

September 23, 2015

During operations of the BLM wild horse gather in the West Douglas HA, Rangely, Colorado, on September 22, 2015, an approximately 2 – 3 month old sorrel stud colt was injured during capture. I was asked to examine the colt prior to euthanasia and examined the injury more closely postmortem.

I witnessed the roping. The colt was caught without incident and it was not lame at that time. He spooked back into the brush and ran about a small brushy flat area above the trap and below the public viewing area while we tried to prevent him from climbing further back up the mountain without choking him with the rope. He was not lame during that time but when he came back out of the brush he jumped back onto the road. At that point, I saw that he became grade 3 – 4 out of 5 lame. He was less than 100 yds from the trap so we gently herded him to the trailer.

While he was being herded/lead to the trap I examined him visually and it appeared he had severely injured his lower right front leg above the fetlock joint. The colt was loaded by himself onto a trailer and taken back to the holding corrals with the BLM PI and me following so we could evaluate his condition in more detail. I had already discussed the possibility of a poor to hopeless prognosis with the COR and he had given authority to the PI to make the final determination regarding euthanasia at the holding corral due to the very poor radio communications at the trap site. Following our arrival at the holding corral, I re-assessed the injury and confirmed that it was a severe injury that had a hopeless prognosis for recovery. I explained this to the PI and recommended euthanasia would be the most humane action. The PI agreed and the colt was humanely euthanized at that time. After the euthanasia was performed, I confirmed the diagnosis by palpating the right front leg. The colt had sustained a closed fracture in the area of the distal physis of the right third metacarpal bone.

Richanne E. Lomkin, D.V.M.
Field Veterinary Medical Officer,
USDA APHIS Veterinary Services