

RECENT RESCUE REPORT *by a Save Equus Foster Carer*

Mimi is our current foster care horse and she has been with us for 6 months. She is a rising 3 year old Standard Bred. Her impoverished start in life has meant she has been very slow to develop physically and she has also had very limited experience. Her living environment was mainly a sand pen, so she was much like a foal in her behaviour and interactions rather than a rising 3 year old. She lacked confidence and at times was fearful of new things. She did not trust anyone, and did not know or understand what we wanted her to do.

Mimi's life with us over the past 6 months has required her to slip into the routine we have for our other horses. She grazes grass in a paddock from 6am to 5pm. Initially we gave her hay in the paddock to boost her body condition, but we have cut that out now as we don't want her to overdo the weight gain. After receiving advice we limited Mimi's physical activity for nearly 3 months, as malnourished joints and tendons require time and good nutrition before they bear the burden of normal horseplay and activity. Mimi comes in at night to a shelter and sand pen. She has a morning and night hard feed of oat and Lucerne chaff, bran, Wesfeeds Equimix, and a mix of supplements in each feed of salt, garlic, celery seeds, rosehips, kelp, dolomite, magnesite as well as humavite tonic. She has a biscuit and a half of oaten hay later at night. We rug her the same as we rug our other horses. Save Equus has provided her with cotton, a combo shell for the rain and a night rug and neck rug for those cold nights.

After some time on her own in the paddock – a precautionary quarantine period – we paired her with our 33 years "young" mare, Lady, who has shown Mimi the ropes. Lady has gently taught Mimi some manners and horse etiquette.

Save Equus volunteers have visited a number of times to work Mimi through some ground lessons – the natural horsemanship approach. She started off very tentative and wary but after the second lesson she "got it" and from then on learned very fast. Save Equus volunteers marvelled at how quickly she picked up each new lesson.



Mimi is now comfortable with her environment. She is still wary, but not afraid of anything or anyone new. She expects a gentle and considerate hand and responds in kind, she does not flinch away in fear of the rough handling she learned to expect. She listens when we tell her to do something. I believe she trusts us. It is the most rewarding part of being a Save Equus foster carer, to see the transformation from a horse closed off and distant from people to one that seeks a scratch when being rugged and who willingly walks up to your call in the paddock.

Mimi has now developed to a stage where she is ready for a new home and an owner of her own. She is ready to be trained to saddle and be a riding horse, to take on new challenges and handle them well. Whatever the Save Equus Committee decides will be the next step for Mimi, she will always have a soft landing with us, that is, if she ever needs it again.



Mimi – before



..... and after

HOW SKINNY IS TOO SKINNY?

THE WELFARE WORK OF SAVE EQUUS

Save Equus regularly receives calls direct from members and the public about horses of concern. We work cooperatively with the RSPCA and once we have identified that the horse reported to us appears to be neglected or being treated cruelly, we liaise with inspectors. We work to follow up and make sure the concerns raised with us are addressed.

A very important indicator to us of a horse's physical condition and general welfare is its weight, so gauging a horse's weight to reflect its condition is an important part of Save Equus's initial assessment of a horse. The following body score rating system, created in Victoria by Patricia Ellis (Attwood) of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, is the system used by Save Equus. This system helps us communicate about the condition of the horse.

We would like to advise members of this system. We have also posted it on our Web Site for ready access, so that if you ever have the need to call us about a horse you are concerned about, you will be able to describe the horse's condition to us more effectively.

An important thing to note when reading this body score rating system is to take account of the horse's activity level. This information is noted in the body score rating system.

We do not recommend members go out assessing horses with this body score rating system – that is our job and we have trained our volunteers to do this. What we would appreciate is that if you are talking with us about a horse you are concerned about, you tell us about the horse's neck, back and ribs and pelvis as per the body score rating system, so we get a better idea (first up), through your description, of the condition of the horse.

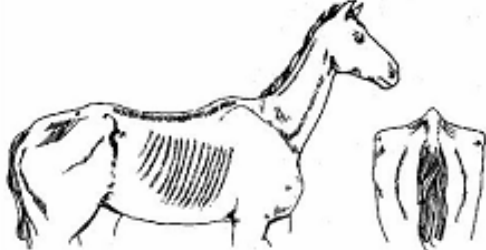

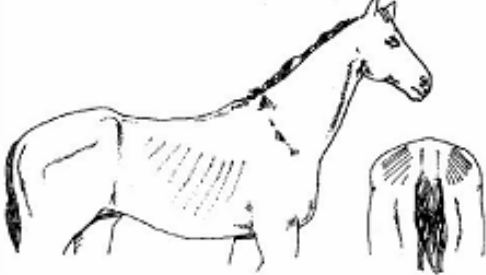
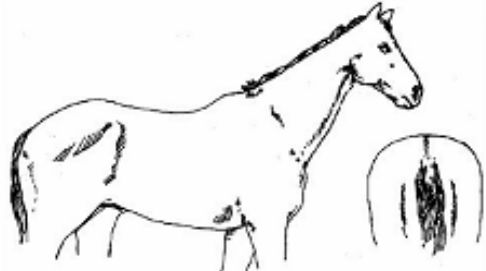


Methods of estimation

1. Assess visually and by feel, the horse's pelvis and rump, back and ribs and neck.
2. Give those areas individual scores using a scale of 0 (very poor) to 5 (very fat).
3. Intermediate assessments can be given half scores.
4. Using the pelvic and rump assessment as the base, adjust that score by a half point if it differs by one or more points from the score for the neck or ribs.
5. Height measurement should be performed on level ground when the horse is relaxed and standing squarely. Use the highest point of the withers as the measuring site. Allowance should be made for shoes.

Body condition scoring system

Score	Neck	Back and ribs	Pelvis
0 Very poor	Marked ewe neck. Narrow and slack at base.	Skin tight over ribs. Spinous processes sharp and easily seen.	Angular pelvis - skin tight. Deep cavity under tail and either side of croup.
1 Poor	Ewe neck. Narrow and slack at base.	Ribs easily visible. Skin sunken either side of backbone. Spinous processes well defined	Rump sunken, but skin supple. Pelvis and croup well defined Deep depression under tail.
2 Moderate	Narrow but firm	Ribs just visible Backbone well covered Spinous processes felt	Rump flat either side of backbone. Croup well defined, some fat. Slight cavity under tail
3 Good	No crest (except stallions) Firm neck	Ribs just covered No gutter along the back. Spinous processes covered but can be felt	Covered by fat and rounded. No gutter. Pelvis easily felt
4 Fat	Slight crest	Ribs well covered – need firm pressure to feel Gutter along backbone.	Gutter to root of tail. Pelvis covered by soft fat – felt only with firm pressure
5 Very fat	Marked crest Very wide and firm. Folds of fat.	Ribs buried - cannot feel. Deep gutter Back broad and flat.	Deep gutter to root of tail. Skin distended. Pelvis buried – cannot feel

Body condition scoring system (cont'd)

<p>0 Very poor</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very sunken rump • Deep cavity under tail • Skin tight over bones • Very prominent backbone and pelvis • Marked ewe neck
<p>1 Poor</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunken rump • Cavity under tail • Ribs easily visible • Prominent backbone and croup • Ewe neck – narrow and slack
<p>2 Moderate</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat rump either side of backbone • Ribs just visible • Narrow but firm neck • Backbone well covered
<p>3 Good</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rounded rump • Ribs just covered but easily felt • No crest, firm neck
<p>4 Fat</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rump well rounded • Gutter along back • Ribs and pelvis hard to feel • Slight crest
<p>5 Very fat</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very bulging rump • Deep gutter along back • Ribs buried • Marked crest • Folds and lumps of fat

Typical body score conditions of various classes of horses

Endurance horses	1.5 – 2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing body condition to fall below a score of 1.5 is likely to compromise a horse's welfare. • During winter, a long heavy hair coat complicates visual appraisal. You need to run your hands over the horse to get an accurate score. • Poor body condition is not always due to lack of feed but could be related to parasite infestations, poor dental health, chronic injury or illness or lack of mobility affecting the horse's ability to forage.
Polo ponies	2.0 – 2.5	
Standardbred racehorses	2.0 – 3.0	
Thoroughbred racehorses	2.5 – 4.0	
Equestrian horses	3.0 – 4.0	
Show horses	>4.0	
Broodmares	2.5 – 4.0	

LUCKY LUKAS!

A True Story by Paula Lavender

On March 25 2007, at 2.30am, my husband Patrick, myself and our two dogs were sleeping soundly when suddenly all hell broke loose. A car was parked at the bottom of our drive, the headlights were shining directly into our bedroom, the dogs were barking it was chaos! Patrick jumped out of bed and quickly put on his jeans, as somebody knocked on our door. Patrick was not amused and, as our bedroom windows were open, he demanded to know who it was. 'It's the Police' said a voice. 'Oh,' said Patrick, 'What can I do for you officer?'

There were two policemen and they explained that there had been an accident on the South West Highway involving two horses which had escaped a paddock somewhere in the vicinity. Unfortunately one of the horses had collided with a vehicle and had been badly hurt, which resulted in the horse being destroyed. The lucky driver walked away from the scene, but his car was a write-off. The other horse had run away in terror and, believe it or not, ran straight into my garden. The police had closed our gate and asked if they could leave the horse on our property until the morning. They said he was very skittish and probably hurt, but they couldn't get near him.

When I explained that I belong to a horse rescue group the policemen were amazed and, in fact, one of the officers remarked, 'Well you wouldn't read about it!'

I offered to move the horse the following morning to a safe place and said I would advise them of the horse's condition, etc, and his whereabouts. The officers were very grateful for this help and went on their way. As soon as the officers left, I went to check on this stranger in my garden. I found him standing under one of our trees, so I gave him some carrots and water and left him till daylight.

Next morning, bright and early, I rang Julie Archibald and gave her the run-down, and she arrived at my place within 45 minutes with a nice bag of hay and her float in tow. We were able to halter this little horse straight away and loaded him with no problems. We took him to Julie's property and gave him a nice feed and were able to assess his injuries. Fortunately they were superficial, so we just cleaned him up and put him in a paddock.

The following week we did some investigating and found out his history. He is a Standard Bred, and only 6 years old. His last race had been two weeks prior to the accident and he did not do well. The owners had sent him up from the country to be destroyed, although there was nothing really wrong with him. For the following 8 weeks Julie and I cared for LUKAS (his new name) together, promising him that nothing bad was going to happen and he will be safe, and finally in the seventh week I received papers from the Shire handing ownership over to me.

So, what do we make of all this? I was certainly not looking for a horse. I am 54 years old, for Heaven's sake, and I thought my horsey days were over but Lukas found me. I had mixed emotions, not really sure what I should do, but neither myself or Julie were going to let him be destroyed. Lukas had run past 18 open gates on my estate – why did he choose to come into mine??

During those first two weeks I had so much support from Save Equus members, it was amazing. Lukas has had two Bowen therapies donated by Karen Lucas, Bush Flower Essences to help with his trauma donated by Carol Eves, a hoof trim donated by Russell Blakely and, of course, a wonderful place to stay donated by Julie Archibald.

Well, we all love a happy ending don't we and this story does have one. Lukas is my little man and when my daughter, Jayne Lavender, gets back from her UK travels in October we will start re-training him so I can eventually do that bush ride. Lukas is currently spelling for the winter with seven other horses on 100 acres in Mardella and seems very happy. I visit at least three times a week and give him a nice feed, already he comes when he sees me so we are beginning to develop a special bond.

So you see, the horses are definitely hearing about Save Equus members and, much to my surprise, they seem to have our addresses too!!

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Paula's rescue of Lukas is a wonderful thing and demonstrates the dedication and commitment that Paula has to the welfare of our equine friends. As you will all know, Paula created the gift cards and the 'Horseanalties' trade mark as a method of assisting Save Equus to do our work. She donates a percentage of her income from the cards every month and it is a great testament to her will to help others.

I applaud and congratulate Paula on a job so very well done.

Frank Smith
PRESIDENT