



Wildwood Farm CLIPS & CLOPS Oak Harbor

August 2026

YOUR NEIGH-BORHOOD HULLABALOO

CREATED & EDITED BY HEATHER CARDER

Inside Iceland's Blood Horse Farms

The 2021 Report from Journalismfund Europe

Iceland is a nation of horse lovers. There is around one horse for every five people on the island just south of the Arctic Circle. The colourful Icelandic horse is famous for its small but sturdy stature and unique gaits. The horses are highly-prized and protected, and the government has helped to promote them internationally – riding them is a popular activity for tourists visiting the country. But some people have found another way to make money from them.

Across Iceland there are more than 100 blood farms operating. The nation is one of the only countries in the world that has such farms, along with Argentina and Uruguay. Every week, for up to eight weeks during the summer, pregnant semi-wild horses are brought into enclosures, where their heads are tied up with a rope

and five litres of blood drained from their necks using a cannula. It's the equivalent of all blood in an average human body.

The blood is bought by an Icelandic pharmaceutical company called Ísteka, which processes it to obtain a special hormone known as Pregnant Mare Serum Gonadotrophin (PMSG). It is shipped around the world where it is injected into factory farm animals to increase their fertility — producing more offspring for more meat. PMSG produced in Iceland is licensed and sold in the UK, Ireland, the US, and throughout Europe, though most consumers remain unaware of its use in our food supply chains.

Sabrina Gurtner was the first person to set out in search of Icelandic blood farms. Working for a German charity called the Animal Welfare Foundation, she stumbled across the blood mares while researching the horse meat industry, initially in South America, where PMSG is also produced. “At

the beginning, I could almost not believe it,” she says. “It’s just really incomprehensible how you could exploit one animal species to then exploit another... I was so shocked when I discovered all this that I thought, we have to continue investigating.”

The industry has been operating in Iceland for decades but has rapidly grown in recent years. The number of blood mares in Iceland has grown by 25% in the last five years, now numbering more than 5,000. The government allows them to operate and even carries out random inspections of the farms — but activists say Gurtner’s findings show that the inspections are not enough.

During two trips to Iceland in 2019 and 2021, Gurtner says she identified 40 blood farms and observed what she felt were “major animal welfare problems”. On one farm, farmers were “using aggressive dogs that attacked the horses and bit into their tails and legs,” Gurtner says. “We could

Continued on page 11

WHAT'S TRENDING NOW

Royal Equestrian Fur Halter

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Dress your horse in discriminating style!

A high end, durable Halter with soft, artificial mink fur for ultimate comfort. Adjustable on both sides of the poll and noseband for the perfect fit.

Solid metal fastenings and Royal Equestrian signature branding finish off the look of the Halter.

A comfortable light weight halter with a strong nylon core. Covered with super soft artificial mink fur, which ensures maximum comfort even for the most sensitive horse. Quick opening on the left side with a spring hook. The size can be adjusted on both sides.

Natural, Black, White or Grey fur



- Royal Equestrian embroidery on the noseband
- Removable fur for easy cleaning
- Machine washable up to 30 degrees.
- We recommend the use of a wash bag to avoid any damage to the buckles.
- Alternatively, can be hand washed in warm water.
- Allow to air dry naturally.
- Available in these colors:

Navy Black
Chocolate Marine
Purple Olive
Silver Pink
Champagne

Also available in Faux Croc Patent Leather!
FULL sizes only

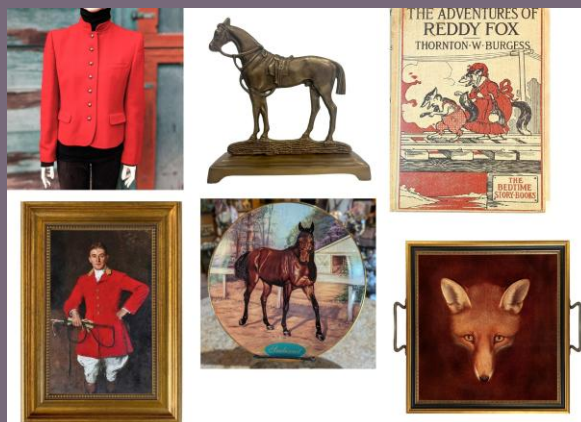


Our Store is currently open by Appointment.



Shop Online!
www.thenoblehorsevintage.etsy.com

New Items for August



When your horse finds A good patch of grass And won't move...



When a customer wants to speak to the manager and the manager just tells them the exact same thing you did 🤡



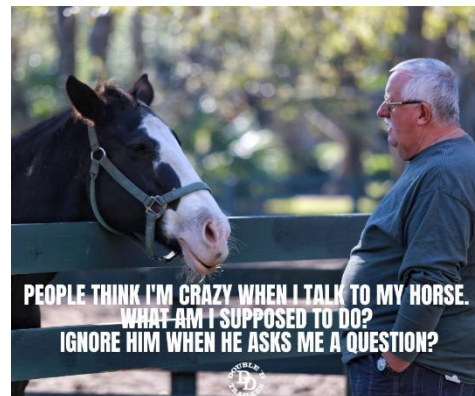
"I have dinner plans tonight with friends"
Also me:



If you ever feel sad, just remember
that horses can grow moustaches



GUYS WITH FEET LIKE THIS HAVE A
125% CHANCE OF STEALING YOUR GIRL



VS



Netflix needs to stop asking me if I'm still
watching and start asking me if I've
turned the horses' water off



WILDWOOD FARM B&B



This is your moment.

Today at Wildwood Farm B&B

A 4th Grade Math Teacher understood...

Life is like photography; you use the negatives to develop.

Immerse yourself in the equestrian world at Wildwood Farm B&B located on beautiful Whidbey Island.

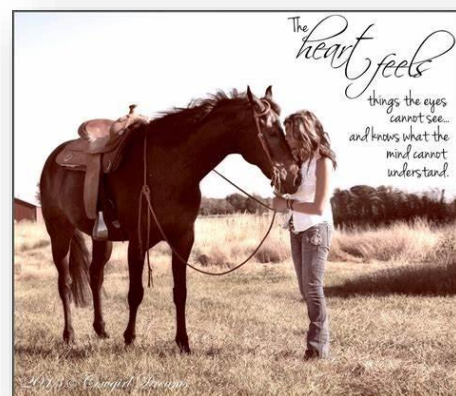
Our ranch has a long history of igniting the spark between horses and humans, whether you want a small introduction or total immersion.

Come experience the power of possibility with these magnificent creatures and explore the abundance of silent repose.

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August 3, 2026

Summary for 07/01/2026 - 07/31/2026

32 alerts posted reporting on 35 confirmed cases

Ordered by State:

Disease	State	Confirmed
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	Florida	1
Equine Herpesvirus- Neurologic	Ontario	2
Equine Infectious Anemia	Florida	1
	Minnesota	1
	Texas	2
	Washington	2
Equine Influenza	Nebraska	2
	Oregon	1
Potomac Horse Fever	Wisconsin	2
Strangles	Florida	1
	Idaho	1
	Michigan	3
	Nebraska	1
	North Dakota	1
	Oregon	1
	Washington	2
	Wisconsin	6
West Nile Virus	Arizona	1
	California	2
	Georgia	2

For the current status on CEM, please see:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/equine/contagious-equine-metritis>

Equine Disease Communication Center
<http://equinedisasesecc.org>

Nutrition Corner

4 Toxic Plants Your Horse Should Not Eat

We have all seen that puddle of drool form under our horse's mouth when he's standing in the crossties. You might be aware this is caused by consumption of clover, but do you know a toxin called slaframine causes the hypersalivation?

Slaframine commonly forms on red clover and irritates horses' oral and gastrointestinal mucosa, causing the drool puddles we see. Although hypersalivation causes no significant threat to our horses, other common plants can have more sinister toxic effects.

Buttercups for example, contain the toxic compound ranunculin. This mild toxin generally only causes irritation to oral mucosa but, if a horse consumes it in large amounts, it can affect the mucosa deeper in the intestinal tract. Horses that have eaten buttercups could exhibit clinical signs of colic or develop diarrhea. Unlike clover, buttercups are not particularly appetizing to horses and rarely cause problems.

Dock is a hearty weed that flourishes in overgrazed paddocks. It contains high levels of nitrates and oxalates, which are both toxic. Common clinical signs include muscle twitching and weakness. Unlike some other toxic plants, dock maintains its toxic principles even when dried, so it is not considered safe in hay.

Horses should also avoid **Cherry Trees**, including wild cherry, chokecherry, black cherry, and fire cherry. While the fruit is safe and delicious, the pits, stems, leaves, bark, and branches contain cyanoglycoside. When consumed, the cyanoglycoside converts to cyanide, which binds to iron in the red blood cells and prevents delivery of oxygen to the tissues.

Black walnut trees commonly grow on horse farms in the eastern United States. These trees contain juglone, a potent toxin that alters blood flow. Consumption of bark, leaves, nuts, or the roots of these trees can lead to colic, laminitis, and even death.

WILDWOOD FARM AND TRIPLE CROWN FEEDS.

Our partnership with Triple Crown began in 2014 through a promotion with the USEF encouraging farm members to compare their current feeding programs with Triple Crown products. We have found the TC products to be superior to other products primarily because of the EquiMix technology and the research support of a leading-edge team including independent representatives of Equine Universities, Medical clinics and top-level riders and trainers

From the 2006 Wildwood Farm Archives ZIP



In the early winter of 2026, we adopted a 16-year-old Quarter Horse named Zip. His owner was JeanAnn Honaker and she had come to our farm to board even though she lived in Snohomish. Zip was the love of her life and saw her through some terrible episodes of trauma when she was recovering from injuries from a brutal car crash.

Zip was a bright flashy chestnut gelding with a flaxen mane and tail, a large star, and a white stocking on his right hind. He was approximately 15.3 hands tall and was blind in the left eye, with a visible cataract.

JeanAnne had shown Zip hunt seat and English sidesaddle at local shows and the number of ribbons he won could fill a small closet.

As Zip's cataract got worse, his showing days disappeared. He often became anxious when he could not navigate the arena and was around unfamiliar horses. He needed semi-retirement.

When JeanAnne asked us if we wanted to adopt him, we were a little skeptical. At this point our lesson program was mostly young children and to have a horse with a minor disability was an unknown liability. But, after agreeing to a lengthy trial period, we decided this handsome horse was worth a try.

Zip would continue in our lesson program for 4 years, until the sight in his right eye was also compromised. Although he was very adept at being ridden still, the liability was high and we decided at 20 he deserved a full retirement.

JeanAnne had since moved to South Carolina, and she decided to ship Zip back to be with her. Zip enjoyed his retirement and passed at the age of 27.

Leo – The Brave Bronco (July 23 -August 22)



Leo

Jul 23 - Aug 22

Strengths: Courageous, Passionate Forgiving

Weaknesses: Arrogant, Stubborn, Lazy

Around the Stable: Extra treats are a sure way to win this horse's heart!

The Leo horse has a dignified passion to succeed and impress. This horse shines brightest at competitions as it loves being the center of attention. Ignore their passion and you may see their lazy side take hold.

This horse desires greatness, even if only in your eyes. Shower them with affection and love and you will have won their loyalty forever. If you make mistakes along the way, a sincere effort to make things right will be well received.

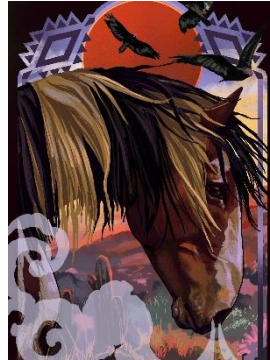
These brave horses will run to the end of the Earth for you if you reward them each time they push for the finish. Great with livestock, the Leo horse can help you with your chores without fear or hesitation.



We celebrate these Birthdays in August!

Jack Van Kampen August 27th, Teddy August 27th,
Billy Bear August 27th, Chief August 27th, Red August 27th

MOST FABULOUS HORSE TATTOOS!



Vatican City

'The Vision of Constantine'

This equestrian statue of Constantine the Great has been the subject of criticism for centuries.



In 312, shortly before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, Constantine I—known as the first Roman ruler to convert to Christian faith—prayed along with his army. While doing so, it's said a cross miraculously appeared in the sky with the inscription *In Hoc Signo Vinces*, or "By this sign you shall conquer." With this divine encouragement, the emperor went into battle and successfully defeated Maxentius.

Over a millennium later, in 1654, Italian artist Gian Lorenzo Bernini was commissioned by the Vatican City to create an equestrian sculpture. Initially, it was designed to be placed in the interior of St Peter's Basilica, but much to Bernini's chagrin, Pope Alexander VII decided that it should be constructed at the foot of the Scala Regia, the stairway that connects the basilica to the Vatican Palace. This caused a big problem for the sculptor, as the marble block he had chosen was too small to fit the niche, making the statue seem dwarfed and out of proportion.

In the end, Bernini sculpted an extensive marble drape behind Constantine the Great to make up for the space. It was finally completed in 1670 after the Scala Regia was restored by Bernini himself from 1663 to 1666. The statue is purposely placed so that the sunlight that pours into the basilica gives the sense of a God-sent vision.

Despite Bernini's effort and work, the sculpture was met with a volley of criticisms immediately after its unveiling. Contemporary writers pointed out various "problems", while others complained that the cross was not viewable to most people and that the statue lacked realism.

Even today, "The Vision of Constantine" continues to be a subject of criticism, albeit for different reasons. To most visitors to the Vatican, it's only visible from a single viewpoint under the basilica's portico. This inaccessibility has caused the statue to receive little attention in art history, and still remains relatively obscure an attraction.

Golden American Saddlebred Horse



Officially the Golden Saddlebred color was infused in the American Saddlebred Horse Association through a horse by the name of Pat Cleburne, who was foaled in 1864. In the Palomino Horse Breeders of America, the first golden Saddlebred registered was Pot O' Gold, later known as Richardson's Pot O' Gold. This horse was foaled in 1939 and was bred by S.A. Clift of Waxahachie, TX, and registered with the ASHA as Clift's Pride.

First and foremost, is conformation. A beautifully shaped, well-proportioned head is a must. The ears are small, alert, and placed at the top of the head. The neck is long, and well-arched, with a smooth clean throatlatch. The eye is bold, bright, and intelligent. Well-sloped shoulders and sharp withers well above the height of the hips is characteristic. The croup is long and level with the tail coming out high, and the hind quarters are well muscled to the hocks. The back is short and strong. The long legs are straight with long sloping pasterns that are so necessary for an easy, well cushioned ride. The shallow, full-sprung rib cage make the barrel of the Saddlebred more rounded than in other breeds. Height is generally from 15 to 17 hands and weight from 1000 to 1200 pounds.

Efforts were started in 1939 to reestablish the breed using Friesian and Oldenburg blood, and later Thoroughbreds and Arabs were used. Currently numbers are low. Connections between the Frederiksborg of today and the old stock are very slight. Up to 1920, the aim was to produce a light carriage horse that could also be used for farming. Then as motorization developed, the demand changed toward riding horses.

The complete picture of Golden Saddlebred should be one of refinement, smoothness and strength. Coloring can vary from cream to copper and all shades in between. However, the ideal color is that of the untarnished gold coin. Eyes must be brown or dark. White markings on the face and legs are allowed, but no spots. Mane and tail should be white and purity is desirable.

The American Saddlebred is an adaptable horse, and easily trainable. For many years they have carried the image of being high-strung, fire-breathing show horses, but just as every person is an individual, so is every horse. Some temperaments are suitable for the show ring, and some are meant strictly for the trail. Each horse, and rider, must find the area most suitable for them. The ways that Golden Saddlebreds can be used are many, there are show horses, pleasure horses and parade horses (in the show ring or down the street). They can be used for eventing and choring, all depending on the individual horse's disposition and conformation.

In the show ring, Golden Saddlebreds are eligible in all the classes in the Saddle Horse Division of the American Horse Shows Association and the Golden American Saddlebred Division of PHBA; five-gaited, three-gaited, fine harness, English and Western pleasure, parade, western show horse, driving, trail and so on. One can see the possibilities of teaming a horse with a division are almost endless.

The Golden American Saddlebred is registered with the American Saddlebred Horse Association.

Cont'd from page 1

see that they were also using sticks on the horses... and that they hit them on their heads.”

Gurtner and her team were followed twice while attempting to film the farms, by workers trying to prevent them. In spite of this they did manage to obtain footage from three farms. It shows chaotic scenes of horses being hit with sticks and whips, struggling while tied up, and biting at wooden enclosures from stress.

When Gurtner’s video was published online, in November 2021, many Icelanders were furious at how their beloved horses were shown to be treated. Most had either not known about the farms or thought little about them until Gurtner’s video thrust the issue into the spotlight, dividing opinion. Intense debates emerged over the details of the practice — the treatment of the horses, the amount of blood taken. The government launched a working group to investigate. An opposition MP introduced a bill attempting to ban the farms.

Frustrated that little progress was being made, some members of the public took it upon themselves to do something: In early 2022 an angry group of horse owners formed **Animal Welfare Iceland (AWI)** with the purpose of shutting down the farms.

Meike Witt was the woman who came up with the idea. Witt works in the tourism industry by day and keeps eight horses, including two rescued blood mare foals, along with other animals at her home in southern Iceland.

“When this video emerged, most Icelanders were completely shocked... I couldn’t sleep for two weeks,” Witt tells us.

She started contacting other people she saw passionately arguing against blood farms on equine Facebook groups and together they founded AWI. “We would stay up all night talking until one or two o’clock on the phone, just exchanging information,” Witt says.

Iceland already had a well-established animal charity — the Animal Welfare Association of Iceland (DÍS) — but AWI has driven the campaign against the blood farms, and the two groups have different approaches. Whereas DÍS is more cautious and traditional, Witt’s group is more loosely organized, fast-moving and “quite aggressive,” as she puts it.

A year ago, Linda Karen Gunnarsdóttir took over as chair of DÍS with a desire to inject renewed energy into the organisation of 600 members. Gunnarsdóttir welcomes us to their small office and pulls out antique newspapers published by the organisation as far back as 1917. “Ours is a well established and respected organisation ... with history spanning 110 years,” she tells us. Even so, it also relies on volunteers — there are no animal welfare charities in Iceland with any paid employees.

DÍS’s long record comes with prestige but also challenges. Reykjavik is small and due to a historic lease, DÍS is currently sharing an office block with Ísteka, the Icelandic pharmaceutical that runs the blood mare industry. Gunnarsdóttir won’t comment on this, however, careful not to flare up tensions.

This is not so unusual in a country of less than 400,000, where many people are careful about what they say in public. Icelandic friends and local journalists say there is often a reluctance to talk to the media and a fear of burning bridges, since you’re likely to keep bumping into people — making DÍS’s formal and cautious approach more typical than AWI’s unusually confrontational tactics.

We take two trips to the south of the island where there are rumoured to be a cluster of blood farms. We travel down dirt tracks close to the Skógafoss and Seljalandsfoss waterfalls, popular destinations for Iceland’s annual 1.7 million tourists, offering up the Instagram-worthy photo opportunities the country is famous for. One evening, we stay overnight in a large horse barn not far from Mount Hekla, one of Iceland’s most active volcanoes. Sheltered from the rain, we spend the evening by the fire with our activist host, discussing his childhood summers spent on Icelandic farms and the country’s incredible environment.

The weather out here is extreme — on a particularly windy day we are warned not to open both doors of the car at the same time, in case the wind rips them off. We drive down dirt tracks and walk around desolate farms. Of the blood

farms we find, one is opposite a small guesthouse that advertises the surrounding horses on its website. We speak to an elderly couple living near another one. They tell us that people around there don't talk about the blood business — the topic is too sensitive. They themselves are strongly opposed to it, though they note that many of the farmers are under financial pressure and that the conditions on the farms vary.

We spot groups of horses banded together near suspected blood farms — some runaway as they see us coming. Local journalists have advised us to look for white horses, as you can more easily see marks on their necks from repeated blood drawing. We walk up to one of the wooden structures used for blood taking. The creepy enclosure has a noosed rope hanging from it, where horses have been tied up by their heads. Next to the structure — which is covered with large bite marks, evidence of stressed horses — we see a whip and broken horseshoe. From the car, our guides watch nervously — they know that activists aren't welcome.

Ísteka, says that the scenes captured by Gurtner and her colleagues are not standard practice and that it terminated contracts with the two farms involved after reviewing the footage. It also says that improvements have been made since then, including increased education of farmers and better monitoring. However, they declined our request to visit a farm, telling us that “All manufacturing and collection facilities are closed to outsiders as [a] protective measure for horses and farmers.”

Asked about what we saw, Ísteka said that bite marks do not necessarily indicate stress, as “Horses are known to gnaw untreated wood irrespective of stress.” They said that “whips or other kinds of tools for beating are a rare occurrence in blood collection and we do not tolerate beatings of horses used in the process.” If farmers are moving collection facilities away from the road, they added, it might be due to the intrusion of “unauthorised persons” around facilities, which has caused distress to horses and workers.

Despite the activists' efforts, animal welfare issues have proven difficult to tackle for Iceland's fragile coalition government, especially since the horse blood industry brings in around £11 million annually in export revenue for Ísteka, as well as additional income for the country's struggling farmers.

But change may ultimately come from outside forces. Last year, 17 NGOs including Gurtner's and Witt's organisations — but not DÍS, which Gunnarsdóttir was not yet running — lodged a complaint with the EFTA Surveillance Authority, the body responsible for ensuring that countries in the European Economic Area, including Iceland, comply with EU rules.

The NGOs argued that Iceland was in breach of animal welfare regulations. The Surveillance Authority agreed, issuing Iceland with a warning that gave them two months to explain themselves.

For a while, there was silence from the Icelandic government. But in September, two months past the deadline, they finally agreed to apply the animal welfare regulations to the blood farms. That means they will now have to undertake a series of assessments to justify the farms, demonstrating, for example, that the suffering of the animals is proportionate to the need for the drugs and that there is no viable alternative. Activists think they'll struggle to show that, especially since there are several drugs that can be produced synthetically that have a similar, though not identical, effect to PMSG.

“It will be very difficult to justify that PMSG is needed,” says Gurtner, who is preparing to release another video in the hopes that it will influence the decision. “According to the... legislation, [they] have to prove that there are no alternatives not involving the use of animals. And that is very difficult.”

Ísteka has a different take. They claim that PMSG is resource- and energy-saving for farmers, and that it therefore “positively affects the farmer and ultimately the environment for us all.” They concluded, “We are extremely proud of our contribution to the planet.”