



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Wild Horse & Burro Program Update

Bruce Rittenhouse, Acting Division Chief, Wild Horse & Burro Program
Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board Meeting
Washington, DC ~ October 30, 2019



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Presentation Outline



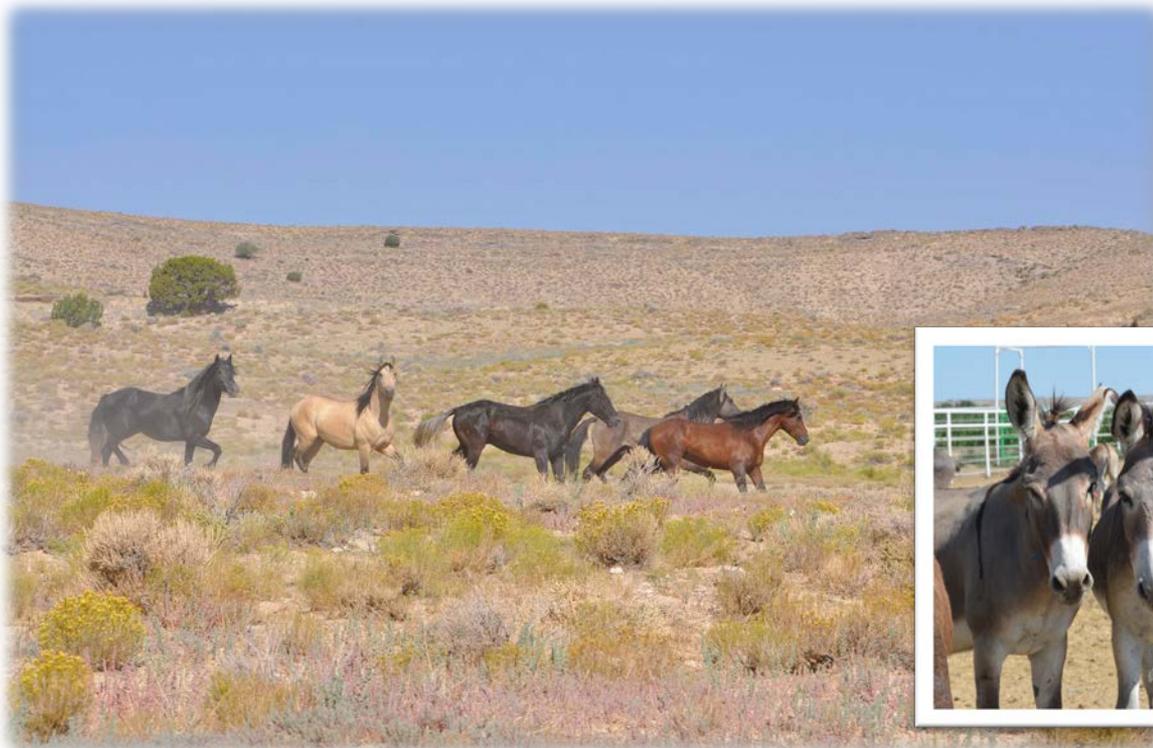
- Program Goals
- Gathers and Fertility Control
- Research
- Private Placement
- Off-Range Holding
- Looking Ahead





WHB Program Goals

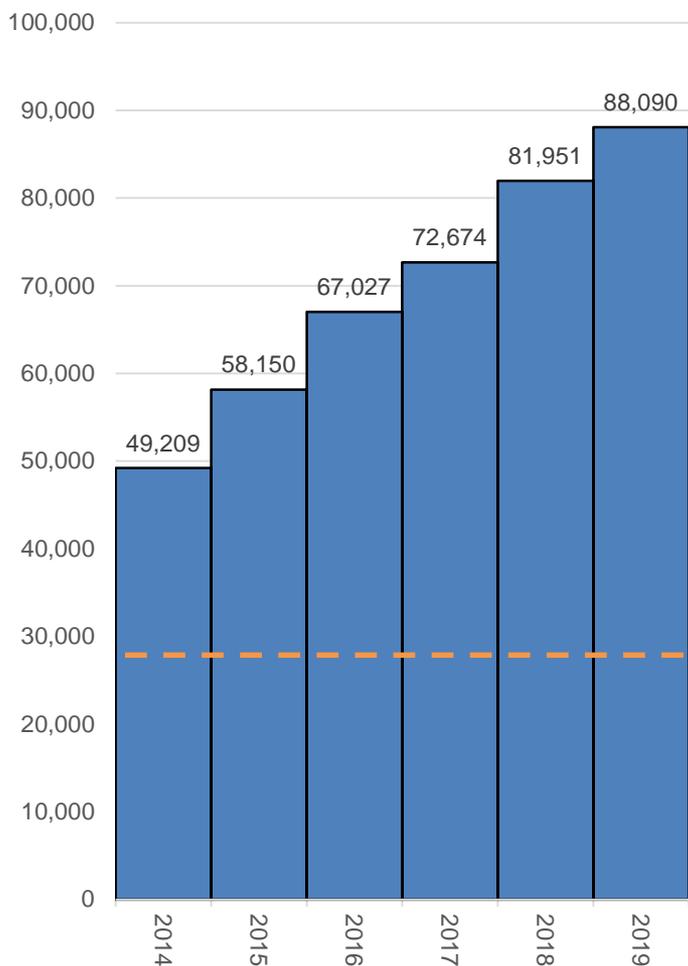
- Maintain healthy herds on healthy rangelands
- Ensure the health and welfare of animals in our care
- Place excess animals into good homes





Population Estimates

Wild Horse and Burro Annual
Population Estimates and AML



Estimated wild horse and
burro population:

88,090 animals*

National appropriate
management level:

26,690 animals

Total on-range excess:

61,400 animals

* As of March 1, 2019



Population Surveys

FY 2019

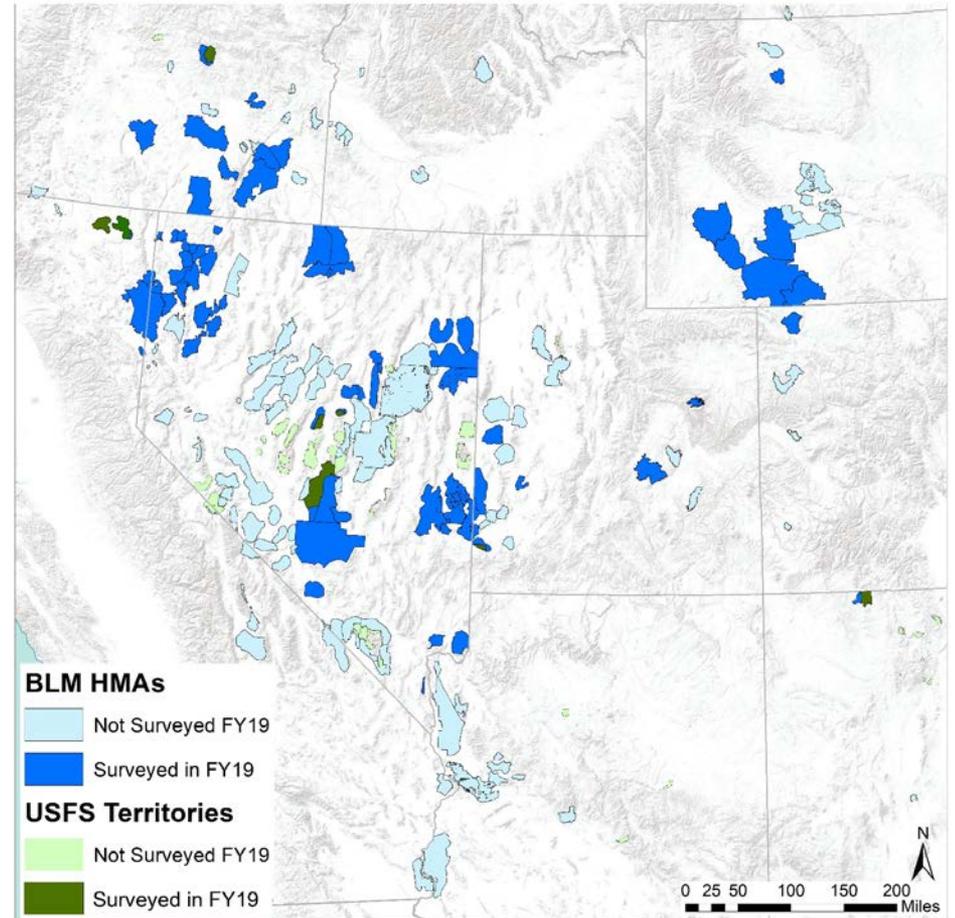
HMA's surveyed: 75

HMA's over AML: 146*

HMA's at AML: 31*



Antelope Valley HMA



* As of March 1, 2019



Gathers

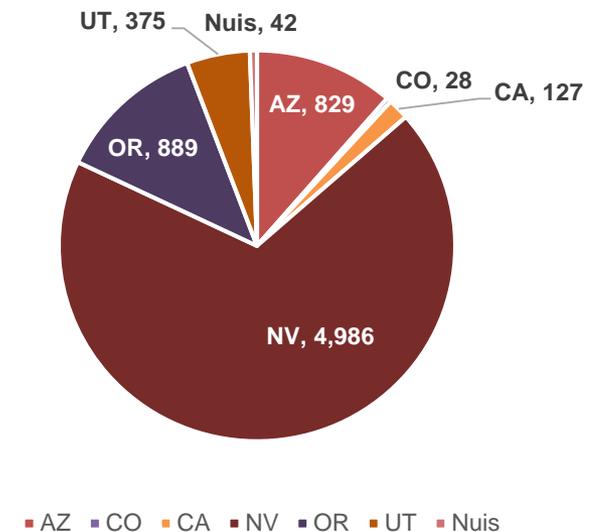
- Gathers are dependent on space and funding.
- Removals restricted to most urgent needs (emergencies, fire rehab), wildlife habitat protection, and removals from private lands.

FY2019

HAs/HMAs gathered: 30

Animals removed: **7,276**

Number of animals removed, by state, in FY19





Gather examples

Silver King HMA

November 27 – December 17, 2018

Near Ely, Nevada

AML: 60-128

Est. population: 1,224
(950% over AML)

Removed: 996

Method: Helicopter



Wild horses at a nearly dry spring in Silver King HMA



Gather examples

Antelope & Antelope Valley HMAs

August 10, 2019 – present (on-going)

Near Elko, Nevada

AML: 187-361

Est. population: 2,794
(773% over AML)

Target Removal: 1,250

Actual removal: 939

Method: Bait-trap



Wild horses at Deer Spring in the Antelope Valley HMA



Fertility Control

- The BLM supports the use of fertility control where it can be effective
- Fertility control is difficult to implement in large and overpopulated herds.

Est. animals treated with fertility control in FY19: 800
HMAs where fertility control was used: 16





Research



1. Fertility Control

- Vaccine formulation & delivery, IUDs, new methods, modeling

2. Improved understanding of WHB ecology

- Movements, behavior, and relation to public safety

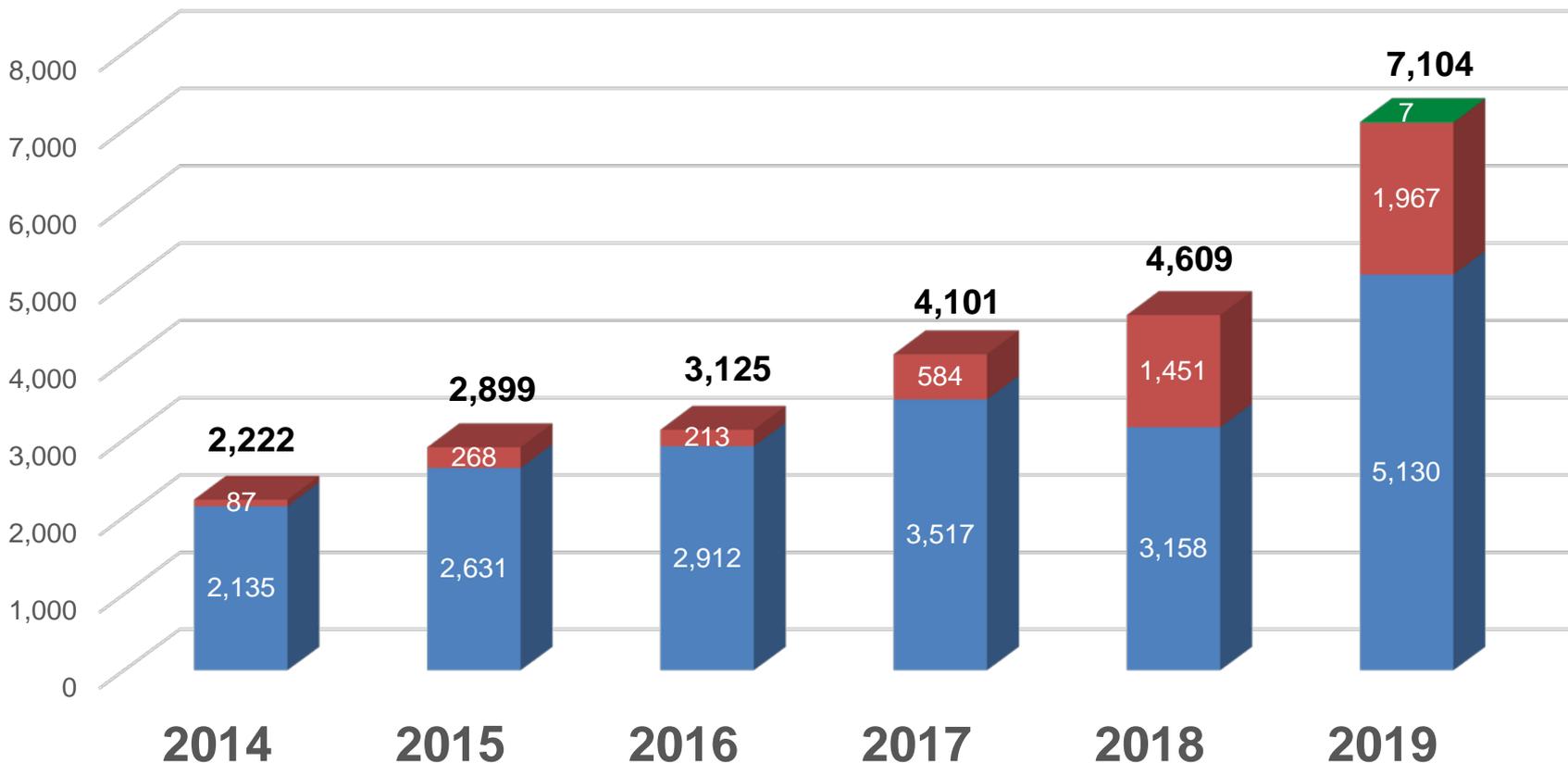
3. Improved survey methods



Private Placement

Private Placements FY14-FY19

■ Adoptions ■ Sales ■ Transfers

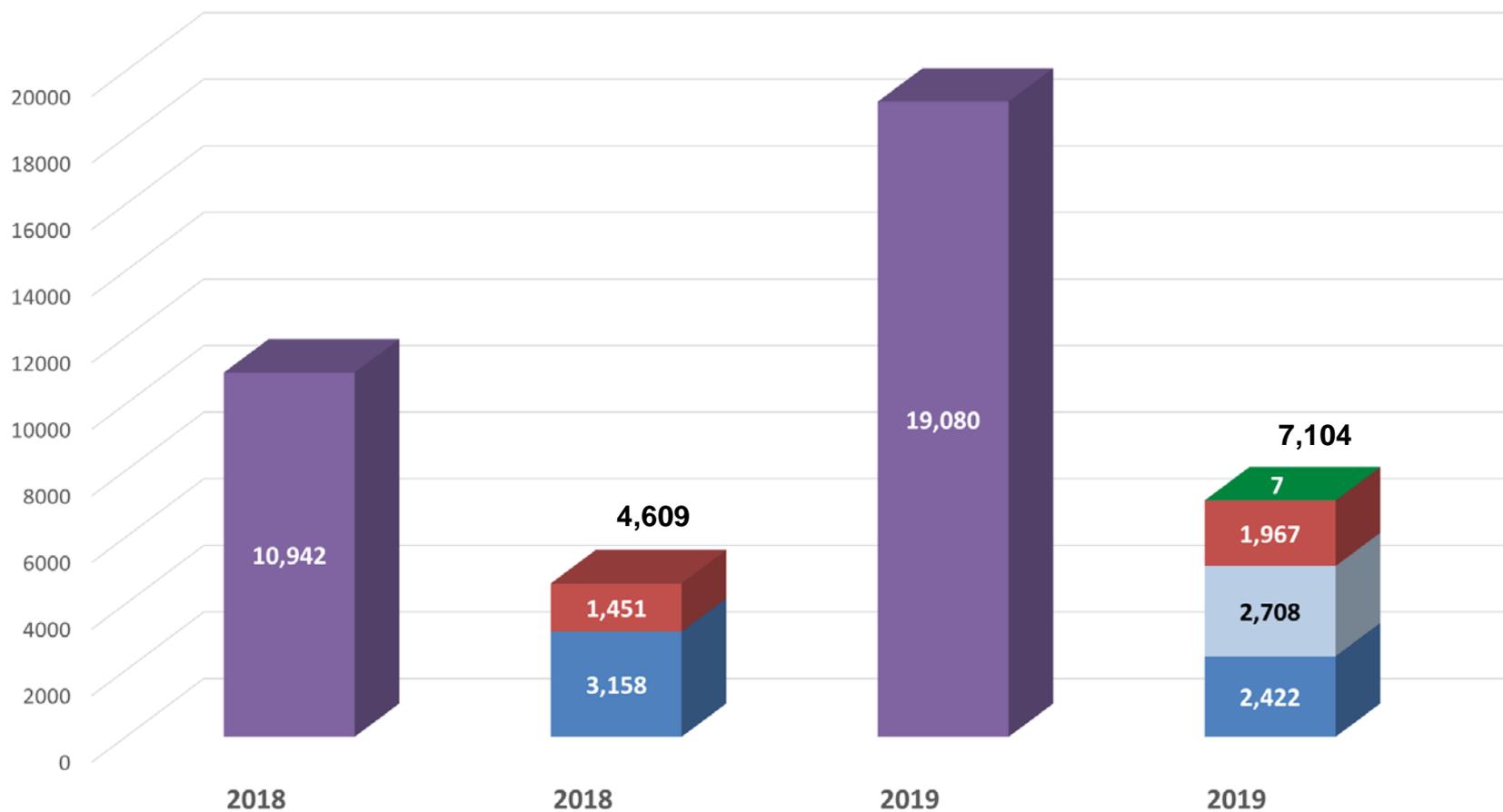




Private Placement

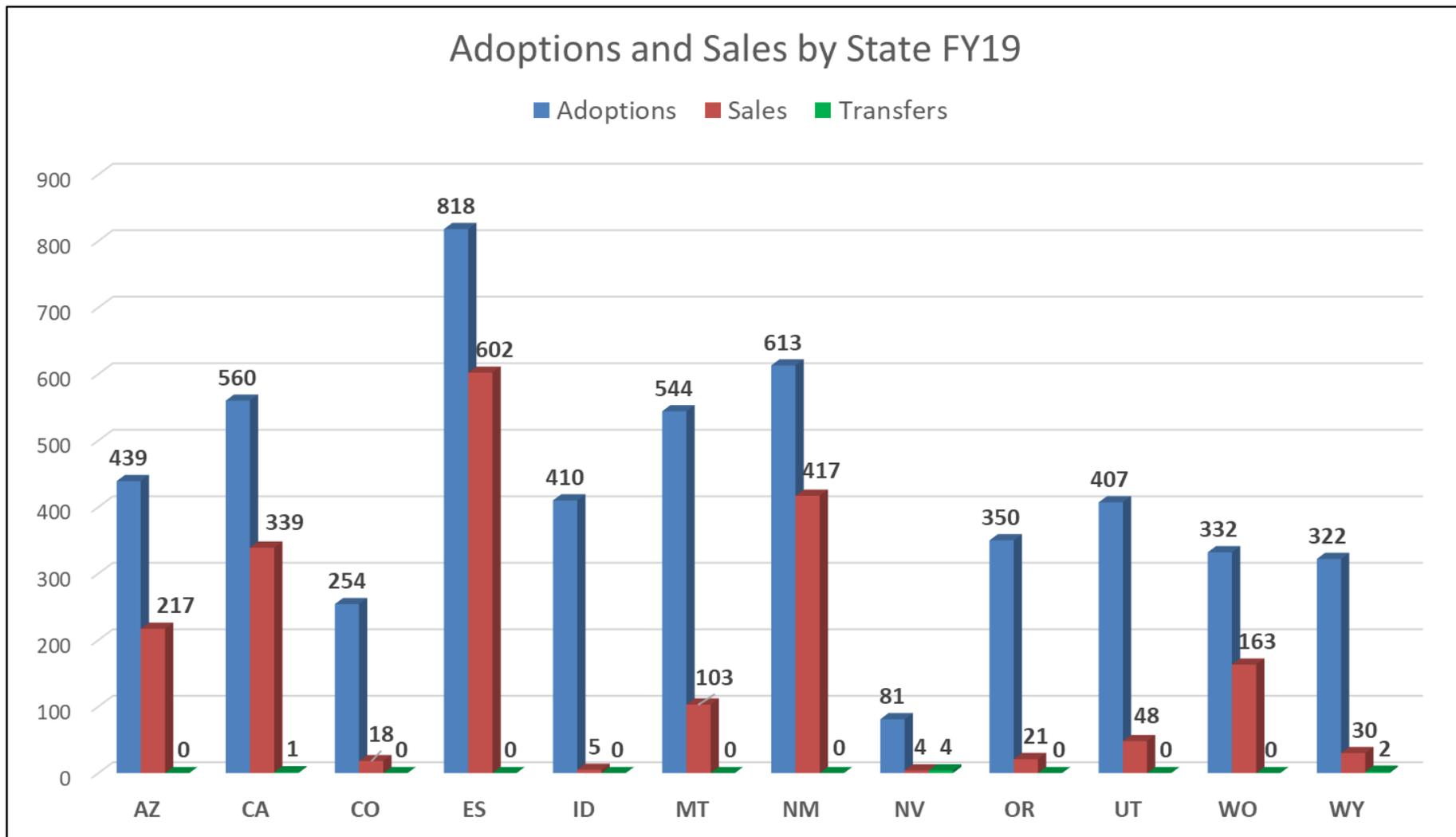
Private Placement Breakdown: 2018-2019

■ Animals Offered ■ Adopted (w/o Incentive) ■ Adopted (with Incentive) ■ Sold ■ Transferred





Private Placement





Off-Range Holding



Off-Range Pasture Solicitation

- Open March 4 – May 3, 2019
- Seeking ranches with capacity to hold 200-5,000 head
- Received 34 bids in response to solicitation
- Horses expected to ship summer 2020





Off-Range Holding



Off-Range Corral Solicitation

- Open July 30 – Sept. 16, 2019
- Seeking facilities with capacity to hold 500-3,500 head
- Open to facilities in CO, UT and WY to accommodate removals in those states
- Received 19 bids in response to solicitation
- Horses expected to ship fall 2020





Off-Range Holding



Fourth Public Off-Range Pasture Opened, April 2019

- Svaty Ranch, Ellsworth, KS
- 1,700 acres; 225 horse capacity
- Public tours and adoption/sale opportunities on site
- Joins three other Public Off-Range Pastures in WY (2) and OK (1)





Looking Ahead

- To reach a sustainable program, removals will need to continue and likely increase
- Increase the use of humane population growth suppression tools
- Look for new, innovative ways to place more animals into private care
- Maximize use of lower cost holding options (i.e. off-range pastures)





Questions

