

# Off-Range Pasture FAQs

Updated 02/27/2019

## 1. Why does the BLM have Off-Range Pasture contracts?

The general purpose of the contracts are to continue the maintenance of the federally protected animals, removed from Western public lands, in pastures large enough to allow for a free-roaming behavior. Off-Range Pastures (ORPs) are more cost-effective than the Off-Range Corrals (ORCs) and Public Off-Range Pastures (PORPs) that hold wild horses removed from the range until they are rehomed into private care or shipped to ORPs. Nearly 50,000 animals were cared for in ORCs, ORPs, and PORPs, as of February 27, 2019.

The free-roaming population of BLM-managed wild horses and burros is estimated to be 82,000, as of February, 2019, which exceeds by more than 50,000 the number determined by the BLM to be the appropriate management level. Despite the BLM's best efforts to use current population growth-suppression (PGS) measures, it is not enough to prevent the population from doubling every four years. In response to increasing population numbers, the BLM is supporting new research to improve existing and develop new PGS measures.

The result of the rising population numbers creates stress on the land, wild horses and burros, and other species competing for the same resources; therefore, the ORPs are a major component in controlling healthy land and animals while reducing holding costs.

## 2. Why does the BLM continue to remove animals from the range?

Under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, as amended, the BLM manages and protects wild horses and burros on western public lands while working to ensure that population levels are in balance with other public rangeland resources and uses. The BLM removes animals from the range to control the size of herds, which have virtually no predators and double in population every four years.

## 3. What are the general requirements for an ORP contract?

- ✓ Pasture will provide sufficient land and forage to sustain a minimum of 200 animals up to a maximum of 5000 animals (depending on the offeror's proposal) year round. The stocking rate will be adjusted, as necessary, to assure animals and pastures are maintained in good condition
- ✓ Pasture will provide sufficient rock and soil types to maintain proper hoof size and shape to maintain animals' hooves in good shape without the need for trimming.
- ✓ Pasture must be private land that is either: (1) privately owned by the offeror; or (2) controlled by the offeror for the contract period (i.e., 5 or 10 years). Loss of control of leased lands may result in contract termination.
- ✓ Pasture must have standing vegetation of sufficient nutritive quality and quantity to



maintain the animals in **good condition** yearlong, with supplemental feeding. **VERY IMPORTANT!!!!!!! A GOOD CONDITION IS DESCRIBED AS: A Henneke score of 4 or better, meaning only a faint outline of the ribs can be seen; the neck, shoulders and withers are not obviously thin; the backbone is not easily seen and the hip bones are not visible.**

- ✓ Pasture will provide shelter from the natural elements by the topography (e.g., canyons, hills, etc.), other natural features such as trees, or manmade structures. The pasture cannot have a tree canopy cover that prevents desirable forage species from growing or a canopy cover which prevents the Contractor and BLM from obtaining an accurate monthly inventory of animals on the pasture.
- ✓ Perimeter and division fences shall be at least four strands of barbed wire, a minimum of 48” in height, and completely enclose the ORP. Gates, rather than cattle guards, should be used at all road crossings or fence openings to keep horses in pastures.
- ✓ Provide corrals and adequate facilities to load and unload wild horses on an as-needed basis.
- ✓ **Contact your [Natural Resources Conservation Service Center](#) for assistance with determining your stocking rate and your soil and water type.**

#### 4. Can the land be located in any state and qualify for the ORP solicitation?

Proposals for the March, 2019, solicitation will only be accepted if the land is located in one of the following states: Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas “Panhandle” (only north of Hwy 82 & 84), Utah, Washington and Wyoming. The solicitation excludes the area west of the Cascade Mt. Range in Oregon and Washington. Please note that future solicitations may accept different states.

#### 5. Where do I locate an ORP solicitation?

- ✓ Go to **[www.fedconnect.net](http://www.fedconnect.net)**
- ✓ Click on *Search Public Opportunities*
- ✓ Visit BLM.GOV/WHB and look under funding opportunities
- ✓ Under Search Criteria, select “Reference Number”
- ✓ Enter the solicitation’s reference number “**LXXXX**”
- ✓ Click Search” and once the solicitation’s information appears, download the information on the right.
- ✓ Applicants who are new to conducting business with the government must first obtain a Duns and Bradstreet number at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com) and then register at [www.sam.gov/](http://www.sam.gov/) to respond to the solicitation. No fee is involved. The solicitation describes what to submit to the BLM and where to send it.

- ✓ You may contact a Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) in your state to assist you with the solicitation. You can reach them by calling (615)268-6644 or visiting <http://www.aptac-us.org/>

#### 6. How many ORP contracts will be awarded?

The BLM expects to award several contracts; however, the total number of contracts awarded will be based on the number of acceptable proposals received and number of animals each proposal can accommodate to meet the BLM's needs.

#### 7. What does the BLM pay a contractor to hold horses on an ORP?

The applicant must submit a business plan that supports the dollar amount needed per head/day to conduct business with the government. The bid should include the percentage of profit the contractor is seeking. The BLM cannot provide a suggested rate.

#### 8. Will the BLM visit my property before making a decision?

Yes. If a proposal meets the BLM's needs, several BLM technical experts will complete an on-site visit before making a final recommendation to award a contract. Additionally, throughout the contract's period of performance, a BLM contract specialist will be the contractor's immediate point of contact and will closely monitor the contractor's performance for compliance.

#### 9. If awarded a contract, when would BLM begin shipping horses? Are genders mixed?

The BLM ships animals to a facility only after the offered property meets the minimum requirements outlined in the contract specifications, together with any mitigation or additional requirements identified in the BLM's Environmental Assessment, and contract is awarded.

Horses are typically shipped 34-36 animals at a time using a semi-truck and trailer. Contractor must be able to offload horses using a loading chute. Each awarded contract will receive all mares or all geldings. The BLM does not ship a mix of genders to any contractor to reduce the chance of any additional animals born in captivity.

All wild horses that go to ORPs live in non-reproducing herds. Prior to shipment, all males are gelded. The mares and geldings are kept in separate pasture contracts to prevent possible reproduction. If mares are pregnant upon arrival, they will foal in the large off-range pastures. After the foals are weaned, they are shipped to off-range corrals for placement in the adoption program.

#### 10. Do the animals receive health care prior to shipping to ORPs?

Yes. They are shipped to an ORC for an overall health inspection by a veterinarian when first removed from the range and also vaccinated, dewormed, freeze marked, tested for coggins, and

aged. Wild horses shipped from an ORC to an ORP have a four-digit hip freeze mark put on their hip to assist in visual tracking by the BLM compliance inspectors and contractors.

#### 11. Does the contractor provide health care to the wild horses?

In the event a wild horse is observed to have a health issue, unless it is impacting the quality of life, the BLM expects the contractor to leave the horse alone to heal naturally as it does in the wild. In the case of a health issue that impacts the animal's quality of life, the animal will be evaluated consistent with BLM policy.

#### 12. What is the life expectancy of wild horses living on ORPs?

The horses may live up to 30-plus years of age. Wild horses that are six years old or older may live out the rest of their lives on an ORP.

#### 13. What is the payment timeframe for an ORP contractor?

First payment will be made after animals are received at the ORP and have resided there for one month. Each contractor MUST keep track of the number of horses on their ORP and invoice the BLM once a month. On an annual basis, at a minimum, BLM and contractor will conduct a joint animal inventory.

#### 14. How many ORPs are currently under contract with the BLM?

The BLM has more than 30 ORPs ranging in size from 1,000 acres up to 35,000 acres; the average size is 20,000 acres. There are no ORPs for wild burros.

#### 15. How can I learn about future ORP solicitations?

The BLM posts all solicitations at [www.fedconnect.net](http://www.fedconnect.net) and a press release is posted on BLM social media and at [www.blm.gov\whb](http://www.blm.gov\whb)

