



## Reported Starvation in Union County by Joanie Benson



When Deborah and I head out on an abuse call, we never know how we will be greeted or what we will see. Sometimes caring people will send pictures of the horses, but all too often the pictures do not show the full story. This rescue took place in Union County and, once again, Animal Control had been called in a number of times to no avail or help for the horses.

When we arrived, there was no feed or hay for the two horses or goats, and the water tub was green. Old feed bags showed that the owners were feeding All Stock. (Never, never a good idea!) The small area the goats

and horses were kept in had very old moldy-looking hay that even the goats would not eat. There were hazards that could easily cause injuries. (Later an abscessed puncture wound was found in the bottom of the gelding's sole.) It was not possible to separate the goats and the horses. Goats can be aggressive when it comes to taking food away from the horses. When feed and hay were put out, I am sure the hungry animals created a madhouse trying to get to it!

This was a nice young couple, and the husband thought having horses would be a good idea. They got the mare and then took on the gelding as a rescue attempt. It did not work out quite as well as they hoped since neither knew how to care for the two horses, including what to feed them or that they needed hoof care. The situation was compounded by the wife's fear of the horses and that their care, as well as care for the other animals and the couple's three children, was left mainly to her. Hubby was working long hours. She felt the horses were aggressive when she went to feed them and she was afraid of them. No, these are not aggressive horses, just hungry ones.

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## Reported Starvation in Union County (continued from page 1)

We left a list of the feed and supplements the horses needed and asked them to call if they had any other questions. The poor gal really had enough and wanted them gone. It took more time than I liked, but finally they agreed to surrender the two horses to HPS. Member Janet Elmo must feel so helpless when she picks up horses for us like these two since she is a Progressive Nutrition equine feed representative and knows what would make these starved babies healthy. (Ed. note: Right on, Joanie!)

The two horses have issues, and one of the most pressing is the huge worm bellies. I started deworming faster than I normally would since that many parasites can kill them by blocking the intestines. Tapeworms will often cause huge bellies, but we are starting with Ivermectin because it will kill 36 stages of parasites. I would like to clear the other parasites first and then take care of the tapeworms when the horses are a little stronger.

The owners felt that the horses are in their twenties. (We will check teeth later.) They may be either full or part Appaloosa. The gelding's front knees are in bad shape and only time will tell how much of the calcification we may be able to clear. He is a nice horse and is almost white, we think... bath time soon. The mare is a gentle soul, a leopard Appaloosa with palomino-colored spots, also in desperate need of a bath. Both horses are doing great and are sharing a small pasture with Wyot.

*It has been so busy at the sanctuary that we have not had time to put together a list of possible names from which the new babies can choose what name they would like to have. When this is accomplished, their website photos will be updated with names. Like Coyote and Wyot, these two would welcome your Angel Sponsor support. For only \$20 per month, you will receive updates during the year so you can see the impact of your caring on these kind and sweet beings.*



## Coyote Returns

by Joanie Benson

It is bad enough when we pick up horribly starved horses. But when we rehabilitate them and then place them, you can understand our frustration when they come back underweight, with the vet work - that should have been completed during the year - not done. When Coyote returned, even his coat looked rough. He is off on his topline and his neck is way off and u-shaped. His wither muscles look damaged as from an ill-fitting saddle.



We work so hard to bring the babies back to full health, at the cost of a small fortune. We have dedicated volunteers who spend hours and hours with them on work under saddle. Then we send them off to new homes, only to have people totally disregard what they should be doing; it drives me nuts! We tell them what kind of feed to use, how much to give, and the supplements the horse needs. Instead he was getting Reliance feed by Southern States. (We would never feed this product, plus Coyote was not receiving the supplements he should have.)

We give to all new caregivers a medical sheet that shows when vaccines and deworming were last done (as well as the dewormer that was used),

dates of dental work and last farrier trimming. Coyote was due for his rabies and dental work when we placed him. It was agreed that the caretakers would have this done... but it didn't happen! HPS asks for a small donation of only \$100 when we place a great horse like Coyote. It costs HPS nearly that much to have the vet come and pull the blood for the Coggin's test and have the results before the horse can be released from the sanctuary.

When I heard what was going on with Coyote, one of our members agreed to pick him up for HPS rather than wait for the people to arrange transportation for him back to the sanctuary. Coyote was the teenager's horse, and the mother was told she was too heavy to ride him, but she advised us that she was riding him. They were also longeing him. They had been told why they should never longe; now he is going to need a chiropractic adjustment.

Longeing is not good for horses since almost everyone does it incorrectly and it can damage the horse. No horse should trot or canter in as small a circle as most people use because it can damage their tendons and rather than build up a horse, it tears them down. If the line is tight to the halter rather than very loose, it teaches the horse to work off the front end rather than the hindquarters as they should. This is one of the reasons people have to work so hard when they are riding to try and get their horse to work off the hindquarters instead of the front end.

Now HPS has to bring Coyote back to where he should be and was when he departed. We have give him time and then get him back under saddle again. HPS would not consider placing him again in his present condition.

## Tied on a Rope by Joanie Benson

This drama started with an email from a concerned person about two horses tied on ropes for months and months and months. The horses were located in Rowan County in a small trailer park, and little-to-no feed was provided. The condensed report included: there was no hay, no grass in the area, horses were getting loose, horses were getting tangled in the ropes, often there was no water or, if there was, the horses couldn't get to it. Many people were concerned, three different agencies were called including Animal Control (many times), and a very skinny dog was also there, on a chain.

When Deborah and I arrived, one of the horses was tangled around and around a small tree in a wooded area. It looked as if the horse had been there for some time. She was so happy to be freed from her prison. Both horses had such sad faces and were begging for food. There was no sign of hay having been given.

The owner said they were moving in two days (that was Sunday) to a place with a field for the horses. *I bet they don't move unless they are not paying their rent and are being evicted!*

Said they were picking up hay that afternoon. *No hay was there on Monday.*

Said the bay horse had gained weight. *The horse would be dead if it was any thinner.*

Said they were having a cancer test done on Monday. *We told her it was not cancer - it was starvation!*

Said the vets told them to feed Senior Feed. *(They had only about 3 to 5 pounds of All Stock Feed on hand Sunday morning—so why were they feeding All Stock, one of the cheapest, poorest feeds there is, if the vet told them to feed **Senior** Feed? Don't think THIS is a good idea, either.)*

Said the black horse was to be picked up Monday to go to a boarding barn. *The horse was still there when we returned to pick up the other horse. The black horse may have been getting most of the food that was put out as it had about a low Four Body Condition Score. (The horse was gone on Tuesday when I checked back.)*



I told the owner I would meet her at 10:00 am on Monday morning to go shopping for all the things the horses needed and I would make sure she was selecting the right products. I gave her a list of feeding instructions for both horses. I got a call early Monday morning to come get the bay horse. Oh! Goody! Unfortunately, it is very difficult to get transportation during the workweek. Several kind folks said they could help, but it would be after dark. Tamara Eichorn, our farrier, offered to be at the sanctuary about 2:30 pm to help pick up the starved horse.

Once the emaciated boy was on the lead and found the grass alongside the trailer, he did not want to move forward. A few alfalfa pellets convinced him and he got into the trailer and went for a small bit of old hay in a corner.

The poor boy was nothing but bones with skin and is only about 20 or so years old. We have kept Wyot in the hospital stall for warmth and safety until the ground dried out. His back fetlock joints are swollen and the pasterns are dropped. Only time will tell if he has DSLD (Degenerative Suspensory Ligament Desmitis).

We have lost a couple of horses to this incurable, progressive disease. We can only hope that Wyot has a better outcome. He is sorely in need of an Angel Sponsor and for people to be pulling for him – will you help?

## Two Lincoln County Horses

by Joanie Benson

On a typical Friday afternoon you may be thinking about your fun weekend coming up as you finish up your work to get home early. Not so much for Deborah Baker and me because, this Friday afternoon, we are heading “cross-country” trying to locate two reported starving horses. Sometimes the directions are difficult to follow and we get to “see” more of the countryside than we might like. Finally we found the property and fortunately the owners were at home.

It had been reported to me that the horses had not had any hay all winter until recently when a round bale was put out. The owner told us he had both horses for about eight years and had been trying to sell them for three. He did not have a veterinarian, had never dewormed the horses, just begun to give grain since they were thin, and had, several times, needed to help the black Thoroughbred to her feet. He attributed the horses’ condition to the fact that they “are just old.” He agreed to sign both horses over to HPS.

The Quarter horse may have kept the mare away from the hay. This is not uncommon behavior when horses are starving and would account for the extreme difference in their weights. The horses would not eat the small amount of hay that was left in the field as it was soiled. We were very concerned that the horses could have Refeeding Syndrome since the owner started feeding (a poor quality) grain in huge amounts after the horses had been getting nothing all winter. Feeding this way can easily kill a horse within a short amount of time. Although the next day, Saturday, was our Project Day at HPS, we did not want to wait until Sunday to pick them up. Things were very critical for the horses.

HPS member Deb D’Amato and I had no difficulty loading the horses and we headed home, praying the black mare would not go down. There was good hay in the back to help keep them busy. She is about 23 years old with a very low One on the Body Condition Scoring. The sorrel gelding is a registered American Quarter Horse about 21 years old. His BCS is about a Three and appears to be a nice horse.

The poor starved black mare did not have a chance. Refeeding Syndrome may have caused her to go downhill fast; on her third day with us, she went down and we spent hours trying to raise her. Her gums were yellow and her organs were shutting down. We had no choice but to let her go.

The sorrel QH is doing great and was not be happy unless turned out with the other pond field horses. His best friend is Anasazi and wherever she is, he is close at hand. His weight is coming back on very quickly.

*The person who reported the horses collected \$420 for us to help offset the cost of their care. Thank you so much for calling us and for providing this financial support as well!*



## HONORS and MEMORIALS

In honor of Tiffany Ferebee.

By David & K.D. Ferebee

To my dear friend Renee, who is a lifelong friend to all horses.

by Laura Weiss

In memory of Eddie Woody.  
We love & miss you everyday  
by Candy Woody

In memory of Prairie Flower, who lived up to her name,  
sweet & beautiful. By Sandy Fisher

"Denali: if love could have saved you, you would have lived forever"

By Dottie Rebhan

In memory of Prairie Flower. By Betty & Floyd Lentz

In loving memory of Sirius, a truly great dog.  
By Elizabeth Richardson

Editor's Note: We regret that the following two items were inadvertently left out of the March issue, and apologize to our donors for this omission:

In memory of Dr. Bob Gochnauer's mother.  
By the Swimmers, Joy Simon & the Mitey Rider Staff

In honor of Ann Seagle, Glenda Thompson & Tiffany Ferebee.  
by B.F. Seagle

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We are greatly heartened by the generosity of our donors and the growth of our Angel Sponsor corps. Sharing with you the responsibility and the joy of returning these magnificent creatures to health aids the heart and spirit of the loyal volunteers who slog through mud, dart through raindrops and work hard every day in service to the horses. Thank you from the bottom of all our hearts.

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