



Animal Welfare Institute

900 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20003

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National Academy Report Finds Serious Fault with BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Management Program

Washington, DC—The [Animal Welfare Institute](#) (AWI) welcomes a new report by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) that clearly indicates the need for a major overhaul in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) wild horse and burro management program. The report, entitled "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward," is the culmination of a 2-year independent scientific study by the NAS. [AWI contributed input](#) to the committee charged with conducting the study, and many of the report's recommendations mirror reforms long called for by AWI.

The report faults the BLM for its lack of transparency, and dismisses the unscientific and haphazard ways in which the BLM estimates populations of wild horses and determines carrying capacity on the range. The report lends credence to accusations by AWI and others that the BLM has been ignoring science and grossly mismanaging the wild equines, and further that the BLM pursues policies that favor corporate livestock grazing interests over the interests of the wild horses and burros—in direct contradiction to established federal law: the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971.

AWI strongly endorses, as it has for years, the NAS recommendation that immunocontraception be used as a principal tool to humanely reduce wild horse and burro population growth rates where and when necessary. The NAS identifies immunocontraception (i.e., Porzine Zona Pellucida and GonaCon) as a technology that is effective and immediately available for use on wild horses and burros. Currently, the BLM relies instead on an endless series of brutal and destabilizing roundups to remove horses it deems in excess of capacity.

"The NAS report should be a wake-up call to the BLM, as it clearly and comprehensively identified substantive flaws in the agency's management of wild horses and burros," says D.J. Schubert, AWI's wildlife biologist. "The BLM must fix these deficiencies in its management program to benefit wild horses and burros and the public by maximizing the management of wild horses and burros on the range, reducing if not eliminating roundups, and improving the transparency and accountability of its management efforts."

AWI will continue to analyze the NAS report and will work with Congress and the administration to ensure that immediate changes are made to the wild horse and burro management program.