



Wyoming  
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

Dave Freudenthal, *Governor*  
Jason Fearnelyhough, *Director*  
2219 Carey Ave. • Cheyenne, WY 82002  
Phone: (307) 777-7321 • Fax: (307) 777-6593  
Web: agriculture.wy.gov • Email: wda1@state.wy.us

*The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.*

October 1, 2009

Bureau of Land Management  
Lander Field Office  
P.O. Box 589  
Lander, WY 82520

To Whom It May Concern at the Lander Field Office,

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining to the Wild Horse Gathering for the Red Desert Complex Wild Horse Herd Management Areas Environmental Assessment (WHGRDCEA).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As the proposed project affects our agriculture industry, our natural resources, and the welfare of our citizens, it is important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide us the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA supports the proposed action to gather wild horses and utilize a fertility control vaccine in the Red Desert Complex Wild Horse Management Areas. We commend the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for their development of a proposed action that includes removing excess horses from this area and adjacent lands using a selective removal strategy, collecting wild horse data for appropriate future herd management, and administering fertility treatments. The gathering of wild horses in this area is essential to achieving the appropriate management level (AML), ensuring a natural ecological balance to the range, and providing for the protection of rangeland resources. The proposed alternative also meets the direction and guidelines of the 2003 Consent between the State of Wyoming and U.S. Department of Interior and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

We support the continued work of the BLM to manage wild horse populations in the State of Wyoming, while providing for the protection of rangeland resources. The gathering of wild horses is in conformance with the Rawlins and Lander RMPs, provides for the continuation of healthy viable populations of wild horses on public lands for future generations to view and works to protect the delicate balance between rangeland resources and their multiple uses.

It was noted in the need for the proposal "As the wild horse population increases, horses begin increasing their range in search of forage, water, and space. Livestock actual use levels have

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also declined as permittees and BLM have tried to manage the rangelands within the HMAs to maintain an ecological balance between use and available forage.” This is of great concern to the agriculture industry and can have profound negative effects upon the sustainability of economic viable livestock operations and the goal of maintaining open space. We would urge the BLM to continue monitoring and perform gathers on a regular basis to keep herd levels at the low end of the AML to insure an ecological balance.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Red Desert Complex Wild Horse Herd Management Areas Environmental Assessment. We look forward to hearing of your decision about this project and urge your agency to continue to keep us informed of the current status of this project.

Sincerely,



Jason Fearneyhough  
Director

JF/lb

CC: Governor's Planning Office  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
State Grazing Board  
Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Wyoming Board of Agriculture  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association  
Wyoming Wool Growers Association  
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts