



PHHWV Dakota

Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc. (PHHWV) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to providing hope for equines through education, rehabilitation and advocacy.



PHHWV PURPOSES

- Assist horse owners through education, advice and support to rehabilitate their own horses.
- Rescue and rehabilitate any horse found abandoned, sick, injured, mistreated or neglected or likely to become so in the imminent future.
- Provide emergency care, treatment and assistance to horses.
- Educate the community on the plight of neglected horses.
- Contribute to the development of improved government legislation and policy to the welfare of horses.

COMMITTEE

Executive

Leigh Wren, President
Silvija Footner, Vice President
Karen Davies, Secretary
Mark Dean, Treasurer

Ordinary

Kristen Brehaut
Toni Harris
Tricia Hartshorn
Mandi Herauville
Lee Skiathitis
Angela Smith
Sandra Strongman

Contact us

Stay in touch

 1300 881 606

 0419 515 931

 info@phhwv.org.au

 GPO Box 1991
Melbourne VIC 3001

 phhwv.org.au

REG: A0027152D
ABN: 96 820 500 367

Follow us



President's report



Dear Members

As the year marches on, it continues to be a very busy time for Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria. There have been a number of horse reports requiring investigation and we have been able to offer assistance to horse owners in a variety of ways. There are a large number of horses in Short-Term Care that are undergoing rehabilitation and we hope we will be able to advertise them for a Long-Term Care home soon. Some of our Long-Term Carers have experienced a change in circumstances that has resulted in us needing to source new Long Term Care homes for the PHHWV horses and ponies that they lease.

In June, we conducted a Horse Rep Training Session in Mornington and another one was held in Ballarat in July. It was wonderful to sign up a number of new Horse Reps, as well as several new members. A big thanks to Lucy Clyde for presenting the sessions and to Mandi Herauville for organising them. Also, thanks to Alan Salter for hosting the Ballarat session. The next one is in Warragul on 15 August 2026 at Warragul Community College.

The Chinese Banquet was a great success and a full report is included in this newsletter. On Saturday, 1 August 2026 we held a morning tea at member Helen Ward's property to celebrate the Horses' Birthday. It was great to see so many members in attendance and we all enjoyed the spread – including PHHWV Gina Hanover who indulged in large slabs of carrot cake.

An education seminar by Kerry Marsh, Equine Mineral Analyst, will be held on 16 September 2026 from 6.30pm – 8.30pm at The Vic Hotel in Woodend. The event is open to the public and costs \$25 with all proceeds going to PHHWV.

Lastly, we are excited to announce that a date has been set for our 50th Anniversary Celebration and Book Launch. Invitations will be sent out by email, however in the meantime, please see more information in the Upcoming Events section of this newsletter.

As always, a big thank you to all our members for supporting us and the work we do to help horses in need.

Leigh Wren
President

WINTER
NEWSLETTER
2026

Contents

President's Report

Meet our Members

Member Notices

Events

Merchandise

Looking for a Home

Horse Reports

Horses Farewelled





MEET OUR MEMBERS

Rachel

I first became aware of PHHWV in the early 1970s when I was a child. My mother took on an old milk cart Clydesdale from a dairy in Box Hill through a friend who was with PHHWV.

I joined in my mid 30s as a member and then also became a Horse Rep.

Horses have been a constant in my life and I was always paid to work with them. When I purchased my own property, I had the room to be able to offer a safe place for some of the many that were not looked after as they should have been.

I live in the south-east of Victoria and mostly concentrate on reports in my local area. I have been involved in many cases from horses dumped on properties, underweight and foundered horses and overbreeding/hoarding of horses.

They are all different breeds and the most common problem I come across is unhandled horses. Rescues are time consuming and need a well thought through plan with committee to ensure all members and horses are safely protected through what can be a complicated process.

The horses and ponies I have had time with have found so many perfect homes. I feel so lucky that I get to know them and then see that they are happy and healthy in committed homes.

It has been a never-ending learning process and PHHWV has advanced with the times. I would like to thank the members and the committee for their ongoing commitment and values in giving the organisation the foundation to continue for another 50 years.

Congratulations PHHWV!





MEMBER NOTICES

We need your help!!

We are creating a **2027 Wall Calendar** and would love to feature some pictures of our wonderful PHHWV long term care horses and ponies.

If you have some favourite good quality photos of your PHHWV horse or pony, please send them to info@phhvv.org.au **BEFORE 31 August 2026** for a chance to be an exciting part of our upcoming pin-up crew.

We are always looking for fabulous high-resolution pictures of our horses and ponies for other publications like our Newsletters, Annual Reports and promotional brochures, so there are other opportunities to showcase your favourite equine. We look forward to receiving plenty of submissions. You never know, you could be one of our lucky ones.



Save the Date!!

50th Anniversary Celebration & Book Launch

When: Saturday, 10 October 2026

Time: 12.30pm – 5.00pm

Where: Paramoor Winery, Carlsruhe

See more details in the

UPCOMING EVENTS SECTION



EVENTS



Chinese Banquet Fundraiser - 19 June 2026

Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria's 50th anniversary year is also the Year of the Fire Horse in the Chinese zodiac. To celebrate, we held a Banquet at Ming Dining in Melbourne on 19 June 2026. The event was attended by 50 people, comprising both members and non-members, with many from the legal profession. Guests were able to socialise over a delicious seven course meal accompanied by premium wine.

Our guest speaker, Ms Ya-wen Tsao, captivated the audience with her engaging, entertaining and informative presentation on the symbolism of horses in Chinese culture. She explained that the horse represents endurance, freedom, loyalty and spirit. Historically, horses carried people across battlefields, over mountains and long journeys. They symbolised perseverance — the ability to keep moving forward despite difficulty. There is a Chinese phrase: “千里馬” — the “thousand-mile horse.” It refers to an exceptional horse capable of travelling enormous distances with resilience and spirit. But the thousand-mile horse is only half the story. There is another important figure called “伯樂” — Bole — a legendary person famous for recognising exceptional horses. There is an old Chinese saying: “世有伯樂，然後有千里馬” — “Only when there is a Bole can the thousand-mile horse truly be found.” Over time, 伯樂 became a symbol for mentors, teachers, and people who recognise potential in others before the rest of the world does. This resonates with the foundation upon which Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria was built — the relationship between horse and human, as depicted by our logo.

Committee members Lee Skiathitis and Mandi Herauville put together an exclusive range of limited edition 50th anniversary merchandise, which proved popular with attendees as evidenced by the high number of sales.

Thanks to the generosity of members Anita Mackiewicz, Fiona Clarke, Tricia Hartshorn and Sue Smith, as well as Goddess and Horse and Paramoor Winery, there was a dazzling array included in the Galabid online auction. All the items were on display for inspection and incited many eager bidders

by combining the thrill of competition and community momentum. This energy resulted in a fabulous fundraising effort for our cause.

To spice things up, PHHWV President Leigh Wren donated a bottle of 1981 Grange Hermitage wine, which enabled Patrick Bonello to demonstrate his dynamic and charismatic auctioneering skills. He encouraged crowd participation, creating an energetic atmosphere where the excitement was contagious. It was down to Zoe and Jock, both determined to out-bid the other, when suddenly as the competition intensified and adrenaline ran high, in swooped Simon with the winning bid.

Overall, an incredibly successful event which raised significant funds to assist with veterinary, farrier and feed expenses for horses that have come into PHHWV care. Thank you to all involved.





HORSES' Birthday

MEMBERS MORNING TEA

SATURDAY 1 AUGUST 2026

Wow!!!



We were privileged to have this event for members hosted by another wonderful member whose beautiful property was a joy to attend.

What an amazing horses' birthday.

Thank you all so much.

Those who were able to attend.

Those who sent us messages of support.

And to those who travelled so far!

Thank you all from the bottom of our heart.

Our members are our heart and soul.

We are you and you are us – thank you again!

Happy horses' birthday



Enjoy the photos including PHHWV Gina Hanover



EVENTS



Upcoming Events

50th Anniversary Celebration & Book Launch

Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria is holding a celebration luncheon to showcase the wonderful work of the organisation and the achievements over their 50-year history. We will also launch the 50th anniversary book at the event! A wonderful opportunity to enjoy delicious food and excellent wine, socialise with members, meet PHHWV horses and ponies, get your copy of the 50th book, purchase special 50th anniversary merchandise and more! Stay tuned for your invitation.

Date: **Saturday, 10 October 2026**
Time: 12.30pm – 5.00pm
Venue: Paramoor Winery
439 Three Chain Road
Carlsruhe VIC 3442
Cost: FREE for Members
\$50 for Non-Members
(or join beforehand and come for free)



Would your PHHWV horse like to come to the party?

We are looking for Project Hope Horse Welfare horses to be a part of our upcoming 50th year celebration event! We need 4 lovely happy gorgeous horses or ponies to help showcase our good cause. The venue has equine facilities available with yards, water trough and float parking, so horses will be safe whilst we all enjoy the festivities.

What we require:

- Very quiet Pony or Horse, used to lots of people, and new surroundings
- Happy to be touched
- Friendly, meaning no bite, kick, or bad behaviour
- Has no problem being in a yard for a few hours
- Is not anxious or herd bound, and is generally no fuss
- Horse or Pony who loves snacks and cuddles

What we need from you:

- Transport your horse or pony to and from the event
- A backstory on the horse or pony, and how they came to you to be in your care
- What life looks like now for your PHHWV horse or pony
- A short spiel on how having a Project Hope equine has changed your life

Members who bring a horse will be reimbursed for travel expenses. For those travelling a distance, overnight accommodation for your horse is available at a member's property very close to the winery.

If we receive more than 4 nominations, horses names will be drawn from a hat and all nominated members notified.

This is open to ALL Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria horses and ponies.

To nominate your horse or pony, or if you would like any further information, please email Kathryn@phhwv.org.au.

Nominations close on **1 September 2026**





EVENTS

Upcoming Events

Gippsland Horse Representative Training

Date: Saturday, 15 August 2026
Time: 10.00am – 2.00pm
Venue: Warragul Community College
71 Korumburra-Warragul Road
Warragul VIC 3820

Kerry Marsh BAgSc, DipAgr (Organic Farming) – Equine Minerals Analyst Seminar - Feeding your horse for health, performance & wellbeing: The impacts of nutrition & environment

Date: Wednesday, 16 September 2026
Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Venue: Victoria Hotel
67 High Street
Woodend VIC 3442
RSVP: Friday, 11 September 2026

Tickets: \$25 each
All proceeds to PHHWV
Dinner and drinks available at bar prices
Please order meals before 6.00pm

BOOK HERE:
<http://www.trybooking.com/DNQIM>



Yarra Valley Horse Representative Training

Date: Saturday, 24 October 2026
Time: 10.00am – 2.00pm
Venue: Yarra Ranges Lawyers
16 Winyard Drive
Mooroolbark VIC 3138



EVENTS



Upcoming Events

Bairnsdale Show

Date: Saturday, 7 November 2026
Time: 9.00am – 4.00pm
Venue: Bairnsdale Racing Club
75 Racecourse Road
Bairnsdale VIC 3875

East Gippsland Members' Social Event – Afternoon Tea

Date: Saturday, 7 November 2026
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: At the Bairnsdale Show

Heathcote Horse Representative Training

Date: Saturday, 28 November 2026
Time: 10.00am – 2.00pm
Venue: The Barn Heathcote
55 Wilson Road
Heathcote VIC 3523

PHHWV Members' Christmas Lunch

Join us for our end of year wrap up and Christmas lunch.

Date: December – Date to be confirmed
Venue: To be advised

We'd Love Your Help!

Every event we hold relies on volunteers who are willing to lend a hand—welcoming visitors, setting up displays, talking to the public or simply sharing their enthusiasm for horse welfare.

If you would like to volunteer at any event, attend a training session or simply learn more about what we do, we'd love to hear from you.

Please email:

mandi@phhvw.org.au or info@phhvw.org.au

Thank you for being part of Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria.

We look forward to hearing from you.



MERCHANDISE



PROJECT HOPE HORSE WELFARE VICTORIA

Official Merchandise



Holographic sticker 18x6.5mm
\$2.00 each (Plain white also available)



50th Logo Cotton Business socks 1 size
Light grey, dark grey, black
\$7.00 per pair



A5 sized notepad 50 sheets
White or Lilac
\$4.00 each



Holographic sticker 6.5x6.5mm
\$1.50 each

(Plain white also available)



7cm Dia hanging Christmas Ornament with
PHHWV logo on back
Purple, Blue, Green
\$5.00 each



Keyring
\$6.00 each



Zipper pouch 21mmx12mm
White, grey, black
\$4.00 each



Pack of 4 Christmas cards A6 size with envelopes
Featuring 4 different LTC horses
\$10 each

Contact Mandi for sales
Mandi@phhwv.com.au
Please specify colours in your
order



Help us in supporting our horses that need a helping hand





HORSES LOOKING FOR A HOME

PHHWV Spook: A Shared Story of Hope

Spook was reported to Project Hope by the owner of the neighbouring property in March 2026. He was located on a property in Eastern Victoria. The concerned neighbour had witnessed both kindness and, as time went by, some "awful things" on the property. As you will read in her story, she was incredibly relieved when Project Hope stepped in to assist.

Spook's reporter was so impressed with our work that she has since applied to become a member of Project Hope.

The property and horses had been known to us for some time, and we had been monitoring their welfare since early in the year. Eventually, the property became part of a deceased estate and, fortunately, the executor granted us access and surrendered the ponies to Project Hope, along with one sheep, who has since been happily rehomed with other sheep.

There was a total of 13 horses on the property, and Spook was one of them. A lovely-natured little stallion, his tail was matted with barbed wire and he desperately needed some love and care.

These are the stories of Spook's journey with Project Hope so far...

Horse Reporter

I met the pony's owner when we moved in next door to a property that they owned. They lived on a larger property further down the road but kept horses on the block beside us.

We became friends, and I admired their strength and determination to sort things out whenever they weren't right. I kept an eye on the horses for them and let them know if anything was amiss. As I fed my own horses twice a day, it was easy to look across the paddocks and check on them all. Whenever foals were born, I would send them a message to let them know. All of the horses associated with this rescue by Project Hope were born there, apart from the lovely Arabian, who had been purchased.

As the years went on, the horses' owner moved away, so the care of the horses was left to their partner. They was busy with work, so I continued to keep an eye on them. When one pony needed to be confined and fed hay every day, I went over daily to care for him. He was confined for a long time, so we got to know each other well. He was a sweet little miniature Shetland who I would have happily sneaked across to my side of the fence—had he not been a stallion.

Sadly, there was a very bad outcome for him, and it broke my heart because I believe it could have been avoided. When the owner sadly passed away, I was terrified the remaining horses would suffer the same fate.

I was contacted by her Power of Attorney and had the opportunity to share my concerns for the horses. I asked if it would be okay for me to contact Project Hope, and he said yes. I am incredibly grateful to him and to Project Hope for giving all these lovely souls a new and safe life.

Angela (PHHWV Horse Representative)

I attended a report involving multiple neglected ponies. Their owner had been unwell and had since passed away, and over the years this had left the horses receiving very poor care. There were skittish, frightened mares in one paddock, alongside the sweetest little Australian Pony stallion named Spook.

Rachel and I were able to administer a worming paste and carefully remove the blackberry prickles tangled through his mane before removing him from the property. He floated beautifully and must have been well trained and handled earlier in his life.

This perfect little gentleman now has the opportunity to enjoy life thanks to his short-term carer, Mary, Project Hope, and the many volunteers who have helped him along the way. He will make someone a truly handsome addition to their paddock.





HORSES LOOKING FOR A HOME

PHHWV Spook: A Shared Story of Hope

Rachel (Surrender Coordinator)

My first sight of Spook was him running up and down the fence line in distress, worried that the mares in the next paddock would leave his sight.

It was a very hot day, and he was dehydrated, which was concerning. We gave him some water and, surprisingly, he settled down quickly and was quite happy to be checked over and handled. He was badly sunburnt, scared, dehydrated, underweight, and living in a very dangerous environment.

Despite everything, he was happy to be led and loaded onto the float without any fuss for transport.

Mary (Short-Term Carer)

Spook has been with me for approx. five months, arriving on 11 March in the capable hands of Rachel.

He was a little guy with heaps of presence and personality right from the outset. The barbed-wire horror wrapped around his tail was cut away within minutes of him being unloaded—a clear sign of the neglect he had endured. Since then, I have concentrated on his nutrition, handling, and overall happiness.

He is highly social, not just with other horses but with any humans nearby.

Like most stallions, he "reads" messages left in manure—even his own! So he happily follows me around the paddock while I collect his droppings for my garden. He may be Spook in the Project Hope records, but to those of us who know and love him, he is simply Pookie—a sweet, energetic little fellow with a huge personality.

His recent dental work means that the food he used to drop, especially carrots, no longer ends up feeding my dog. He is quite accustomed to Tia standing under his nose while he enjoys his carrots and happily tucks into his Gumnut mash.

Mandi (Support Person)

Since then, another Project Hope volunteer has transported Spook for his dental and surgical examinations and treatment. Everything went well, and we are incredibly grateful for our wonderful network of volunteers, as well as members of the public like the case reporter, whose care and compassion helped make this rescue possible and who give their time and care so freely.

Would you like to be part of Spook's journey? He is looking for his Long-Term carer. The continued support of our members and community will write the next chapter for this loving little pony.



PHHWV Spook

20yo 11hh Grey Australian Pony stallion

He is very friendly and curious.

He is easy to catch, halter, lead, tie up and floats well.

He is suitable to be around children, can be touched all over and all four feet can be picked up, but it is preferable to home him with an experienced handler.

If you would like to give a loving home to this friendly little pony, please submit your expression of interest to info@phhwv.org.au



HORSES LOOKING FOR A HOME



PHHWV Kelly

Horse Report Coordinator Jen was rather taken aback when the 16hh Thoroughbred she was checking on turned out to be a 14hh Welsh pony. However, what PHHWV Kelly lacks in height she makes up for in personality! Sassy little mare, all ears and 'tude! Despite all the bravado, we see that she is a special little mare. She reminds me very much of PHHWV Sapphire. Ears back with a look of defiance if you invade her space.

We were looking for a short term care home and I had my friend Marieke in mind, but she had lost her beautiful Arab mare only a month before after 19 years together and was grieving. I was a bit hesitant but knew this would be a perfect pairing. Marieke jumped at the opportunity to take on Kelly and called it a 'spirited gift'.

Two months on Kelly is coming along brilliantly under Marieke's tutelage. She's lost none of her sassiness but is a quick and eager learner and once the head collar is on, she knows it's time for work. Marieke's no-nonsense approach is exactly what Kelly needs and responds extremely well to this. She still has a tendency to flick her ears back but Marieke simply ignores this and she said it never develops into bad behaviour. As you can see from the photographs, she needs no encouragement to get onto the ramp. Marieke runs her own operation, Kunami Park Equine Handling, which teaches young children how to do ground work with horses. Kelly works with the children and behaves perfectly.

We believe Kelly has already been under saddle, but Marieke is taking her back to basics in preparation for a new long term home. Kelly shares a paddock with a yearling and is already showing signs of being a worthy matriarch by disciplining him if he steps out of line – not bad for a five year old. Kelly's training is continuing, but if you are interested in offering Kelly a long term care home, please get in touch with us at info@phhwv.org.au.

By Trish Hartshorn



HORSES LOOKING FOR A HOME



PHHWV Tucson is a 15.1hh, 20yo (approx) Chestnut & White Paint Mare.

Her carer will need to be experienced in managing laminitic prone horses and understand the value of minerals in the diet.

She is a quiet mare that can be a little bossy in the paddock but she is a great companion mare and would do well as a nanny bringing up young horses. Tucson has had issues with her feet but with the correct diet, patient handling and regular corrective hoof trimming, she has improved immensely. She still needs gentle training with her hind feet but is getting there. She leads well and can be tied up. She is up to date with dental, microchipping and vaccinations.

We have recent x-rays on file and she has been cleared of insulin issues and Equine Cushings.



PHHWV Mocca is a 15.3hh, 10yo brown Thoroughbred mare (never raced). She is a sweet, inquisitive girl who enjoys observing the world around her and thrives in a relaxed environment. She is excellent with other horses and integrates easily into a herd, showing a calm and settled nature in the paddock. She does not become anxious when companions are taken away, making her a reliable and low-stress addition to any property. She is also fantastic with dogs, taking everything in her stride.

This mare would make an exceptional companion horse thanks to her steady temperament and easygoing attitude. She takes a little time to warm up to new people, but once she trusts you, she forms a quiet and genuine bond. A true “good doer,” she holds her condition well now she has hit her healthy weight.

PHHWV Tapiki is a gentle 16.1hh, 18yo brown Thoroughbred mare. She has received all necessary veterinary treatment, dental care, and hoof work, and is now comfortable and healthy. PHHWV Tapiki gets on well with people and all her paddock friends both mares and geldings. A very gentle soul, following retirement from racing, PHHWV Tapiki had several foals. She is looking for a long-term home to settle into and will reward her carers with love and devotion.



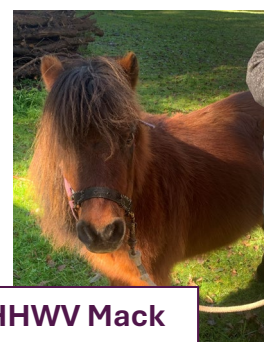
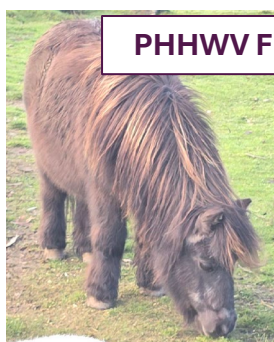
PHHWV Fuzzy & PHHWV Mack

MUST BE HOMED TOGETHER

Fuzzy (18-20yo) 8.2hh Black/Brown Miniature Shetland Gelding

Mack (12-15yo) 8.3hh Bay Miniature Shetland Gelding

These two little fellas are up to date with their dental treatments, microchipping, vaccinations and farrier work. They stood well for the farrier and to have their needles. Both can be haltered and tied up, and Mack is learning patience on the tie up. He is also the cheekier of the pair, but they are both “cuteness overload”.





HORSE REPORTS

Summary to date

Key Statistics:

Reports Received: 14

Horses Involved: 40

Outcomes:

- Cases Actioned – 2
- Assistance Provided (advice, member help, financial) – 10
- Horses PTS (euthanised) due to age and poor condition – 2
- Horses Surrendered – 3
- Referred to RSPCA – 1
- Referred to Racing Victoria – 0
- Declined Assistance – 0
- Provided Information – 2

Reports by Shire Location:

Ballarat Shire
City of Kingston
East Gippsland
Greater Bendigo
Horsham Rural
Loddon
Macedon Ranges
Melton
Mitchell
Mornington Peninsula

Please contact us with any concerns that you discover about the welfare of horses and ponies. Our trained members follow up the reports, visit the property to talk to the owners, look at the horses and check their surrounds.

PHHWV Representatives look for signs of a horse not thriving including inspecting the paddock for safety, checking on a horse's condition and ensuring there is access to water and shelter.

We have no power to help unless owners are cooperative. Some horse owners lack the knowledge or means required to have a horse. When we look at the horse with them, we share our knowledge and experience to improve a horse's health.

When a horse is at serious risk, we ask for permission to rescue the horse. If surrender is refused, we contact RSPCA Vic. as they have the authority to remove a horse.

If you are concerned about a horse, please contact us on
1300 881 606 or report online here:

<https://www.phhwv.org.au/education-and-health/report-neglect-or-abuse/>



HORSES FAREWELLED

Since our last newsletter, we have said good-bye to the following Project Hope horses:

Gandalf, Scarlett and Red II (Pugsley)

We send our heartfelt wishes to their rescuers and carers. RIP.



PHHWV Gandalf



PHHWV Scarlett



PHHWV Red II (Pugsley)





CONFLICT IN A HERD

An article by GROW HorsemanSHIP

'They always get beat up.'

'They're too aggressive to live with other horses.'

'The horses are always covered in wounds, so I can't risk it.'

I hear variations of this every single time I talk about horses being social animals.

Conflict within a herd is not the norm. A healthy herd shouldn't have horses routinely coming in with bleeding wounds, significant swelling, or repeated injuries. Some superficial nip marks on the occasional scrape can happen but the number of people who talk about horses constantly injuring one another as though that's simply 'normal herd behaviour' or what happens when horses are kept together is concerning.

In reality, healthy herds spend much of their time engaging in affiliative behaviours. They choose to rest together, groom one another, move as a group and maintain preferred social relationships. Conflict can occur, but persistent aggression and repeated injuries shouldn't be the expectation.

If your horses are constantly getting hurt, something needs to be investigated.

INTEGRATION:

Horses need to be integrated correctly. I have written articles on this topic and developed many successful integration plans for clients. You do not throw a new horse into a herd and hope for the best, especially when you don't know the herd, don't know how they will react, and cannot safely intervene if needed.

I know people who successfully use this approach, but it requires a very stable herd, thoughtful management, and a good understanding of the individual horses. It isn't the right approach for every situation. Proper herd integration needs to be thought out. Standing in the field with a whip and intervening once conflict escalates into actual fighting is a little too late.

FOOD SOURCES:

If you only have one round bale in the field, you're setting your horses up for an argument. My professional preference is one feeding location per horse, plus one additional feeding location for

every three horses added to the herd. That's my minimum, especially when integrating new horses or managing a socially unstable herd. Having ENOUGH hay IS NOT the same as every horse having ACCESS to hay. If you take anything away from this post, this matters A LOT.

SPACE & DESIGN:

Horses need enough space to avoid conflict, but it's not just about acreage. They need to be able to move away from another horse while still accessing food, water, shelter and other important resources. The layout matters too. Narrow gates, dead ends, single entry shelters, and resources placed in sharp corners can create bottlenecks that force horses into conflict. A horse can't avoid conflict if the environment repeatedly funnels them back into it.

WHEN THINGS CHANGE:

If conflict suddenly appears in a herd that was previously stable, pay attention. In my experience, when significant conflict shows up 'out of nowhere', there's often an underlying cause. Consider pain, lameness, illness, hormonal changes, changes in herd dynamics, resource availability, or environmental changes. A bite that bleeds, unexplained swelling, any kicks, or a horse suddenly being driven away from resources in information that needs to be investigated immediately. One injury may be an accident. A pattern deserves immediate investigation.

.....

Too often, the conclusion is simply:

'My horse just can't live with other horses.'

Sometimes that's true but often the problem isn't the horse. It's the way the herd has been managed. Social contact is a FUNDAMENTAL behavioural need. I think it should be much harder for us to accept lifelong social isolation as the solution to herd conflict without first making a serious effort to understand why group living is failing for that horse and whether there are management changes that could allow them to safely live with other horses.

Printed with permission from GROW HorsemanSHIP, Caledon East, Ontario, Canada





PHHWV Maggie May

