

November 30, 1977

Mr. Chester E. Conard, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
705 East 4th Street
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

Dear Mr. Conard:

Thank you for your response of October 17th. I am sorry that I am delayed in our comments to the information that you furnished. I wrote a letter on October 3rd of this year because of complaints coming into this office, some resulting from the TV spot others from people in your own area. I wrote to the District....I did not seek information that was not ethical. I have always gone to the District; not to the public, not to the press. I am disheartened because the tone of your letter infers that we have no right to question the activity of the District.

My point is this: If the animals are brought in, in two days, so as not to stress them. Then how are they contained until they are picked up once again by the helicopter on the second day? Do they stay there and wait for you? Do they not attempt to return to their natural habitat? Do you corral them? These are normal questions asked constantly. How am I to respond, if I am not aware myself? The Johnson Report may well have been an isolated incident and we were not claiming that it wasn't. But you know full well the difficulties the Bureau has had in humanely destroying injured animals, let alone using an axe. I have been in some Districts where firearms were not allowed at all. I have worked too many hours right along side of the Bureau not to be able to recognize that all hands do not have the same philosophy, towards these animals.

I can tell you this, I was present when horses were brought in from the Winnemucca area by truck. I have the description of the truck, the license plates and people who had traveled cross-country to pick up horses to witness the unloading of horses. It took them less than 10 minutes to unload those horses and 2 went down in the truck because of the hurrying, injuring two animals. Am I expected to believe that this doesn't happen? Had someone known I was there I am sure the procedure would have changed slightly.

We know the condition of the resource, otherwise we wouldn't have supported the reduction. We know the condition of the animals, they are dying right in front of us. We KNOW how urgent it is, but there are rules of fair play. No one from this office has condemned your procedures; no one has put undue pressure upon your district by our frequent presence. If I had written a letter

Mr. Chester E. Conard
Bureau of Land Management
Page two

for every call I have received in this office, then you would be justified in the disappointment. We have realized all along that you must deligate time, equipment, and money to varied interests, not just to wild horse management. Our sole interest and primary concern is the welfare of those animals and we stand on the right to voice our opinions. As long as our comments are reasonable and without malice we see no injustice.

Most sincerely,

Dawn Y. Lappin (Mrs.)
Adoption Director

CC Rowland



United States Department of the Interior

IN REPLY REFER TO
4320-4335
(N-023.01)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
705 East 4th Street
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

October 17, 1977

Mrs. Dawn Y. Lappin
WHOA
P.O. Box 555
Reno, Nevada 89504

Dear Mrs. Lappin:

In response to your letter of October 3, it disappoints me that we were accused of over-stressing the animals and causing their deaths. We have worked closely with all interested segments of the public during our round-ups and have performed them in the most humane manner proposed by all parties concerned.

The situation involving the horse that ran into a panel and broke his neck was unfortunate, but when working with wild animals these things occasionally happen. Ron Hall is authorized to carry and use a firearm. When the incident Lonnie Johnson refers to occurred Ron was in the helicopter and was not aware that a horse was injured. The situation was not relayed to him and the horse was humanely destroyed before Ron was aware there was a problem.

It is interesting that neither Mr. Johnson or you refer to the fact that we have injured and had to destroy only 6 horses out of 1286 that we have captured to date. Instead, one incident is selected to inflame the minds of the uninformed.

The animals that we have been capturing in the last few weeks are in very poor condition. Most of these animals have been coming from the north end of the Owyhee Desert where the range condition is very poor. The horses are thin, weak, and most of them are stressed to the point they would not have survived the winter. In the next few weeks some animals will be shipped in from south Owyhee and you will find them to be in much better shape - due to range condition.



It is an indisputable fact that animals in a weakened condition can be stressed to the point of no return. However, we are not running these animals too hard. In fact, the horses are allowed to choose their own pace of travel. Anyone who has captured wild horses will tell you the slower you can bring the animals to the trap the better off you are. If horses are tired when they reach the trap site, they cannot be handled and will often scatter like quail.

When a band of horses are first picked up with a helicopter they run for a few minutes while we are lining them out for the trap. Once the horses are headed in the right direction the helicopter backs off them and circles at altitude. The horses are then allowed to choose the pace which they wish to travel. In most cases the animals settle into a trot intermingled with a walk. When the mouth of the trap is reached the animals are then pushed into the trap at a run. With this procedure, horses actually enter the trap during the hot summer time without any signs of exhaustion.

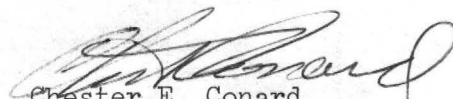
The maximum distance we have been moving horses is fifteen miles. We often take two days to do this. Several bands of horses will be moved eight to ten miles in the afternoon and then dropped for the night. The next morning the horses are picked up and moved to the trap. The exercise received using this procedure is less than the normal capacity of the young colts.

Horses have often been held back that were in a weakened condition and fed until they picked up in strength. I understand that some horses are being lost at Palomino to colic and other causes. Your statement that we are "running them too hard" is not supported by the facts.

We have exerted every effort to maintain the humane effort in capturing, caring for and transporting wild horses to Palomino Valley Corral. The fact that some of the horses are in a weakened condition is the very reason the horses are being removed from the range. There are too many for the available forage supply.

Your further inquiry into our operation is welcomed. We have always attempted to work closely with your organization and intend to continue as the welfare and humane treatment of the animals are also our primary concern.

Sincerely yours,


Chester E. Conard
District Manager