

State Agriculture and Rural Leaders

Resolution 2010-4

A Resolution in Support of Controlling the Overpopulation of Wild and Feral Horses.

WHEREAS: Wild and feral horses on federal, state, tribal, and private lands must be managed to prevent overpopulation because they have no natural predators, and increase by 20% to 27% per year—doubling in population every four years; and

WHEREAS: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other federal agencies have been hampered in their efforts to apply sound science, and the best management practices recommended by range resource and wildlife professionals to control the population by continual litigation driven by animal rights and advocacy groups; and

WHEREAS: The Governmental Accounting Office (GAO) has reported that current methods used to determine the number of horses on public lands is seriously flawed resulting in the under-counting of wild horses, and that this finding is backed up by actual experience when far more horses are gathered in any particular Horse Management Area (HMA) than was expected; and

WHEREAS: Uncontrolled feral horse herds are severely impacting the environment and productivity of tribal, state, and private lands in addition to the federal lands, and that the numbers of feral horses off of federal lands or designated HMAs are not monitored by any agency; and

WHEREAS: Unwanted domestic horses are being abandoned on federal, state, tribal, and private lands which only worsens the overpopulation of wild and feral horses;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that State Agriculture and Rural Leaders urges state legislatures and members of Congress to support all efforts to control the numbers of wild horses on public lands for the protection of the resource base, the sustainability of wild horse herds and native wildlife, and the preservation of the multiple-purpose mandate for the management of federal lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that no wild horse should be held at public expense in captivity for longer than 90 days, and that if they cannot be adopted, sold, or otherwise permanently disposed of within that time that they should be sold to the highest bidder without recourse with the revenue being returned to better manage the wild herds, and the resource base; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, appropriations for the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program should be spent on controlling the numbers on public lands, restoring the resource base, and better management on the public lands—and should not be used to warehouse horses in feedlots and long term holding facilities off of the public lands at public expense. This is essentially establishing a welfare entitlement program for animals, which is unacceptable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the restoration of a regulated and humane horse processing industry in the U.S. is essential to the ability of states, tribes, and local jurisdictions having the ability to control abandoned and feral horses without unnecessary taxpayer expense, and without wasting a valuable, renewable meat resource that is welcomed by a worldwide export market, and could combat hunger in the U.S. by providing a high quality, affordable protein source.