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Special
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Sylvia Loch
on Finding Lightness

Discover Sidesaddle

Baroque Horse
Photo Gallery, p. 62

Plan a
Dressage
Exhibition

Work In-Hand
Through the
Levels, p. 66

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Wild Horses Are Protected From Slaughter

Mustangs have regained their once lost protection from slaughter. Last December's bill, which stripped wild horses and burros of 34 years of protection, has been repealed.

On May 19 of this year, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 249 to 159 to stop the slaughter of wild horses.

As the public learned that Mustangs were being sold for human consumption, officials immediately felt the outrage. **Nancy Perri**, vice president of government affairs for The Humane Society of the United States, recalls the effects. "We were inundated by e-mails, calls and letters about what an unnecessary tragedy it was that this symbol of American freedom and heritage was subjected to such treatment."

The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act was instituted as public law 92-195 in 1971 to protect Mustangs from being sold to slaughter houses. The controversy began in 2004 when **Sen. Conrad Burns** (R-Mont.) passed a bill allowing wild horses and burros over 10 years old, or those offered for adoption three or more times unsuccessfully, to be sold without limitation. This opened the door for the commercial sale of numerous

horses. Before the bill could be revoked, 41 Mustangs were slaughtered and 52 barely escaped death before they were rescued by the Ford Motor Company.

The Bureau of Land Management

Arnd Bronkhorst



Mustangs have regained protection from slaughter.

(BLM) has managed the wild Mustangs since the start of the protection. The BLM Adopt-A-Wild Horse program has placed many Mustangs into adoptive homes. Maintaining herd sizes is a concern for the BLM, with over 20,000 horses and burros in holding facilities that cost close to \$500 per animal per year. Over 8,000 of the horses and burros in these facilities fell into the category that allowed sale without limitation. Although safe for now, many of the same concerns still exist.

Many issues affecting all horses, including slaughter, were addressed at the Unwanted Horse Summit held by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) on April 19 in Washington, D.C. The Summit discussed "the factors that contribute to unwanted horses and the approaches to addressing these problems."

Although the elimination of horse slaughter is advocated by many people, the AAEP's position contends that slaughter is a humane alternative compared to other scenarios such as neglect.

Jennifer Williams, Ph.D., of the Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society spoke at the Summit about alternatives for people who

find they can no longer keep their horses. "Most people truly care about their horses, but when they face financial trouble or other problems, they don't know where to turn," she said. "These horses will often end up at an auction, then at a slaughter house." Williams believes that there are many options for unwanted horses. "People can contact rescue organizations, therapeutic riding programs, equine assisted psychotherapy programs, universities or camps. Their horses can live long and happy lives."—*Jessica Lawrence*

Showing on the Coast of Spain

What do 14 different countries, international riders, Spanish food and a plethora of friendly faces have in common? Southern Spain's Sunshine Tour! Located within Spain's beautiful Costa de la Luz, the Sunshine Tour (*Circuito del Sol*), takes place every March at Dehesa Montenmedio. The tour includes three weeks of international dressage competition and five weeks of jumping. This past year marks the seventh anniversary of the tour, and it continues to be a popular destina-

tion among competitors from many countries every spring. Amidst a beautiful setting, the tour creates a comradeship among the international community gathered there.

Dutch horses topped the charts overall in 2005. Stars were Great Britain's **Wayne Channon** and Lorenzo (by Ferro) and France's **Constance Menard-Laboute** on Lianca (by Tourist). Spanish horses carried Spain's rising stars: **Antonio Cid** on Bandido, **Borja Carrascosa** on Remigius, **Enrique Cruces** on Keops and **Jose Antonio Garcia Mena** on Osado. For more information, visit the Web site sunshinetour.net.—*Angeléa Kelly*