

FREE

245 M80 02/10/95 770

Cliff Gardner
HC 60 Box 700

Ruby Valley, NV 89833-

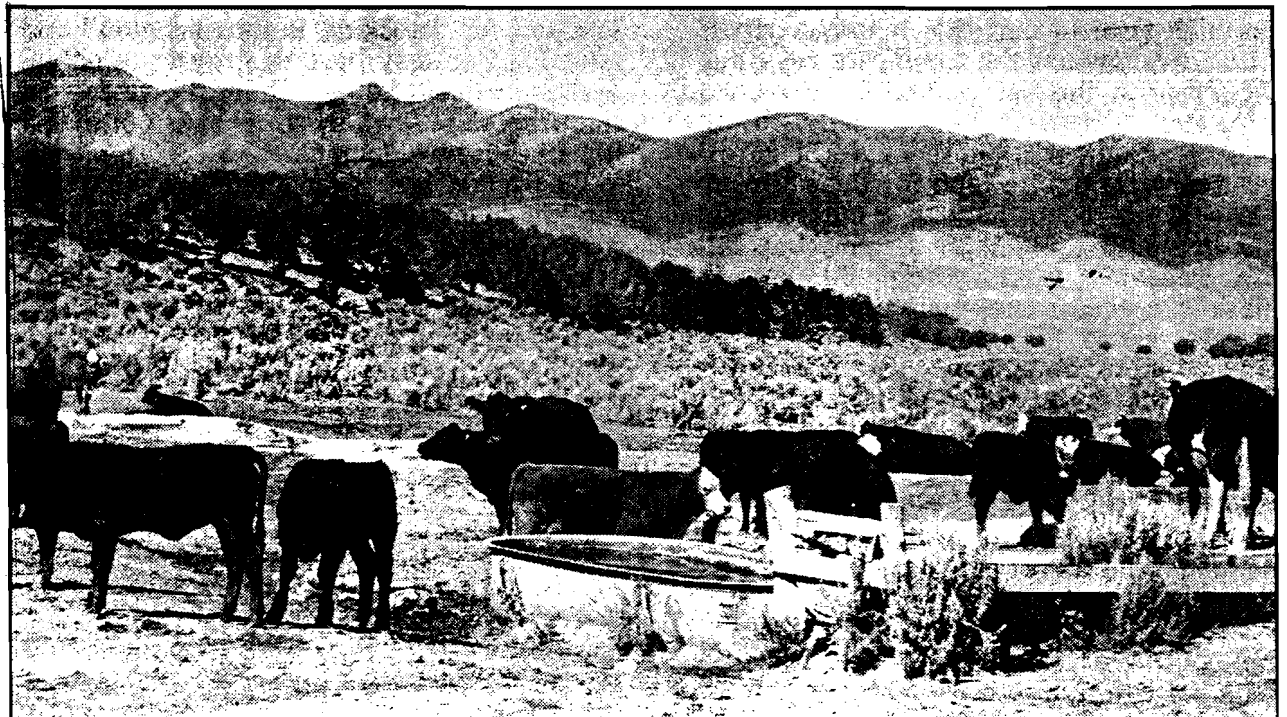
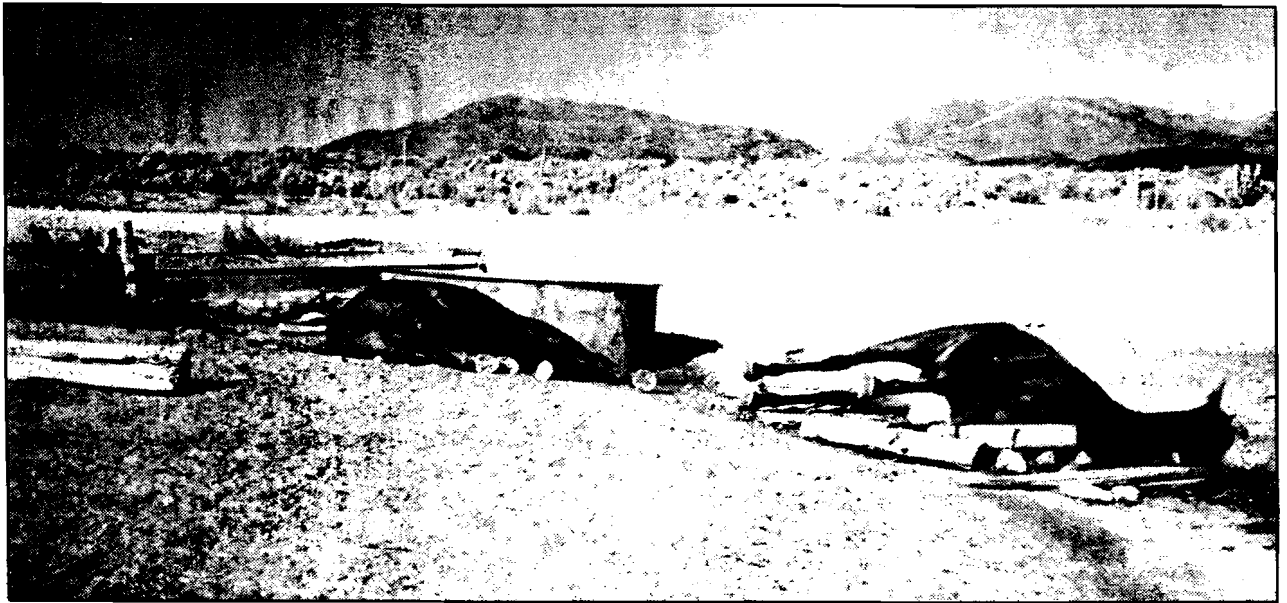


EVADA

35 CENTS

THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1994

16 Pages



Three feral mares were found dead earlier this month around a dry water trough north of Bald Mountain. A passerby pointed out that when cattle were in the area (lower picture), ranchers made sure the troughs were full of water.

Lack of water suspected in death of feral horses

Lack of water suspected in death of feral horses

On July 7, a passerby pulled a dead feral horse out of a dusty water trough on public land 30 miles south of Jiggs near Pete Holm Spring in White Pine County. He said the pipeline from the spring to the trough had become plugged and the horse died of thirst.

The man saw two more dead horses at the trough the next day and blamed the Bureau of Land Management for the death. He also said he couldn't identify himself because he lives at the mercy of those federal agents.

He explained that the BLM allotment has been used in the past by cattle from Russell Ranches, but the ranch is now in bankruptcy and didn't turn out any livestock this year. Nor did Russell hire anyone to scatter salt or check the allotment's water troughs.

The passerby pointed out that wildlife and feral horses suffer in the absence of ranchers and said he feared more of the same if the government were successful in its attempts to gain more control over public lands through Rangeland Re-

form 94 and its efforts to change the mining laws.

"When the horses got the allotment all to themselves, they died," the passerby observed. He added, "When the rancher is gone, this is what replaces him."

And it wasn't government that came to the rescue of the dying horses either, the man said, but workers from Bald Mountain Mine. They noticed the animals' plight and brought in a water truck to fill the trough. Jerry Fontes, a mine foreman, said some miners planned more water runs as needed.

He noted the pipe feeding the trough also had plugged up a year ago, but a Russell Ranch cowboy took care of the problem.

Steve Goicoechea, who used to run cattle in the area, remarked, "I know where the pipe is. It's easy to fix."

Another man said, "There were a dozen horses standing around here. One was so weak I could walk up to her."

U.S. Forest Service officials, however, have said no horses were observed in the area last week during a

helicopter fly-over. Doug Sorensen, supervisory range conservationist for the Wells Resource Area, said Mitch Bultheis from the Wells office and Joel Stratton, the BLM's wild horse specialist, conducted the helicopter run.

Gene Drais, BLM area manager for the Egan Resource area, explained his office was using helicopters to fly over and count horses on the BLM's 7,000-acre "Buck And Bald" range. He said the count was in preparation for gathering about 1,000-head of excess wild horses as part of the BLM's herd management program.

However, one rancher argued, "It's not the BLM's job to look after wild horses. They're supposed to manage land, not feral stock. The wild horse people should be out here like the cowboys are. Wild horse advocates don't even pay grazing fees, but they collect a lot of money from little children and should hire someone to take care of these sorry animals. ... Dying of natural causes like water deprivation is not very pretty."

Sorensen said Bultheis unplugged the pipe near Holm Spring and got water running again.

Reader's Forum

More BLM Handling of Round-up

Editor:

I wish to join my neighbors in commenting on the BLM round-up. The enclosed photographs were instrumental in starting this whole mess.

The conditions on the range east of Goldfield were already poor in mid June when these pictures were taken. Many of the horses were emaciated and the trip to a new water hole would have been very hard on animals that were weak and stumbling.

Fortunately, local citizens, not BLM, came to their rescue and removed the dead horse from the trough and cleared the pipe so there was again a source of clean water. This trough has had clogging problems since the current pipes were installed. The remedy would be rather simple if the pipes could be enclosed so the horses couldn't knock them loose while playing in the water.

BLM has been using lack of funds as an excuse for the lack of maintenance. I would think it would be cheaper to routinely do minor maintenance on the various water sources and supplement the feed of the few animals in this particular area, than to pay the wages and expenses of the people who ran many already weak horses to death.

The government has taken ownership and therefore responsibility for the free roaming mustangs. In their wisdom, they appointed, in the area, to oversee that responsibility, a person who is said to have starved his own horses until reported to his local sheriff's office. This is the information given me by several thus far reliable sources. If my information is incorrect, perhaps that person would like to contact me for a formal apology.



BLM stands for Bureau of Land Management. One would presume this to include wildlife thereon, as well as the livestock of ranchers with grazing permits.

Management of the mustangs seems to be a case of protect them until they are desperate and then eliminate them for their own good.

My sincere, but pointless apologies to those injured and killed as a result of my concern.

J.A. Green
P.o. Box 666
Goldfield, NV 89013

Gans-Nelson Fight Programs Available

History buffs and boxing fans can pick up copies of the world famous Gans-Nelson Fight Programs at the Goldfield Motel & Gift Shop, on Hwy. 95, in Goldfield.

The programs are in limited supply, and are particularly timely now, with the fight just passing its 90th birthday on Sept. 3, 1996.

The gift shops has many other antique gift ideas to check out.

Pictures taken and article written at the time when Ben Colvin was being forced to abandon use of his allotment because wild horses were overrunning the range. (See Document 27-a.)

1987

Nevada news summary:

BLM's Burford defends wild horse experiments

WASHINGTON (AP) — The head of the Bureau of Land Management has defended a controversial experiment that killed 48 wild horses in Nevada, saying the loss is "the price paid for progress."

Robert Burford told the House public lands subcommittee yesterday that the experiments should continue, despite the loss of the horses.

The experiments by University of Minnesota researchers have drawn fire from humane associations, who claim the horses were mistreated and left to die on Nevada range lands.

In the experiment, some of the horses were driven by helicopter miles from their normal range, fitted with collars, then left to fend for themselves. Many of the horses died of dehydration after being unable to find water. Others were killed as they grew and were choked by the tight-fitting collars.

The experiments involve developing birth control methods for the horses.

Burford also said he will seek congressional approval to round up 15,000 of the wild horses next year and sell 12,500 at auction.

local calls a week, Washoe County Sheriff Vince Swinney said in court papers filed Tuesday.

The sheriff's also said he is working to contract with doctors and psychologists to care for the inmates on a regular basis. A contract is being negotiated with Lakes Crossing Mental Center for psychological services. And deputy District Attorney Thomas Riley said that since Feb. 1, a doctor has been working five days a week for the jail, although his contract has not yet been settled.

Swinney filed the court papers in Reno as evidence he is attempting to comply with Judge Reed's order to allow county jail inmates ready access to public telephones and to stop denying them adequate medical and mental health treatment.

Reed found Swinney in contempt of court last month because no improvements in how inmates were treated had been made at the jail. And the judge ordered Swinney to correct the problems within 45 days or be fined \$1,000 a day.

The contempt ruling came after prisoners complained that Washoe County Jail officials were failing to

follow a 1986 agreement to make improvements at the jail.

The agreement resulted after a lengthy battle over what inmates said were overcrowded and substandard conditions at both the main jail and the Glendale Avenue annex.

A new regional jail expected to open in May is being built to help solve the overcrowding problem.

BLM reduces horse population by eight

TONOPAH (AP) — Eight wild horses involved in a University of Minnesota research project have died east of here, the Nevada Appeal reported yesterday.

And Nevada Humane Society officials said they fear several dozen more horses in the area could die if they aren't given immediate medical attention.

Bureau of Land Management officials said they plan to send a team of experts to the Stone Cabin Valley area near here today to give them medical assistance.

BLM officials haven't established an official cause of death, but said they could have resulted from tight collars put around the horses' necks as part of the birth control experiment.

BLM spokesman Maxine Shane confirmed her agency is looking into the possibility the collars were installed so tightly that they strangled the animals.

Forty-eight wild horses died east of Fallon late last year as a result of the same experiment, and the BLM assumed the blame for their deaths.

McGuire and officials of the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses called for an immediate halt to the research project yesterday.

But BLM officials in Washington and University of Minnesota researchers said they have no immediate plans to cancel the program.

As for the latest incident, Shane said "some kind of collar" was put around the necks of 98 wild horses in the Tonopah area in August 1986. Some were radio transmitter collars used to track horses after they were implanted with birth control devices, she said.

She said two horses turned up dead Jan. 8 in the Stone Cabin Valley area, one the apparent victim of a gunshot wound and the other the apparent

victim of a tight collar.

She said six others had died of unknown causes over the course of the project before that.

She said a team of experts will be sent to the scene today to determine the extent of the problem and render medical assistance.

She said at least six more horses are in serious need of medical attention, but it's unknown how many more will require help.

The Stone Cabin Valley area is one of five study areas being used by the University of Minnesota team in Nevada.

Free Press
1991

BLM wild horse adoption sessions set; one in Elko

PALOMINO VALLEY (AP) — Nearly 2,000 wild horses who escaped death in the parched Nevada desert are destined for adoptive homes across America after a stopover at this picturesque ranch.

"The sad thing is that the little ones were just abandoned," Mike Rockingham, a Bureau of Land Management employee, said as she checked a pen holding seven spirited colts captured earlier this summer.

The colts were among some 200 taken off the Nellis Air Force Bombing and Gunnery Range north of Las Vegas. Many were near death from lack of food and water on the drought-ravaged range. Most had been kicked away by mares who were unable to fend for themselves, much less care for their offspring.

"In some areas of the range, the food and water are 15 miles apart," Ms. Rockingham said. "The babies just can't do it; they can't get from one place to the other. So the little ones are just abandoned."

Some 80 colts, ages 3 to 6 months, will be placed for adoption Friday through Sunday at the BLM's wild horse and burro placement center at this sprawling ranch, 19 miles north of Sparks. Also up for adoption are 50 mares who have baby colts at their side. Other horses of all ages — some 800 in all — will be offered for adoption this weekend at Palomino Valley.

A total of 75 colts will be adopted Aug. 17 in Las Vegas, with adoptions following in Elko Aug. 22-23, Ely Aug. 24-25 and Winnemucca Sept. 20-22.

Another adoption is planned in Las Vegas in early December, to coincide with the National Finals Rodeo.

BLM officials are stepping up adoptions across the country in efforts to place the 2,000 horses taken from the Nellis range this summer. The massive effort was made to thin what has become the nation's largest wild horse herd.

BLM officials estimate some 6,000 horses inhabit the 2.2 million acres of the Nellis range, where droughts have dried ponds and streams, and growing herds have left land overgrazed.

Satellite adoption centers have been set up by the BLM in more than a dozen states at locations ranging from Cherry Hills, N.J. to Manchester, Mich. to Ridgecrest, Calif.

Horses are trucked here from the Nellis range and sorted by age: yearlings, 2-5 years, 5-9 years and over 10 years old.

Veterinarians draw blood to check for any diseases and check their teeth to determine their age. They are tagged and branded with a number that is entered in BLM records.

Rockingham, who has adopted three horses and two burros over the past five years, says many people mistakenly believe adopting a colt is like obtaining a dog or cat.

"There's a lot more expense involved and a lot more care needed," she said. "And you've got to have plenty of room."

"People who want to adopt are screened before they can get a horse," said Maxine Shane, a BLM spokesman in Reno. "They must have the proper facilities at home. And they need to bring the proper trailer. They can't just drive up in a pickup truck and expect to take one of the horses."

Some of the wild horses are also provided to prisons throughout the West. Supervised programs allow inmates to gentle the animals, which are later offered for adoption.

Congress passed legislation in 1971 to protect, manage and control wild horses and burros on public lands, declaring them to be "living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West."

In the first 15 years after the declaration, the BLM adopted out more than 91,000 horses and burros, with the most horses going to Texas, followed by South Dakota, Oklahoma and Oregon. Californians have adopted the most burros.

A fee of \$125 per horse and \$75 per burro is charged for each animal.

Although most horses have found their way to ranches or residences with oversized lots, some have made the spotlight. Four palominos adopted in Nevada are now with the Marine Corps Mounted Color Guard and have appeared in parades throughout the West, including the Rose Parade in Pasadena, Calif.

Just my opinion

1991



by Lee Pitts

One wonders what will happen to our vast rangelands when the environmentalists, the animal rightists and the government bureaucrats take over riding the ranges?

One really doesn't have to speculate.

If the tourists would leave the air conditioned casinos on the

Las Vegas Strip and travel a little up country, they would see a glimpse of the future . . . and it would make them sick to their collective stomachs.

Dead horse carcasses litter the landscape. The horses that are alive are in such bad shape they hardly have the strength to fight for territorial rights over withering water holes. Orphan foals go in search of their delirious mothers who abandoned them in search of a drink of water.

Thousands of horses are dying a slow and painful death, largely because of the actions of animal rightists. They should not be allowed to escape the blame for this tragedy.

For those folks with short memories, let me remind them. In 1971 a federal law was passed that prohibited the capture, sale or slaughter of wild horses. The
continued on page seven

Just my opinion

continued from page one

Bureau of Land Management was left in charge of the largest wild horse herd in the nation. They would be responsible for them in sickness and in health, in the good times as well as the bad.

In 1987 the Animal Protection Institute sued the federal government and claimed that the Bureau of Land Management was removing horses from the range at too fast a rate, and that this was being done at the urging of ranchers whose cattle competed with the horses for forage. So the BLM stopped removing horses from this range, which includes the Nellis Air Force Base test range. Incidentally, there are no cattle here to share the range with the horses . . . or to blame the terribly overgrazed conditions on.

The problem is a simple one. After five years of drouth, this

range can support only 2,000 or so horses at the most. It is estimated there are 6,000. And the BLM and Forest Service blame cattlemen for overgrazing?

More than 10,000 gallons of water have to be trucked in daily just to water the horses. Are the thirsty southern Californians upset about this waste of water?

A plan is now under way to capture 2,000 of the wild horses, haul them to Reno and sell them. Good luck! The animal rightists will probably be there to make sure none of the horses are sold for dog food. Better to die a slow and painful death in the desert, I suppose.

If you want a clear picture of what our western lands will look like once under the protection of our all powerful government and the urban based animal welfare groups, go run with these wild horses for just one day.

Emergency roundup to save mustangs eyed

RENO. (AP) — An emergency roundup to save a herd of wild horses from dying of thirst on the open range in northern Nevada is being planned by the Bureau of Land Management.

About 1,250 wild horses, protected under federal law, roam the Little Owyhee area in the Winnemucca Range, around 200 miles northeast of Reno.

In Nevada, the nation's most arid state, water typically is scarce. And with the northern region hit particularly hard in this sixth year of drought, officials worry the herd will not survive on the dwindling water supplies in the rugged and remote terrain.

"They only have four water sources," BLM spokeswoman Maxine Shane said on Wednesday. "What we're concerned about is as the summer goes on, they won't have enough water. So we want to get in there before there's an emergency situation."

Shane said agency officials in Washington D.C. have allocated \$150,000 for the roundup, expected to take place around Aug. 1.

Most of the horses are scattered over about 80,000 acres, Shane said. About 1,000 horses will be rounded up by helicopter. Those under nine years old will be transported to the BLM's wild horse center in Palomino Valley north of Reno and put up for adoption.

Older animals will be left on the range, where, because of the reduced competition for food and water, they will have a better chance of survival, she said.

Shane added that by leaving the older horses, officials also hope to slow the herd's reproduction rate. In the wild, the horses live an average

of 20 years.

Scores of wild horses died on the Nellis Range in southern Nevada last summer for lack of water. But above-average rainfall this spring in that region has eased the drought's impact.

"Southern Nevada got more water than we did, so we don't expect a problem down there," Shane said. "We're monitoring other areas. But at this point we haven't identified any as critical as this."

The BLM estimates Nevada's wild horse population at 35,000.

Scattered showers

Low: 47 High: 84

TUESDAY

DAILY FREE PRESS

Northern Nevada's News Source Since 1883



50-foot Spiderman

— See page A8

Weather, page A3

Elko, Nevada

June 29, 2004

www.elkodaily.com

Vol. 121 No. 154

50 cents

Wild horses die of thirst in BLM corral

RENO (AP) — Seven wild horses died in a remote northeast Nevada enclosure because of a mistake by a U.S. Bureau of Land Management employee, an agency investigation found.

In a statement released Monday, BLM officials said a worker failed to install proper gates that would have allowed the animals to leave a fenced weed treatment research area.

Instead, the seven horses were trapped inside the enclosed area and died of a lack of water in Mav.

BLM spokesman Chris Hanefeld in Ely declined to identify the employee. He said it was a personnel matter that has been referred to the worker's supervisor for "appropriate action."

"It was an honest mistake and a tragic mistake," Hanefeld said. "We discovered the problem and are going to correct the problem and just move on from there. We're not here to punish anyone."

Wild-horse advocacy groups were notified after the dead animals were discovered.

"I think wild-horse advocates

will be angry," said Bobbi Royle, president of Wild Horse Spirit based in Reno. "A lot of this mistake stuff you have to wonder about sometimes."

"They (BLM) better get a damn grip, that's what I think. They don't care a flip about the horses. I hope they learn to value the wild horses more than they do," she said.

The seven wild horses somehow entered the 2,600-acre fenced southern portion of the North Antelope Valley Cheatgrass, Halogeton and Russian

Thistle Treatment Research Project, 80 miles northeast of Ely

Had the employee installed "one-way gates" as directed by supervisors, the horses might have been able to escape and get to water, BLM officials said.

Four dead horses were found inside the enclosure May 21 and the other three were found within a few days.

The research project gates then were wired open and water turned on to prevent any more deaths, officials said.

"If the right gate had been

installed, they could have pushed the gate open and got out," Hanefeld said.

Nevada is home to roughly half the estimated 32,000 wild horses in the West.

Wild-horse advocates are at odds with the BLM, which contends the animals are overrunning parts of the West and need annual roundups to thin the herd. Advocates say some of the millions of cattle grazing public rangeland should be removed before any more wild horses are rounded up.

BLM criticized over mustang deaths

Advocates calling for investigation after nine animals die during roundup

By MARTIN GRIFFITH
Associated Press Writer

RENO (AP) — Wild-horse advocates are calling for an independent investigation after the deaths of nine mustangs so far in a government roundup of

the animals on the range north of Reno.

Two advocacy groups — In Defense of Animals, based in San Rafael, Calif., and the Cloud Foundation in Colorado Springs, Colo. — criticized the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's

handling of the roundup after two more deaths this past week.

A contractor is using two helicopters under BLM supervision to drive horses in the Calico Mountain Complex to corrals. Officials are then trucking the animals to a Fallon holding facility before placing them for adoption or sending them to long-term holding corrals in the Midwest.

BLM officials said the

roundup is necessary because an over-population of mustangs is harming native wildlife and the range itself, and threatening the horses with starvation.

Horse activists maintain a colt was run so hard and long during the roundup that the hoof walls of its two hind feet came off, leaving exposed bones and nerves. The colt was euthanized Thursday at the Fallon facility.

The groups also contend a

mare fell down in a trailer after being driven for miles on the range by helicopter and failed to receive any help on the four-hour drive to Fallon. The mare was still down on arrival in Fallon and died a short time later.

"These latest tragic and unnecessary deaths document beyond doubt that the BLM hel-

See WILD HORSES

Continued from front page
helicopter stampedes violate federal requirements for humane and minimally-intrusive management of wild horses," said Dr. Elliot Katz, president of In Defense of Animals.

"(We) are calling for a full and independent investigation of these and other fatalities and injuries caused by the Calico roundup," he added.

Katz's group unsuccessfully sued to halt the roundup, claiming the use of helicopters to drive horses to corrals is inhumane and risks their injury and death.

BLM spokeswoman LoLynn Worley said less

than 0.5 percent of wild horses gathered in such roundups die and the agency goes out of its way to minimize the risk to the animals. She disputed the groups' accounts of the latest deaths.

Worley said the colt had no apparent health problems when it arrived in Fallon, but was placed on antibiotics a couple days later after it was observed with "acute lameness."

"Apparently what happened is the colt's two hind feet did develop abscesses and the pressure of that is what made the outer hoof area come off," Worley said. "It was the veterinarian's decision to

euthanize him."

Worley said it was speculation on the groups' part that the mare stayed down in the trailer on the ride to Fallon.

"They stop the truck at various times to make sure animals are on their feet," she said. "They make every effort to get horses back on their feet when they're down."

Worley said two horses have been euthanized and another horse died of a pre-existing condition at the roundup site.

Of six horses that have died at the Fallon facility, she said, five involved mares thought to have experienced difficulty making the transi-

tion to hay feed.

Another 20 to 25 horses at the facility are recovering after receiving treatment for various injuries or lameness.

Nearly 1,200 horses have been gathered from the Calico complex so far — about half of the mustangs the BLM plans to remove during the two-month roundup that began late December.

The government says the number of wild horses and burros on public lands in the West stands at nearly 37,000, about half of them in Nevada. It believes the number that can be supported on the range is about 26,600.