

Notes from the Office

With the arrival of spring, the foals begin to romp in the fields with their mothers and it is a happy site to behold. Horse owners are welcoming the new additions with anticipation of having bred a great horse or pony. At the same time new lives are introduced to us, there are many horses facing the end of their time here on earth. There are two aspects of our ownership of horses that we have reasonable control and responsibility over, one being the **breeding new equine lives** and the second being the **end of our horse's lives**. Emergencies notwithstanding, it is the responsibility of each and every horse owner no matter where they live, how many horses they own or where and how they house them to provide a humane end to their life.

Euthanasia is not an easy topic to discuss. The name in itself is derived from the Latin words "eu" meaning "good" and "thanatos" meaning death. However difficult it is to contemplate putting a horse down may be, this is a subject best planned for and discussed with family, vets and barn managers before the decision is made or must be made in an emergency. Take the time to decide what method of euthanasia you would prefer for your horse, how you will dispose of the carcass, and who will make the decision if you are unable to do so. Make sure that you and your vet have relationship that allows you to trust his/her opinion and have the horse put down when there is no other viable option.

Euthanasia options vary and not everyone agrees with the "best" way to euthanize a horse. The usual options available are:

Lethal Injection from a Veterinarian: Where the Veterinarian injects the heavily sedated horse with an overdose of a barbiturate anesthetic. The horse loses consciousness, goes to the ground and stops breathing. This can be done at the horse's home with no transport required.

Gunshot; A quick and painless method of euthanasia, but must be done by someone who very sure of this method to ensure it is done humanely and safely.

Captive Bolt; The captive bolt pistol discharges a blank rifle cartridge (no bullet) which drives the pistol like bolt forward. When placed on the skull of a horse, the bolt is projected forward and delivers a lethal blow to the brain. This method should only be used by an experience operator.

Transportation to an Abattoir; Owners can transport their own horse to an abattoir or have them shipped. The captive bolt method is used. Horses that cannot rise or stand unassisted not be loaded, transported or unloaded at an abattoir.

The options each may have valid reasons and definitely some options are unacceptable for some owners. In the end, it is the owner who must weigh the options and choose what is right for them, and humane for their horse. It is not illegal to put your horse down yourself using a safe, humane and painless method, however, this is not a viable method for the average horse owner. Additionally the discharge of firearms laws may vary throughout the province. *Please note, HCBC does not recommend one method over another. It is our mandate to educate our membership about Euthanasia.*

Disposal of the Carcass is a dilemma faced upon the death of the horse. After a humane death the disposal of a beloved horse's body can be a very difficult decision at best. Even though logically we know that the horse is gone, seeing the body taken away is distressing. Often your vet will be able to help arrange the collection of the carcass by a stock farm hauler, but be sure to find out before the horse is put down.

There are several options available for disposal, some can be quite expensive, and some are not viable or available in all areas of BC.

Burial; Where municipal zoning allows, owners with the sufficient amount of property and equipment can bury their horse. Care must be taken to bury the carcass deep enough not to attract scavenging animals, and avoid areas where it may affect the groundwater.

Composting; On farm composting is an option and must be done in accordance with bylaws for the area lived in.

Incineration/Cremation; This option is available in some areas but can be very costly. The cremation facility must meet standards that prove that they are using a high enough temperature to decrease emissions. Larger animals will likely have to be partially processed before using this option, due to their size.

Collection by a stock farm operator for rendering; The carcass is collected and taken to a facility where it is rendered for pet food or other uses. This is a very common method used in more populated areas of BC. Where the owner transports their own dead stock the carcass must not be viewable by the public and care taken to avoid any spillage of bodily fluids. The vehicle used should be disinfected afterwards.

Giving the carcass to a zoo or animal farm to use as feed *:(this is only viable when the horse has not been euthanized by lethal injection)* can be an option in some areas. You will need to contact the facility prior to trying to use this method of disposal. Not all zoos at all times are will to take the carcasses.

While the costs of carcass removal can be cost prohibitive, dumping of the carcass in a field, woods or garbage dump is normally against municipal bylaws, can possibly spread disease, attract wild animals and result in heavy fines.

Guilt and grief are very common emotions upon the death of a beloved horse. These feelings are normal and natural. The grieving process includes the realization of the reality of your loss,

accepting the loss and adjusting. Knowing that you have made an informed humane decision can help as well as knowing that you did the right thing for your horse.

BC residents may be facing an uncertain future with the downfall of the economy. It has become a harsh reality that many people can no longer afford to keep their horses. This does not make them bad owners. No one ever started out to own horses knowing how their finances will be in the future or anticipated the loss of income. When all options of sale, lease, retirement homes and giving the horse away fail, what now? A responsible owner must make the decision to do what is humane for the horse and the lifetime he has left.

For more information about Health and Welfare, burial and other related topics please go to the HCBC website <http://www.hcbc.ca/agind/health> or follow the links from the Agriculture and Industry section on the home page.

This it! The **BC Heritage Finals** are almost here. BC's Premiere General Performance show is more than a competition. Bring the whole family for a fun filled weekend:

- 1 2009 BC Heritage Finals **show program** and **entry form** now available on our website
- 2 **Battle of the Breeds** Contest details and registration are on the website and the prize list
- 3 Saturday evening demos include **West Coast Thunder Drill Team, Reining by Carl Webb, Barrel Racing by Natalie Giordano** and vaulting on horseback by **Cheam Vaulters**
- 4 Tickets now available for the **BBQ buffet Saturday night**, licensed mezzanine area to watch the show
- 5 **Open classes** are available this year including Driving, 55+, more Gymkhanas, Stock Seat Equitation, English Showmanship and more...
- 6 2010 venue booked for the IPE fairgrounds in Armstrong
- 7 Great prizes, relaxed atmosphere, fun for all horse enthusiasts!

A huge thank you goes out to all of our sponsors including our **Title Sponsor: Beez Country Barn** in Aldergrove and our **Official Partner Sponsor: Capri Insurance**

For more information contact Kelly at Horse Council BC at kellymackintosh@hcbc.ca or check out the website <http://www.hcbc.ca/competitions/bcheritage>

Advanced Notification Regarding Anabolic Steroids and Fluphenazine

The Equine Canada Equine Medication Control Committee (EMCC) is announcing the following medication control information.

Anabolic Steroids

As of June 1, 2009, drug testing of horses competing in Equine Canada sanctioned competitions will include testing for anabolic steroids.

A positive test for veterinary approved and non-veterinary approved steroids will be sanctioned as per the Equine Canada penalty tables and drug classification system as a Class III offence.

Information about the EMCC medication rules

<http://www.equinecanada.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=40&Itemid=281&lang=en-GB>

Fluphenazine Guideline and Warning

As of **June 1, 2009**, the drug testing method for horses competing in Equine Canada sanctioned competitions will allow for the detection of fluphenazine for at least 45 days from the date the drug is administered. It is the sole responsibility of the person responsible for the horse to ensure no fluphenazine is present and detected in the horse at Equine Canada sanctioned competitions.

Equine Canada members are responsible for keeping up to date on this information.

Attention Recreational Riders!

How can we make HCBC a more valuable resource for you, the recreational rider? Please contact our new **Recreation Coordinator, Ruth Donald**, at recreation@HCBC.ca or call at 604-856-4304 with your comments and suggestions.

We are very excited to introduce a new trails information section on the HCBC website at www.hcbc.ca/recreation/trails as a resource for recreational riders. Our goal is to identify and describe as many recreational equestrian trails in British Columbia as possible. The section is still under construction, but when it is completed, each trail will be described and pinpointed by GPS coordinates and a Google Earth marker, and include driving directions as well as a printable trail map. We will depend on you, the HCBC members and recreational riders, to help us keep the information up to date and accurate, so there is a form for you to send us comments about your own experiences on the trails. Photos will be welcome! Many thanks to retiring Recreation Coordinator Kym Slater, the Back Country Horsemen of B.C., and especially to Jack Breaks of the BCHBC Happy Trails (Aldergrove) chapter, for being instrumental in getting the trails database started.

Looking for a riding partner in your neighborhood? Question about a trail you're thinking of trying out? Got a space in your trailer for a day ride and looking for someone to help pay gas? Try posting a request on the Recreation Forum. It's there to help you to connect with other recreational riders.

Riding is its own reward, but if you'd like a little extra incentive to spend hours in the saddle, don't forget the HCBC Ride & Drive Rewards Program! Challenge yourself, or challenge a friend! Check out the Ride & Drive section on our website.

Welcome **Kim Robertson** to HCBC. Kim has taken over the **Marketing and Communications** portfolio at the HCBC office. She is an EC Certified Coach and brings a fresh outlook and great experience to the team.

Coaching dates: The Summer/Fall English Coaching and Instructor dates are set:

Instructor of Beginner's English: August 12, Langley

English Coach 1 Evaluation: September 23-24, Langley

English Coach 1 Exam: October 28-29, Langley

Western Coach 2 Final Assessment: July (date to be announced) Penticton

For information or application forms, please contact coaching@hcbc.ca

Coach candidates: please be sure to have your complete application into the HCBC office a minimum of 30 days prior to the evaluation date. Instructor Candidates: please be sure to have your applications into the HCBC office a minimum of 30 days prior to the exam date, which includes your 2 Lesson plans and your Emergency Action Plan.

2010 Summer Games Announcement!

We are very pleased to announce that the disciplines of **Vaulting and Para Dressage** will be added to the 2010 Summer Games. The Summer Games will be held in Langley, July 22-25, 2010. The addition of Vaulting and Para Dressage to the already accepted Jumper, Reining and Dressage will make the Games an even more exciting event. For more information on qualifying and competing at the Summer Games, contact competition@hcbc.ca or the HCBC website.

Announcing Horse Council BC's 1st Annual Industry Conference

An exceptional opportunity for learning! Mark your calendars as this Industry Conference will be well worth attending.

January 21st – 23rd, 2011

Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre
Kelowna, BC

Troubles with the HCBC forums? If you have registered and still cannot access our forums, most likely your registration was incorrect. Please be sure to use your first and last name as your user screen name. This is the number one reason why potential users have trouble with the HCBC forums. Incorrect registrations are deleted from the system. Business users may use their business names. Email any problems to forums@hcbc.ca

Don't forget to renew your membership

If you have not done so already, be sure to renew your HCBC membership today. You can call the office 1-800-345-8055, fax a registration form to 604-856-4302, mail a registration form to our office, renew online at www.hcbc.ca, or drop by the office during the week from 8:30 to 4:30. If you have membership questions, please contact membership@hcbc.ca or call the office and ask for Susan.