

"Donate Equine"

Choosing to donate your equine can be a very sensitive and difficult decision. At the United States Equine Sanctuary & Rescue, we understand your concerns and are sensitive to your needs and desires as a donor.

USESR has the best donation program in Texas. We've had excellent success in uniting donors with adopters and the equine they both love. Donors don't have to lose touch with their beloved pet simply because they have donated it.

Our philosophy, which extends to donated equine, is that we can not help any equine in need without first 'helping' the human who holds the fate of the equine in his or her hand.

Accepting donated equine is a service we provide to the equine community at large, as well as law enforcement and under certain circumstances, the Bureau of Land Management. Because this is a service for equine in need, please do not ask us to accept your beloved 40-year old mare because you need space in your barn for 3 new barrel horses to go along with the 8 you already own and you only have 90 acres. Our Foster Care Providers love the equine they foster and it isn't any easier to watch an equine die if you've only loved it for a short time.

Donation FAQ:

What are the requirements for donating an equine?

- **You must be the legal owner of the equine;**
- **The equine must have a negative coggins test that is *less than 3 weeks old* at the time we take possession;**
- **You must have a signed, notarized donation contract**
- **The donation fee must be paid;**
- **We must have space available to foster the donated equine and we must have funds to support both the donated equine and other equine already in our program.**

How do I go about getting you to pick up an abandoned animal?

Each state has its own "stray" laws. No equine rescue has the authority to seize a stray animal. We, like everyone else, must go through the local authorities first. When a member of the general public calls us to report a stray equine, all we can do is refer them to the City or County, depending on the location of the stray equine.

Like most rescues, we have a good working relationship with local Animal Control officers and Deputy Sides is always willing to help other Animal Control officers if they are unfamiliar with laws on stray animals. She can advise other officers on abuse investigations, also. If you have contact with a law enforcement officer regarding a stray equine and they do not know how to handle the situation, please call USESR on our toll free number: 877-720-1685. We can always help.

Does law enforcement need a donation contract?

No, but we do need some official documentation from them showing that they donated the equine to us.

Can I get periodic updates on how my donated equine is doing?

Yes. Some donors ask for Christmas cards with a photo and brief update enclosed, others simply contact us and we refer them to the adopter or foster care provider whenever they want an update.

Can I ever visit my donated equine?

Yes, while it is in Foster Care, we encourage this. You can request to be able to visit your donated equine even after it is adopted. In such a case, the adopter would have to agree, in writing, to allow visits.

Can I ever get my donated equine back?

Donating an equine does not make the donor a “DNA” (rescue lingo for, “Do Not Adopt”). On the contrary, donating is the ultimate sacrificial demonstration of selfless love on the part of an owner. You may adopt the equine you donated under certain circumstances. Most of our donors do not ever want their donated equine back, but a small number of donors do. Our Adoption Contracts have stipulations for adopters to exchange, re-donate, or give an adopted equine away. If the equine you donated years ago has now been adopted, you cannot adopt that equine, however, the donor may choose to give the equine to you, free of charge. Exact details are in the Adoption Contract.

Is my donation tax deductible?

Yes. We have been a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation, chartered in the State of Texas and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service for many years. Your donation receipt is available upon written request only and must be submitted by the last day of March each tax year. We cannot place a monetary value on your donation receipt. As we all know, the IRS must view everything in dollar amounts, and equine are no different. When we claim your equine on our federal tax returns (Texas has no state income tax), the dollar amount we must place on each equine is that of it’s adoption fee. If you value your donated equine over a certain dollar amount, you will need to send us a form that you will need to submit to the IRS along with your Federal income taxes.

What will you be feeding my donated equine and can I specify what feed/supplements he/she gets?

We try to keep all equine in foster care on a low protein pellet. We actually feed the cheapest pellet on the market. Unlike sweet feed, we can increase the amount of

protein in pellets in the winter time, to help the equine generate energy, which turns to heat as it burns through the muscles. Unlike oats, equine of all ages can easily chew pellets, which simplifies purchasing feed. Often, when we get new rescues in (from auction, etc.), we do not know what kind of feed they've been eating, or how much. We must begin their feeding program as though they have been eating anything but pellets. When equine are transferred from Intake Foster Care to their foster homes, if that foster home is feeding something different than pellets, then the equine must go through the whole process of small portions being built up into large portions again, which is not good for our underweight equine. Each person has his or her own favorite feed, and we do not fully control what a fostered equine eats. After the new equine is in foster for a period of time, the Foster Care Provider may change the feed to what he or she normally feeds, that is, if the foster situation is definite and expected to be long term.

For Senior equine, we normally feed Purina Equine Sr. and any supplements needed to maintain good health, weight, and condition of the senior citizen.

Most rescues require a donation fee. Does USESR?

Yes. The donation fee averages \$200.00, but may be more or less. There is almost always a donation fee. Extreme poverty or to avoid prosecution are two examples of when the donation fee *might* be waived. For equine requiring medical care or daily medication, the donation fee *may* be more.

I don't have a trailer. Can you transport for me?

We can transport to and from most places in Texas and southern Oklahoma. We charge for fuel only, except when the round trip will require us to be gone overnight. In that case, there will be a charge for meals. You may expect us to transport your donated equine for less than \$100.00 to most locations.

You also have the option of having an equine transported professionally, which you would need to arrange for and pay for, in full. Please discuss this with us prior to making this decision, as there will be additional stipulations to the donation process, although nothing too troublesome. We try to make the donation process as simple as possible.

Can I change my mind about donating my equine?

Yes, even after you have submitted your fees and paperwork, *under certain circumstances*. Fees are not refundable, under any circumstances. Once your equine is in our possession and we have the donation contract in hand, you may not change your mind, under any circumstances.

What are the states that you take in donated equine from?

We take in equine from all 50 states. Outside of Texas and parts of Oklahoma and Arkansas, you would need to deliver the equine yourself or arrange for a professional shipper. Our volunteers have time and distance limits.

The donation process, intake, foster care, to adoption and beyond

- 1. Read our ‘Donation FAQ’s’**
- 2. Print the Donation Contract, donation checklist, and donation questionnaire**
- 3. Call us toll free at 877-720-1685 and check to see if we can accept your equine. Please do not ask us to reserve a spot for him or her. That would not be fair to another equine that may be in more urgent need.**
- 4. Follow all instructions on your donation paperwork.**
- 5. Transport to Intake Foster Care.**
- 6. Equine will be vetted, trimmed, wormed, measured, photographed, evaluated, and vaccinated as need be.**
- 7. Equine will be moved to a Foster Home to await adoption.**
- 8. Equine is adopted.**

Estimated time to complete this process depends on volunteer and donor scheduling, weather, time taken to submit necessary paperwork, etc. Normally, the process takes at least two weeks.

Tips on donating your equine to a rescue organization:

- Make sure the rescue you donate to is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization by doing a web search on the IRS website or by calling the IRS.**
- Contact the Attorney General of the state in which the rescue operates in. Ask if there have ever been any complaints filed against this rescue.**
- Spend a lot of time on the rescue’s website, combing over it, looking for hidden clues as to how your equine may be cared for. True story on a rescue website: Donated horse, foundered (degree not noted on web site) with arthritis in one knee (degree not noted on web site). Four months later, the horse had to be put down due to severe arthritis with bone spurs in that knee and its feet had abscessed. The horse also had some deterioration of bone; neither degree nor location of deterioration is noted on the web site. Photo of horse shows it standing in a very muddy pen, with no grass at all. These are references you won’t get by asking the rescue for them. The vet noted that the horse would eventually have to be put down, so the ‘officers’ decided to have the horse put down right away. There is no mention of pain or suffering.**
- ◆ *Note: You, as donor, have the legal right to stipulate anything in writing that you please, including decisions regarding when and why the equine you donate gets put down and who gets to make that decision. You can write out your own***

- contract with an ink pen and if both parties sign it and it meets state contract law minimal requirements, it's legal in any court until a judge rules otherwise.*
- Find out what may happen if it is discovered immediately after donating the equine should the equine be diagnosed with a serious or terminal illness.
 - Do not be afraid to inquire about the finances of the rescue. Texas rescues, historically, have not had problems with overloading themselves with too many rescues and having to shut down. Sometimes, we see these rescues state in public e-mails that if their rescued horses aren't purchased by a certain (very soon) date, they'll all be sent to auction. Find out the rescue's policy of dissolution should it ever have to fold or go under.
 - Inquire about foster homes. Is there an internal inspection policy? Are the foster care providers ever checked on by the rescue? If so, how often. Ask specifically where foster homes are located. Write down the names of the towns. Later, check the map. If one is extremely far from all the others, you'll want to know how the rescue makes sure the foster equine is being properly cared for.
 - What sort of policy is in place in the event a foster care provider refuses to cooperate with the rescue? Exactly how much control does the rescue have over its volunteers?
 - If the rescue has a facility where visitors are welcome, such as 'Open House' or riding lessons, find out who will be handling your donated equine, excluding equine professionals.
 - It should be a no-brainer, but there are rescues that are not opposed to slaughter. Ask for the rescue's history of opposition to slaughter. We should all have documentation stating our rescue's name and having our logo on it. Some good things to see are letters from members of the rescue, writing in representation of the rescue, in opposition of equine slaughter for human consumption. Letters to the editor are good, and most valuable are documents written by officers, especially the President.
 - Be doubtful of inquiries made regarding the rescue on the internet. Ask the rescue about accusations/allegations against them. Most are false, but some are true. It's important that you find out the difference and you'll never know unless you ask. If the rescue gets upset because of any of your questions, it means they are hiding something.
 - Ask the questions listed in our Donation FAQ.
 - Never make a snap decision. Give yourself at least 24 hours to decide to donate your equine to a particular rescue.