egos and selfish desires and profits over the health and well-being of these generous animals who give their lives so we can have pleasure.

Last fall, an Eastern Iowa eventing trainer came to our neck of the woods in Sioux City to give a small clinic to some friends and neighbors interested in this sport. My friend and instructor, along with a few other friends, took some students along to watch. They came away from the

day sickened and appalled at what they witnessed: horses being beaten, forced, and otherwise abused. This from a supposedly well-known eventing coach. There is never any excuse for this and it reflects badly on this individual whose training methods are so poor that she has to result to cruelty to get "results."

In another case, a friend of mine reported that strangles ran through her barn but this was ignored - determined to compete anyway, boarders continued entering shows, not caring where they spread the disease or who might become exposed. This is almost the epitome of irresponsibility and selfishness.

I have also seen horses pushed too young, too fast, to the point where they develop injuries and become unsound, subjected to horrendous "training" methods (such as tying their heads to their sides, or between their knees). This kind of thing happens in the horse world all the time, and will continue to happen, as long as it is permitted to happen - if we close our eyes to this, it is the same as saying, "It's okay."

Owning a horse is a privilege, and with that comes responsibility. The horse cannot speak for itself, and for the most part it is a benign animal more interested in running away than causing harm. Horses are utterly dependent on their human caretakers to

provide for their needs and show them in humane ways what is wanted of them. If we do this, horses respond with tremendous generosity of heart and spirit.

Nothing forced or beaten can ever be beautiful - many fine horsemen and women have said this, from Xenophone to Klaus Balkenhol. No relationship can have harmony or trust if there is abuse present. This is as true as much in our relationships with animals as it is true for people. There is never any excuse for sacrificing a horse for own selfish egos. We need to adopt a zero tolerance stand on this, and develop the courage to speak out when we see it happening.

If you abuse a horse, you cannot call yourself a horseman or a horsewoman, period. One of the marks of a true horseman/woman is that he/she puts the health and well-being of the horse before anything else. **Discipline** is the art of sticking *with* something - being consistent and clear about what you want - **abuse** is senseless punishment. As Monty Roberts says - "abuse is when you say "you must or I'll hurt you," which no one has the right to say or do...

I'm sure most of you readers out there do this conscientiously but there are plenty who do not, and I would be willing to bet that you know who you are.

Terry Hey,  
Sioux City, IA



that goal yet, and won't get there without state and local government recognizing that equines are suffering because of a lack of money and support. County officials must be made to realize that livestock neglect in Iowa is a **very serious epidemic**, and that Iowa law is being broken when owners do not provide the necessary food, water, shelter and medical attention that equines need. IERAL has tried to share to all 99 counties in Iowa, that **"If you have equines in your county, you better budget in your next fiscal year for equine neglect cases, because the number of neglect call and follow-up inspections, increase DAILY."** Iowans should never question IF these animals need to be attended to when they lack water, food, and have sure signs of neglect due to improper care, because the law reads that owners MUST provide those basic items. County supervisors need to be educated on equine neglect, and IERAL is trying to help them realize exactly what is happening in all 99 counties in Iowa.

Currently, IERAL is monitoring 504 equines in 28 counties, and this number grows DAILY. Without your support to provide food, shelter and medical care, these equines may die. Please consider supporting our cause, and let's make Iowa a leader in prevention of equine neglect and/or abuse.

**WANT TO HELP!?!**

Consider donating a 16-foot stock trailer for IERAL representatives to haul horses during emergency situations. We need volunteers to trailer equines during seizures, and always: we need hay, grain, and volunteer hours. We need donation dollars to help offset the cost of equine care and housing in situations of LARGE seizures.

Currently, we are seeking good foster care facilities as well. Do you, or does someone you know, have a barn and a small amount of land they would like to offer to IERAL as a foster care facility? If so, please contact us immediately. Some of our foster care facilities have barns that have not been used for livestock for years, and some of our barns date back to the 1890's.

Please visit our website: [www.iaeral.org](http://www.iaeral.org)

Mail donations to:

IERAL  
PO Box 8726  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52408

Phone: 319-560-0347

Email: [ksibert@infionline.net](mailto:ksibert@infionline.net)

\* IERAL has a newly published "Minimum Care Guide" brochure. Please contact us if you are interested in receiving one for yourself personally, or if you know of a group/organization that would like to have them.

*Foster care facility owners have repeatedly shared the following sentiment with IERAL volunteers...*

**"We are so pleased that we have a facility to offer to IERAL and their neglected horses. NOW, the barn and land can be used for what it was built; to house animals / livestock."**

