

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**National Horse Gelding Clinic Pilot Program  
To Be Tested Widely In California**

ENCINITAS, CA -- A statewide Gelding Clinic pilot program will be conducted at various locations throughout California in 2011. This flagship program is intended to help economically challenged horse owners castrate their colts and stallions at a minimum cost, and to decrease equine breeding at a time when there is an over supply of horses in the United States.

Shirley Puga, Founder of the National Equine Rescue Network (NERN), said the goal of this program is to geld 100 or more horses in California in 2011, while creating a template for these charitable clinics that can then be expanded to benefit horse owners nationwide.

"The current economy has created a greater number of displaced horses and this trend will likely continue for at least the next few years," Puga said. "By gelding colts and stallions, we can help reduce the number of new horses coming into the world during these trying economic times. Hopefully, proactive measures such as these, will go a long way toward alleviating this problem."

The gelding clinics are collaborative efforts with local nonprofit equine welfare organizations, and veterinarians who volunteer their time for this important work. The Gelding Clinics are scheduled throughout California monthly, from February through June, with additional clinics planned for October through December.

The first clinic in the series will be held this February, in partnership with Red Bucket Equine Rescue, at the Huntington Central Park Equestrian Center. Locations and times for this and all subsequent clinics will be announced 30 days in advance of each event, and a full schedule will be posted soon on the NERN website.

NERN, a nonprofit organization itself, is accepting donations from the public to help defray the costs of these clinics, each of which are expected to geld between 10 and 20 horses. Donations can be made through the organization's website at [www.nationalequine.org](http://www.nationalequine.org).

In the near future, when the working model has been fine tuned, NERN will seek additional funding in order to assist equine welfare organizations to establish similar clinics throughout the country.

NERN conducted an extensive nationwide survey of nearly 500 equine welfare organizations in 2010 and Puga said that over 80% of those responding indicated that gelding clinics would benefit their communities. While only 16 responding organizations have this type of program available now, 93% said they would participate in gelding clinics, and other similar community service projects, if given the opportunity.

"NERN was created to help equine welfare organizations find new resources for their very important work on behalf of America's horses. These gelding clinics are just the first step in our efforts to do this," Puga said.

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