

## WHAT IS EUTHANASIA?

The aim of euthanasia is to provide a quick and painless death of the horse to avoid unnecessary suffering from illness or injury. Making the decision is never easy. Determining the right time for you and your horse is important and your veterinary surgeon will be happy to have this discussion.

## WHY DO WE NEED TO EUTHANASE?

Euthanasia of horses can be performed for the following reasons:

- Illness resulting in incurable suffering
- The horse has become elderly and can no longer maintain a good quality of life.
- The horse has become a danger to the owner, itself or other animals.



## HOW IS MY HORSE EUTHANASED?

There are two methods of euthanasia available; both are quick and painless for the horse.

**Lethal injection** - The veterinary surgeon will sedate the horse then provide a large overdose of anesthetic, being given by intravenous injection through an intra-venous cannula. The horse will lose consciousness and collapse. You may see the horse take a final large deep breath which is normal.

**Shooting** - The horse may be sedated prior to being shot. The muzzle of the gun is placed on the horses forehead and the horse will fall down instantly. Be prepared for the noise of the shot, some blood from the nose and some reflex limb movements. Shooting can suit needle-shy horses and death is instant.

## WHERE DOES EUTHANASIA TAKE PLACE?

The familiar surroundings of the horses home will cause the least distress. Planning an area with vehicle access, so the horse can be easily collected is essential. Generally, if the situation allows, an indoor school or field space is best practice to ensure plenty of space and easy access.

## DO I NEED TO BE THERE?

You will want the horses last minutes to be peaceful. If you feel that you can stay calm and supportive, this will help to relax the horse. You could have a friend or family member present with you if preferred. If you are likely to be distressed, it is recommended that someone acts on your behalf to ensure a safe and calm environment for the euthanasia to take place.



## HOW DOES MY HORSE GET COLLECTED?

There are a number of options for collection of the horse depending on individual requirements. There are companies that offer these services and can collect the horse, provide an individual collection, can cremate the horse and also provide ashes back should you choose. These extras can be costly therefore, ensure that you do some research into this. Your veterinary practice will be able to advise and if required, organise the collection of the horse if required.

All veterinary surgeons and practices are all fully trained in intravenous injection and will be able to provide extensive and sympathetic advice on this procedure to horse owners. It is best to be prepared for end of life care, as this could be an emergency situation, so contact your veterinary practice for further information.