

## Making "End of Life" Decisions for your Horse □



Few college-level curricula in equine management classes address the topics of death and euthanasia, even though every horse eventually will experience the process. A comprehensive educational approach includes topics on assessing the need for euthanasia, decision-making techniques, acceptable euthanasia methods, physiology of dying, and appropriate carcass disposal options, as well as addressing the emotional context of the human-horse bond and the grief process. Suggested projects for students include the development of an equine euthanasia plan or a quality of life assessment. Since death and euthanasia are integral components in the U.S. societal issues concerning the number of unwanted horses, the slaughtering of horses for human consumption, and the development of minimum welfare standards and regulations, education and research in these subjects will help to effectively resolve these situations and enhance the welfare of horses.

Dr. Carolyn Stull received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry from Purdue University, and then continued her studies as a graduate student at the University of Illinois. She received her Master of Science and PhD degrees while working on research projects focusing on muscle and exercise physiology in the horse. Currently, as a Cooperative Extension Specialist, Dr. Stull directs the School of Veterinary Medicine's animal Welfare Program focusing on the well-being of agricultural animals, primarily dairy cattle and horses.

She is the national recipient of the "Hank Award", has served as the Chair of the Animal Welfare Committee of the US Animal Health Association, and has worked in collaboration with the US Dept. of Transport of Equines to Slaughter. Dr. Stull is also the North American representative to the ad hoc group on Land Transportation for the OIE, the World Organization for Animal Health which meets annually in Paris. Currently her research is directed at examining long-term transportation stress in horses, developing nutritional rehabilitation

programs for starved horses, determining the glycemic index of common equine feeds, and evaluating the impact of extreme weather events on the welfare of dairy cattle on commercial dairies.