



Euthanasia Policy

In some rare cases - such as a dangerous temperament or chronic and severe pain conditions, foster or adoption homes are not suitable options for the equine and HERO may consider humanely euthanizing the animal. Horse Education and Rescue Organization, Inc (HERO) adheres to the guidelines of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) when faced with the difficult decision to humanely euthanize an equine in their care.

There are several circumstances in which HERO may consider euthanasia as a humane and responsible choice. The most common of these circumstances are:

- Incurable or progressive disease
- Incurable or transmissible disease
- Chronic or severe lameness
- Inoperable colic
- Foals born with serious defects
- Severe debilitation in old age
- Severe traumatic injury
- Dangerous and aggressive behavioral issues

Euthanasia is often a highly emotional issue and every life matters deeply. It is vital to address each situation from a practical and informed standpoint. In **all** cases - whether dealing with an emergency, a chronic pain condition, or a long-term illness, HERO staff consult with a team of veterinarians and/or farriers. The team reviews any medical information in order to fully understand the horse's current condition and future implications as well as discusses available treatment and care management options. HERO takes into consideration advice of reputable trainers if dealing with aggressive behavioral issues.

HERO considers the following questions with the veterinarian before determining a course of action:

- Is the equine suffering?
- Is equine standing/mobile? If not, is the veterinarian of the opinion that mobility will return?
- How long will the horse experience the current level of pain or debility?
- Is the horse's condition chronic or incurable?
- Does the immediate or chronic condition suggest a hopeless prognosis for life?

- Is the horse a hazard to itself or its handlers?
- Does the horse continue to show an interest and desire to live, or has it become depressed or despondent?
- What kind of special care will the horse require and can HERO, a foster caregiver or an adopter meet its needs.
- Can HERO continue to provide for the horse financially?
- What are the alternatives?
- Will the animal be a liability to the health, safety and welfare of the humans that will continue care?

Choosing whether, or when, to end a beloved animal's life is not a decision HERO takes lightly; the decision to euthanize, or induce a painless death, is never made without careful consideration. Euthanasia is a last resort option.