



Statement of Advocacy for Updating Laws Relating to the Handling of Stray Equines

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Opportunities for Speedy Resolution of Livestock Running at Large

Livestock found running at large could easily and quickly be legally surrendered to the county or finder through a revision of existing Kentucky statute. This would limit expenses for the agency or individual taking in stray livestock while still allowing the rightful owner of such animals adequate time to locate and claim missing stock. After a brief holding period the stray livestock could be dispersed, surrendered to a rescue, or humanely euthanized as appropriate.

Background Facts

- Laws regarding stray livestock have not been updated since the 1940's
- Livestock running at large create a hazard on roadways which impacts the health and safety of humans
- Many horses are found running at large both in rural and populated areas of Kentucky
- Under current statute (KRS Chapter 259) the "taker up" of such animals is required to hold the stock for 2 years before the equine legally belongs to the finder
- Many county agencies and individuals faced with horses running at large do not have the finances to hold such animals according to the requirements of the law
- Often the cost of maintaining a stray horse for 2 years far exceeds the potential sale value of the animal
- Some counties have local ordinances which reduce the holding period for all "stray" animals regardless of species to a shorter period (often 5-7 days)

Changes which would improve the handling of stray horses and other livestock:

- Modify the KRS Chapter 259 as follows:
 - Implement consistent words for all large animals/livestock (currently cattle in many places, equines in others, the law should be applicable to livestock according to the definition KRS 257.010)
 - Specify and revise the process for the individual or agency that takes possession of the stray animal, including:
 - Review of all fees and assessments
 - Elimination of swearing of oaths, animal valuation and book of records
 - Require notification to local sheriff department of stray livestock
 - Require notification in local paper
 - Reduce holding time to 14 days from date of sheriff notification