

"The Price of Freedom"

The value of an individual horse has not changed. Yet the price of an individual Horse has changed. You may ask yourself what is the difference between value and price? It seems at first to be some sort of a cute little play on words on my part. I wish it was the case. The overall Horse market in the United States has taken a major hit and is still trying to find a steady pace. The Horse market up until a few years ago had a pretty steady type of up and down time of the year. During the spring and through summer the price of Horses was at a yearly high do to people buying Horses to be ridden. After summer was over the Horse market would become flooded with Horses that people did not want to keep through the winter months.

Along with seasonal changes and rider demands, there was the killer market that would have a high demand for horse meat for western European tables and restaurants. The killer plants or horse processing plants were very busy. Actually over 100,000 Horses a year were being slaughtered in these US plants. This kept a steady base price of the average riding Horse from dropping to low. As horrifying as it sounds to read about this, killing Horses kept a certain checks and balances even in the world of Horses. No matter what happened in a Horses life eventually their value came down to what are they worth to a Killer plant.

Now let's fast forward to the year 2009. All killer plants are closed in the United States, The only plants still processing Horses are in the countries of Canada and Mexico. Which at today's fuel cost makes hauling Horses across the country very costly, then hauling them out of the country, more of an expense than some sort of profit generating business. The lack of demand for people to buy and sell Horses for killing has hurt the value of all Horses. Yes some types of performance Horses and specially bred Horses always have value. Yet those types of Horses do not make up the majority of Horses in the US. The majority of Horses are the back yard hobby Horses, un-registered or just someone's best friend. Older Horses are living longer do to improved genetics and better health care. People are breeding more Horses than there is a demand for.

Now I want to bring the economy into this scenario, the total cause and effect of Horses being abandoned and turned loose on open country is complete. Horses are being dropped off at public sales under false ownership names due to the price of Horses being so low. Many areas of the US have prices so low that a Horse in the prime of its life is only worth 2 to 3 hundred dollars. Young Horses under 2 years of age selling or not even getting a bid of \$50.00 at an auction. This has proven to be a disaster for many innocent Horses. Some people have lost their jobs and their homes and cannot afford to keep their Horses around anymore.

So what is someone to do, if the Horse has no value to be sold? These people turn to desperation and poor judgment and commit terrible actions in the name of "what else could I do"? Dropping a Horse off at an Auction that cannot sell the Horse is not the answer. Taking a Horse to some remote area and turning them loose is not the answer as well. Most Horses have come to enjoy a certain type of life that includes stable mates, a steady supply of food and water along with regular love and attention. Suddenly loosing the only world and friends the Horse has grown or ever experienced is very traumatic for the Horse. I am not sure what the proper answer to this tragic set of circumstances is. The Human Society of The United States does not like to euthanize cats and dogs. Yet the realization of room, food and an ever population explosion of household pets, has dictated such a response to a very heart wrenching issue. The reason for this particular topic is not to pass judgment or find fault with on individual Horse owner. It is more of a personal

message and question from this Horse owner to you, another Horse Owner. "What price and value do your Horses have"?

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