

12 Stallions Gelded at State's First Free Clinic

CHESTER--The first free gelding clinic in the state was held on Nov.14 at Gaston Farm Equestrian Center, LLC.

"Operation Gelding," a program under the auspices of the Horse Welfare Committee of the South Carolina Horsemen's Council, was a huge success, according to committee chair B.B. Weavil. A total of 12 stallions were gelded at no charge to their owners. The horses ranged in age from a yearling to 4- and 5-year old stallions of various breeds.



Veterinarians Dr. Jennifer Rash and Dr. Rebecca Reid donated their time to the gelding clinic, which was organized by Teri Stemper of Dream Equine Therapy Center. Horses started arriving about 9 a.m., and the vets finished the last one shortly after lunch. Each owner was given after-care instructions.

The purpose of Operation Gelding is to reduce the number of unwanted horses in the state. Any barn, horse association, or saddle club can sponsor a free gelding clinic. Other groups are encouraged to sponsor additional clinics with the assistance of the horsemen's council.

"We are trying to address the problem of over-breeding and unwanted horses," Weavil explained. "We had one owner who brought five stallions to be gelded." Information on Operation Gelding is being distributed to animal control offices, veterinarians, farriers, tack shops, and feed stores around the state



Another component of the program targets individual horse owners who might not be able to transport their horses safely. They may apply directly for assistance to the Horse Welfare Committee. Each application will be reviewed to determine need. When approved, payment for castration will be made to the attending veterinarian by the South Carolina Horsemen's Council.

Recommendations are also welcomed from veterinarians, horse welfare groups, or animal control shelters.

In addition, the SC Horsemen's Council offers a Horse Help Hotline to horse owners who need help in keeping and responsibly caring for their animals. Its goal is to connect, communicate, and educate. For more information on both programs visit the SCHC website at www.schorseouncil.org or contact B.B. Weavil at bbweavil@gmail.com.

Funding for Operation Gelding is raised at the yearly horsemen's council expo, through fund raising activities, and by private donations. SCHC is a 501 (c) (3) organization. Next year's Horse Expo will be February 5 at the South Carolina Equine Park in Camden. Anyone who is interested in horses is invited to attend.

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