

Population Control in Wild Horses

Leon Pielstick DVM



Current Data, as of December 2009

- 36,900 wild horses and burros on rangeland
- 20,000+ horses on tribal lands in the Northwest
- 199 herd areas on 26.6 million acres
- 34,000 horses and burros in holding facilities
- \$29 million spent on holding facility costs in 2009
- **Population doubles every 4 years!**



What to do

- Adoption
- 225,000 horses and burros adopted out since initiating program in 1971
- Adoptions are down (3487 adopted/6413 animals rounded up in 2009)
- Some animals not adoptable



Other options...

- Keep them in long and short-term holding facilities (expensive)
- Sell for slaughter (not popular with the public)
- Fertility control!



Sheldon



NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Interior*



IUD STUDY











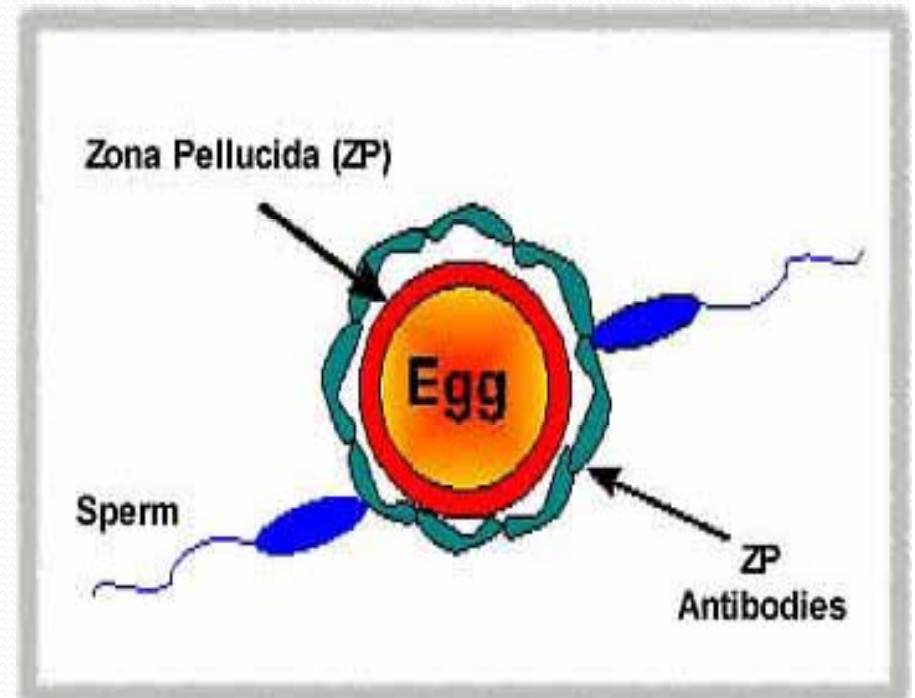






Methods of fertility control

- Mares
 - PZP vaccine (Porcine Zona Pellucida vaccine)
 - 30-40% foaling rate in vaccinated mares compared to 65-80% foaling rate in unvaccinated mares
 - Ovariectomy (SPAY)
 - Via colpotomy or flank incision





MARE SPAYING

OVARIECTOMY



HISTORY

- 2007 Spay 33 head for Sheldon @ private ranch



HISTORY

- 2007 Spay 33 head for Sheldon @ private ranch
- 2009 Spay 41 head @ Sheldon



HISTORY

- 2007 Spay 33 head for Sheldon @ private ranch
- 2009 Spay 41 head @ Sheldon
- 2010 Spay 8 head @ Wild Horse Sanctuary

Wild Horse Sanctuary





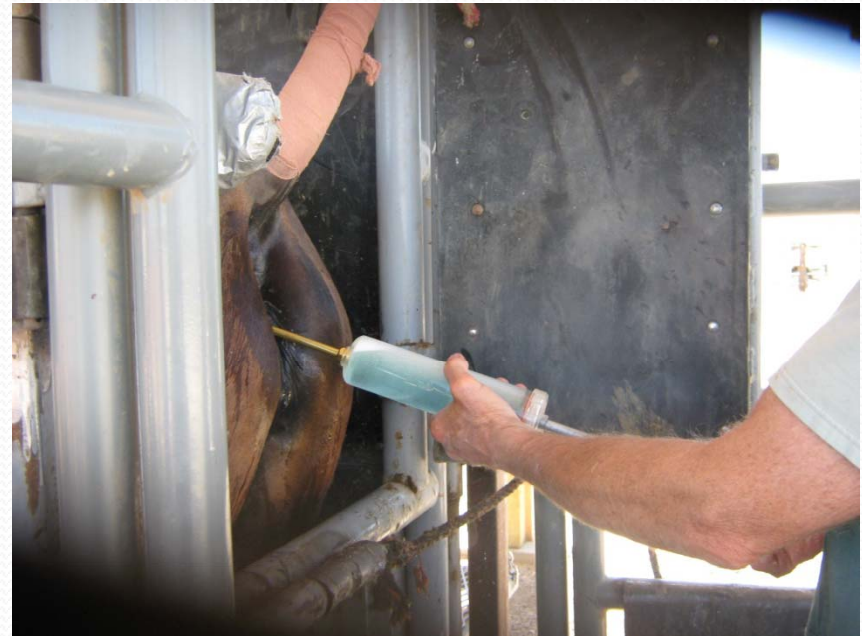


Special Considerations for Working with Wild Horses

- Safety
- Speed
- Cost
- One time procedure vs. biannual procedures
- Mechanical restraint (chute)
- Chemical restraint
- Trained personnel

Surgical Preparation

- Mares off feed for 48 hours (to decrease GI fill)
- Wrap and tie tail
- Empty rectum
- Clean vulva and vaginal vault with chlorhexidine in dosing syringe
- Sterile sleeve and sterile surgical gloves
- Cold-sterile instruments

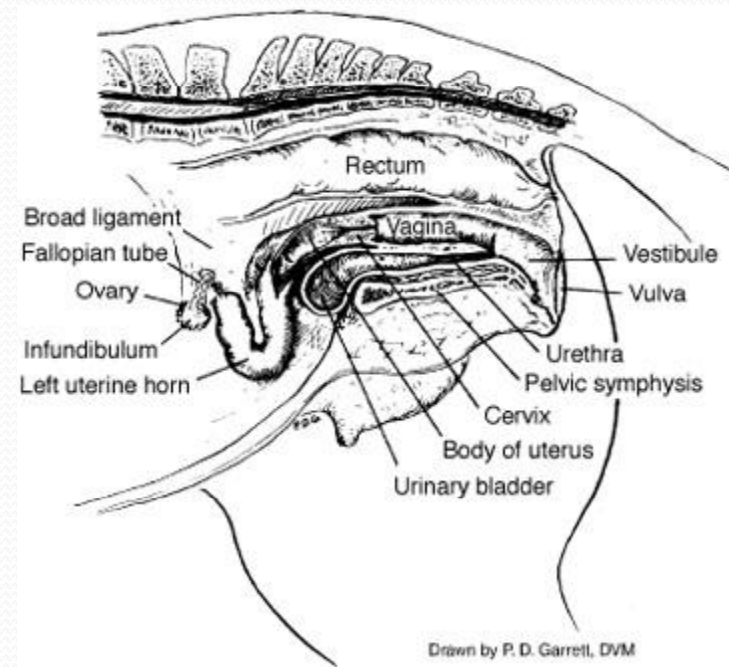






Incision

- Guard blade to 1-2mm length
- Incise at 11 or 1 o'clock
- Caudal to cervix
- Avoid penetrating rectum or cutting Femoral artery















Ovariectomy

- With chain ecraseur via colpotomy incision
- Special attention taken to avoid
 - Intestines
 - Femoral artery
 - Contamination



Ovariectomy Cons

- **Possible Complications**
 - **High risk with inexperienced surgeon**
 - Hemorrhage > bleeding out > death
 - Involving intestine in ecraseur chain
 - Accidental removal of non-ovarian structures
 - Infection
- **More time required than for injection of contraceptive**



Colpotomy Pros

- Fast!
 - Less than 5 minutes surgery time!
 - About 15 minutes for restraint, sedation, prep AND procedure
- 100% efficacious unlike PZP vaccine
 - **One time treatment**, no need for further round ups
- Minimal complications with experienced surgeon



VASECTOMIES



Sheldon
National Wildlife Refuge
Dufurrena Field Station
← 1 Mile

Wildlife District of 11 Miles
OPAL



















Conclusion

There is a wild horse and burro overpopulation problem!

It is expensive to maintain and feed the animals in holding facilities

The population doubles every four years

Adoption is on the decline

Need a method of fertility control that is cheap, fast and 100% efficacious

SPAY and NEUTER

