



**UNWANTED HORSE
COALITION**

Unwanted Horse Coalition Hosts Annual Meeting

Operation Gelding to be Expanded

June 20, 2016 – Washington, D.C. The Unwanted Horse Coalition (UHC) held its annual meeting on Monday, June 13, 2016, during the American Horse Council's Annual Convention and National Issues Forum at the Washington Court Hotel.

Attendees included 31 members of the UHC as well as 21 representatives from other equine industry organizations interested in reducing the number of unwanted horses. The meeting focused on the UHC's new 3-year strategic plan, which aims to expand educational efforts, enhance key programs, increase visibility, and develop a strategic fundraising campaign to support current and future initiatives. Committee chairs Shannon Luce and Kristin Leshney (The Jockey Club), Ward Stutz (American Quarter Horse Association), and Cindy Schonholtz (Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, Animal Welfare Council) will lead the effort.

Jennifer Purcell, PhD, who joined the UHC last March as its new director, presented results of a recent survey, which will guide programmatic changes. "The UHC has not surveyed Operation Gelding clinic organizers since the program began in 2010, so this was clearly the first step in our plan to expand the program," said Purcell.

Fifty-percent of the clinic organizers responded, representing organizations in 18 states. Organizers reported lack of advertising, costs of travel, and inconvenient dates as the three primary reasons horse owners do not participate in clinics, and suggested a monetary incentive of \$90 per horse gelded to help increase participation. Seventy percent said they would plan a second clinic if funds were available, and 81% expressed interest in a voucher option.

Based on these results, the UHC approved expansion of the program, which includes increasing the funding per horse gelded to \$100, approving two clinics per calendar year for qualified organizations, and offering a voucher option. The changes will go into effect January 1, 2017.

"We are so pleased that the Board agreed to expand the Operation Gelding program," stated Dr. Doug Corey, Chairman of the UHC. "The program is working, but there is a clear demand for additional castration clinics across the country, and the UHC is ready to assist organizations in meeting that need." Since its inception, Operation Gelding has distributed \$67,000 in funds, resulting in the castration of 1348 stallions, and the reduction of many more unwanted foals.

The UHC is supported by individual donations and organizational membership. To learn more about the UHC and help reduce the number of unwanted horses, contact Jennifer Purcell at jpurcell@horsecouncil.org or donate through the UHC website (www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org).

About the Unwanted Horse Coalition

The Unwanted Horse Coalition represents a broad alliance of equine organizations that have joined together to educate the horse industry about the unwanted horse issue.

The UHC was a direct result of the Unwanted Horse Summit, which was organized by the American Association of Equine Practitioners and held in conjunction with the American Horse Council's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in April 2005. The summit was held to bring key stakeholders together to start a dialogue on the plight of the unwanted horse, defined as any horse no longer wanted by its current owner. Operating under the American Horse Council Foundation, the UHC provides resources to prospective owners, current owners, rehoming facilities, and industry leaders in its effort to encourage responsible ownership.