

More layoffs in the PMU industry

Layoffs result in thousands of 'unwanted' horses

From United Animal Nations FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Second major Wyeth "layoff" puts tens of thousands of horses in danger of slaughter

UAN calls upon pharmaceutical giant to act responsibly, offers adoption Web site as alternative

SACRAMENTO, CA (April 26, 2005) - Upon learning that Wyeth Organics has just canceled contracts with nineteen Canadian ranches engaged in the manufacture of PMU (Pregnant Mare Urine) hormone replacement drugs, United Animal Nations (UAN) is calling on the pharmaceutical giant to provide financial incentives to ranchers so they will put their horses up for adoption rather than send them to slaughter.

Wyeth today announced it also plans to pursue voluntary and mandatory retirements of another 33 ranchers in Canada and North Dakota - leaving tens of thousands more unwanted mares and their foals "out of work." While Wyeth claims it will offer financial assistance to ranchers for feed and herd health care while horses are placed in "productive markets," UAN is beseeching Wyeth to provide funding geared specifically toward encouraging ranchers to spare horses from slaughter. UAN has heard recent reports of horse meat trading for between 10 and 45 cents per pound.

"It is completely irresponsible for Wyeth to put this many lives at risk without offering ranchers an incentive to save them," UAN president Jennifer Fearing said. "All of the mares are pregnant again and will foal in the coming weeks. PMU mares have provided Wyeth with billions of dollars over the decades and the company is certainly in a position to prevent these horses from ending up on foreign dinner tables - and they have a moral obligation to do so."

UAN responded to Wyeth's last major round of layoffs in late 2003 by creating PMURescue.org, an online database of adoptable PMU horses. Rescue organizations and ranchers post horses on this popular Web site at no charge, exposing them to potential adopters. UAN also offers an Adoption Incentive Program, awarding \$75 cash to adopting individuals to defray the costs of transporting the horses to their new homes.

"We have in place a tool and incentives that can help PMU ranchers do the right thing for their horses," said Fearing. "We've saved more than 500 horses and know that our site can mean the difference between life and death for those whose fate has just been seriously threatened. But Wyeth must buy the ranchers time if we're to be of any use."

Families interested in adopting can use PMURescue.org to search for individual characteristics such as age, gender and breed. Photos of each horse are included, as are notes by the current caregiver about temperament and health.

Background

Since the 1940s, the urine of pregnant mares has been processed into drugs used to treat menopausal symptoms in women. To manufacture PMU drugs, 40,000-60,000 mares were employed at farms in the northern US and Canada. Each year the horses were impregnated in the fall, spent winter inside "pee barns" hooked up to urine collection systems and gave birth in the spring.

Since several research studies have alerted women and their doctors to the health risks associated with taking these animal-based hormone replacement drugs, prescriptions for Wyeth's Premarin and Prempro have plummeted. According to Wyeth, they need less PMU due to changes in the market, a shift to lower doses and improved inventory management.

Founded in 1987, United Animal Nations (UAN) is the nation's leading provider of emergency animal sheltering and disaster relief services and a key advocate for the critical needs of companion animals.

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Anyone interested in adopting a PMU horse can visit the following website: [website](#), project of United Animal Nations.

Potential Canadian adopters may also phone TRACS (The Responsible Animal Care Society) at: 778-754-5522 or e-mail: [.website: tracs-bc.ca](#).