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April 26, 2009

Wild Horse Folks:

These stories (and the video) are telling, but there is more to this case than is being revealed here, due to the on-going investigation. This tragedy calls for criminal background checks for recipients of federal wild horses, whether purchased under sale authority or adopted, and a national system of regulation, legal oversight, and unannounced inspections of ALL equine rescues, sanctuaries, and conservation herds.

This unholy catastrophe also shows the need for reversible, safe, and reliable fertility control in free-ranging federal and privatized wild horse herds. Three-Strikes Ranch had free-roaming, intact stallions. It is my understanding, from speaking with Jill Starr, that many of the rescued (formerly BLM) mares are now pregnant.

Pat

**More Than One Hundred Neglected Mustangs Rescued from Nebraska Ranch:
Ranch Owner Signs Over Horses to Rescue Agencies**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Jerry Finch 409-682-6621 or

Jill Starr 661-727-0049

19 April 2009

Alliance, NE - More than one hundred emaciated horses found at Morrill County 3-Strikes Ranch were legally surrendered Tuesday to horse rescue groups, Habitat for Horses and Lifesavers Foundation. The agreement to sign over the animals was coordinated by the Morrill County Sheriff's Office, which earlier in the week arrested the owner, Jason Meduna, on one count of animal cruelty.

3-Strikes Ranch, according to its web site, is "...a Mustang outpost, is a Non-Profit habitat to hundreds of mustangs from all over the United States. A natural environment for wild horses to run on the open prairies of the Sand Hills." Their mission was to "Enhance the Mustang's quality of life by creating a natural setting that fosters the independence and integrity of the wild horses. Educate the public on the wonders of these Living Legends." Mustangs captured by the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that were not adopted after three attempts -- "three strikers" -- were sent to Jason Meduna at 3-Strikes Ranch.

Jerry Finch of Texas-based Habitat for Horses found that Medina's ranch had pastures devoid of grass with little or no edible grazing. On Sunday, Finch accompanied a sheriff's deputy in a flyover of the property. It was then that the bodies of more than 60 dead horses were discovered. Nearly all of the animals on the ranch were malnourished, their back, ribs and hip bones were very pronounced. Two animals were so compromised, it was determined that humane euthanasia was necessary. Lab reports on the cause of death will be returned by Friday of this week.

Finch applauded Medina's decision to surrender custody of the animals, stating we can now give these horses the medical treatment they need to get them on their feet again. The horses have been moved to the Bridgeport Rodeo Grounds where veterinarians and volunteers will examine and treat each horse as needed. Finch estimates that more than 30 stallions were comingled in herds, indicating that many of the mares may be pregnant. According to Jill Starr of Lifesavers Foundation, the ultimate goal is to place these animals in homes and facilities capable of addressing their needs and where they will have the opportunity to thrive.

Donations are urgently needed to help cover the cost of medical care. Donations are being collected by Front Range Equine Rescue in Colorado. PayPal donations to: donatebuy@fronrangeequinerescue.org. If you do not have access to PayPal you can mail donations to: Front Range Equine Rescue, P.O. Box 307, Larkspur, CO 80118. Please notate on your check and/or PayPal donations that it is for "3-Strikes Mustangs." Any and all help is greatly appreciated.

Those wishing to adopt any of these mustangs may contact Jerry Finch at (409) 682-6621 or Jill Starr at (661) 727-0049 for additional information.

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**Habitat for Horses (HfH)** is a not-for-profit equine protection agency committed to the prevention, rescue and rehabilitation of neglected, abused and homeless horses. The largest organization of its kind in North America, HfH operates a rehabilitation ranch in Texas. The organization has taken a

leadership role in horse protection issues and has been instrumental in developing and promoting legislation to eliminate the slaughter of American horses. To learn more, visit [www.habitatforhorses.org](http://www.habitatforhorses.org)

Lifesavers specializes in the rescue of American Mustangs. Since 1997, **Lifesavers Wild Horse Rescue**, a program of nonprofit organization, Lifesavers, Inc., has provided refuge, training and adoption placement for hundreds of horses in need. To learn more, visit [www.wildhorserescue.org](http://www.wildhorserescue.org).

--- Original Release ---

**At least 60 horses are dead and more than 100 others are seriously emaciated at a mustang facility in Morrill County, Nebraska.**

**If you love horses (or any living creatures) these are tuff pictures to view, but they shockingly illustrate the crisis and desperate need!**

**<http://s703.photobucket.com/albums/ww34/ML801/>**

Jerry Finch of Habitat for Horses is on the ground at 3 Strikes Ranch. This is an emergency situation. If you can help please let me know so we can keep track of funds. It will take a minimum of 4 tons of hay to keep these horses alive. This is just what is needed in hay. The horses are in grave condition and need much more than hay. All donations are appreciated. \$5.00 will help. Please dig in your couch cushions!!!

Paypal [donatebuy@fronrangeequinerescue.org](mailto:donatebuy@fronrangeequinerescue.org)

mailing address Front Range Equine Rescue, P.O. Box 307, Larkspur, CO 80118

**PLEASE CROSSPOST FAR AND WIDE!**

(We are still working on the actual Press Release, so this is just a web-release for now)

There is currently a serious situation at 3-Strikes Ranch in Alliance NE. Approximately 170 Mustangs have been found to be thin and in need of rehabilitation. Veterinarians and law enforcement are currently working hard to determine the cause for their condition. In the meantime, there is a great need for hay to feed these Mustangs. The feeding of 170 thin horses will require a minimum of 5000 pounds of hay each day. Front Range Equine Rescue in Larkspur, CO, (<http://www.fronrangeequinerescue.org/>) will be handling the collecting of donations and purchase of the hay to help these horses.

**The quickest way to help is by Paypal.**

**The Paypal address for Front Range Equine Rescue is: [donatebuy@fronrangeequinerescue.org](mailto:donatebuy@fronrangeequinerescue.org)**

**If you do not have access to Paypal you can mail donations to:  
Front Range Equine Rescue, P.O. Box 307, Larkspur, CO 80118**

*\* Please notate on your check and/or Paypal donations that it is for "3-Strikes Mustangs". Any and all help with hay is greatly appreciated.*

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## From Jerry Finch. More to come....

- Jason is in jail. He was arrested on cruelty charges for the one horse retrieved by the BLM.
- There are approximately 170 horses on the property. They are nearly all in 'desperate' condition.
- Upon arrival, they found two horses laying dead. Both had necropsies and nothing visible indicated toxins. The vet says it appears to be starvation. Toxicology reports will be back Friday, until then nothing is ruled out. Jerry said he was fully prepared to support Jason and give him the benefit of the doubt, but it appears Jason made no effort on behalf of the dying horses. As Jerry said, he would have had them at hospitals or Universities, or at a minimum, humanely euthanized. It appears nothing was done for them.
- Prior to Amanda's arrival, there was some alfalfa, but it is soaked and muddy and completely inedible.
- The remaining horses are on an investigatory hold for 10 days. No animal will leave during that time unless there is proof of ownership.
- Jerry met with the veterinarian who treated Blue (as well as his father, who is also a vet). According to Jerry, he has a "really nice clinic. This guy knows what he is doing". According to the vet, Blue went down the first night and he called Jason, explaining that if he deteriorated, he would have to eu. By morning, he was up and around. Vet called Jason repeatedly and never heard back. Bill is unpaid.

*\*\*If you called the AVMA and lodged a complaint about this person, you made an egregious error. PLEASE call the AVMA, apologize, and herald him for having the courage to speak out on behalf of these horses.*

### Plans:

- Jerry is going to stay until "something is done with these horses".
- It's cold there, so thankfully there has not been decomposition, but they plan to find all dead horses tomorrow.
- In the meantime, the DA is going to try to get a surrender from Jason. As Jerry said, if he truly cares, he would agree.

### What's Needed:

- The horses need hay and tons and tons of it. Amanda has been moving in one round bale at a time in a pickup. The 18 tons set to be delivered will last approx. 3-4 days. MUCH more is needed. They also desperately need wormer -- Safeguard specifically. The sheriff has indicated that under NO circumstances should any money be given to 3-Strikes or Jason directly. Purchases should be made directly to hay suppliers. I know some posted some numbers on here – can someone PM these to me? \*Again, according to Jerry, the WORST thing you can do is donate money directly to Jason or 3-Strikes.
- They also need tractor trailers or other vehicles to move the hay -- any local ranchers who can help, please PM me so I can put you in touch directly with Jerry. I've put in a call to a Rancher-led stewardship organization in NE and hope to engage them as well.
- Finally, and most importantly, Jerry conveyed it's important people stay calm. Do not call the sheriff, DA, vet or anyone else at this point. Under no circumstances show up at the ranch (the sheriff will

arrest immediately). And until there is a surrender agreement, do not discuss taking horses on the board. Perhaps if one person can keep a list/spreadsheet of those who can take horses, any offers can be PM'd -- so we can at least get a headstart should the need arise.

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**Press Release, 19 April 2009**

## **Scores of Neglected Mustangs Imperiled on Nebraska Ranch Ranch Owner in Jail and Need for Aid is Urgent**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:

Jerry Finch 409-682-6621

Alliance, Nebraska -- At least 60 horses are dead and more than 100 others are seriously emaciated at a mustang facility in Morrill County, Nebraska. Habitat for Horses, an equine rescue organization, received reports last week of problems at the 3-Strikes Ranch. Jerry Finch of the equine rescue organization Habitat for Horses returned from flying over the property early Sunday, and reports that "The situation is even worse than we suspected." They spotted another 20 animals on the range, several barely able to stand. Another 50-100 emaciated horses are in holding pens with only a small amount of muddy and trampled alfalfa. They are suffering from a variety of ailments including severe worm infestation and terribly neglected hooves. Two young foals, approximately four months old, were found dead. Necropsies have been performed on both; a full report, including toxicology results is due back Friday.

3-Strikes Ranch, according to its web site, is a "Mustang outpost, a Non-Profit habitat to hundreds of mustangs from all over the United States, a natural environment for wild horses to run on the open prairies of the Sand Hills." Mustangs captured by the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that were not adopted after three attempts -- three strikers -- were sent to Jason Meduna at 3-Strikes Ranch. Meduna also accepted horses from people unable to care for their mustangs, and those in need of special training. A number of private owners who had placed horses with Meduna have already retrieved their animals. The BLM was at the facility last week and removed one of the three horses for which they currently hold title. The others were reported to be dead.

According to ranch owner Meduna more than 300 animals were living at the ranch in January. He has attributed the deaths to toxic poisoning, but to date no proof of this has been provided. Meduna is currently in jail on an animal cruelty charge stemming from the horse already removed by the BLM.

Habitat for Horses is assisting local law enforcement, the Bureau of Land Management, and a number of volunteers in caring for these animals.

**Hay and feed-based wormer are urgently needed.**

**Local families are urged to contact Finch if they are able to provide tactical support for this operation.**

**Donations for hay are being collected by Front Range Equine Rescue in Colorado.**

**[donatebuy@fronrangeequinerescue.org](mailto:donatebuy@fronrangeequinerescue.org)**

**If you do not have access to Paypal you can mail donations to:  
Front Range Equine Rescue, P.O. Box 307, Larkspur, CO 80118.**

***\* Please notate on your check and/or Paypal donations that it is for "3-Strikes Mustangs". Any and all help with hay is greatly appreciated.***

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*Habitat for Horses (HfH) is a not-for-profit equine protection agency committed to the prevention, rescue and rehabilitation of neglected, abused and homeless horses. The largest organization of its kind in North America, HfH operates a rehabilitation ranch in Hitchcock, Texas, as well as a growing network of foster homes throughout Texas, Oklahoma, Florida and Louisiana . The organization has taken a leadership role in horse protection issues and has been instrumental in developing and promoting legislation to eliminate the slaughter of American horses. To learn more, visit: <http://www.habitatforhorses.org>*

*Proud member of the Equine Welfare Alliance*

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*“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.” ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.*