

**For Immediate Release**

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**OIG Report Addresses Expanding Wild Horse and Burro Population**

WASHINGTON (Dec. 15, 2010) - Representatives of the [Public Lands Council](#) (PLC) and [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA) were pleased to see the conclusions reached by a [report](#) on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wild Horse and Burro Program released yesterday, Dec. 14, 2010, by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Inspector General (OIG). The objective of the report was to determine whether BLM gathers of wild horses and burros are necessary and justified. The report concluded that while they sometimes result in the "unavoidable consequence" of animal deaths, the gathers are being carried out in a humane manner and are a necessary tool for population control.

According to the report, "The growing population of these animals must be addressed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance of the authorized uses of the land, thus gathers are necessary and justified actions."

The study also suggested other methods to manage the growing horse and burro herds on public lands.

"We were glad to see the OIG report recognized the need to develop new and better ways to manage the rapidly expanding population of wild horses and burros," said PLC President, John Falen. "We're in full support of continuing gathers—they're a useful and necessary management tool—but more has to be done to manage populations, including increased use of fertility controls. PLC represents public land ranching, one of many multiple uses of our public lands. We support actions that allow all users to benefit from healthy lands."

The report found that costs of the Wild Horse and Burro Program have increased from \$36.7 million in 2004 to more than \$66 million in 2010. The report concluded these budgeting trends are "not sustainable for the animals, the environment or the taxpayer."

"If BLM doesn't manage the herds, their size will double every four years. That would severely impact ranchers, wildlife and the environment as a whole," NCBA President-elect Bill Donald said. "But simply throwing more money at the Wild Horse and Burro Program isn't the answer. We are hopeful BLM takes seriously the recommendations made in this report and develops responsible plan to manage wild horse and burro populations."

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*The Public Lands Council (PLC) has represented livestock ranchers who use public lands since 1968, preserving the natural resources and unique heritage of the West. Public land ranchers own nearly 120 million acres of the most productive private land and manage vast areas of public land, accounting for critical wildlife habitat and the nation's natural resources. PLC works to maintain a stable business environment in which livestock producers can conserve the West and feed the nation and world.*



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