

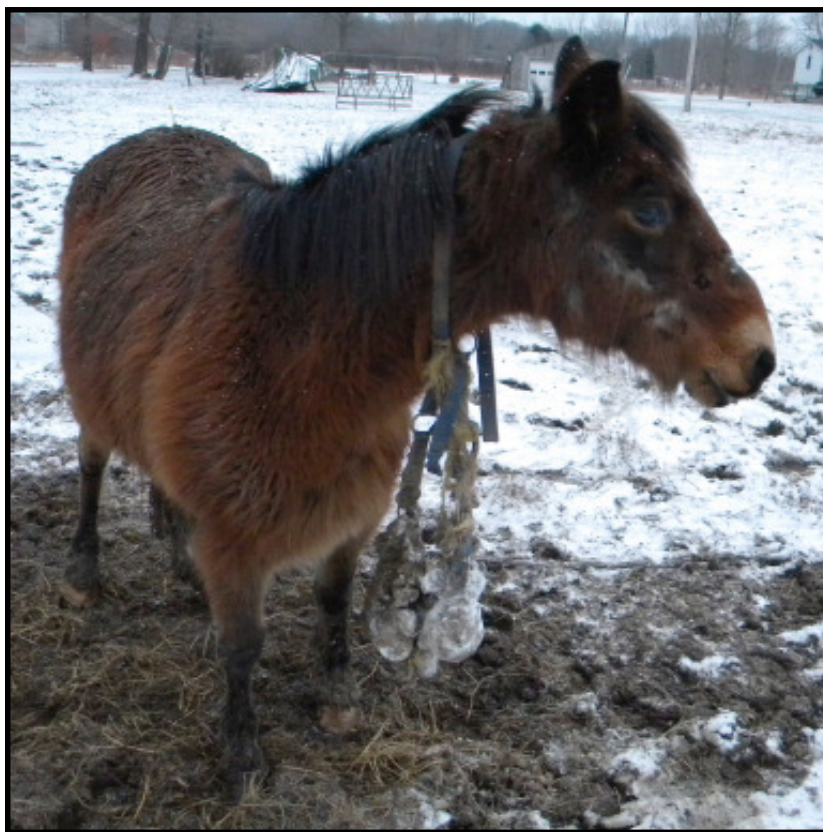
35 Bunnies, A Pregnant 20+ Year Old Pony, And A Small Friendly Calf Arrived At Happy Trails

“Happy Trails does not take in domestic animals such as dogs, cats or rabbits...” goes the saying on our answering machine.

Well, try telling the bunnies that when you’re on the scene of a cruelty call, and they’re looking out at our from their pathetic little cages which held no bedding and no water, and were sitting out in the middle of a yard in a snowstorm.

I often accompany Ohio humane officers on calls when they would like a second opinion on a situation regarding farm animals or horses. Last week, Portage County Humane Officer, Jennifer Sanderson, and I visited a location in Portage County which we had checked-on many times in the past. Not only had conditions *not* improved, conditions seemed to have worsened. The owner used to have a single small pony and a group of rabbits that he raised for meat.

This latest visit revealed that the small three-sided shelter that was questionable in the past had since caved in and lay in a pile of rubbish on the frozen ground. And there was now the addition of a small calf, and more cages of bunnies out in the yard than



ever before. Pointing to the pony and the calf, Jennifer asked the owner, “Where can these animals go for shelter?” The owner pointed to a run-down barn out back. “Well, they can go in there.” “Let’s go take a look,” Jen suggested.

We have learned over the years that things are never as they seem.

In many places the ground had not completely frozen, and it was like walking through an ankle-deep icy swamp as we broke through the top layer of crust and headed for the back of the property. The pony stood before us with a big rope hanging from her neck that had been dragged through the freezing muck. Heavy ice balls hung from the ends of the rope. “That makes it easier to catch her,” we were told. The same heavy ice balls hung from the fur around her back ankles. “She’s pregnant.” the owner announced. I immediately hoped to God he



was wrong. She was underweight and in pretty sad shape. As we watched, she dug her heavy ice-encrusted rope around her neck wherever she went. “How do you know she’s pregnant?” I inquired. “I got a stallion and brought him here,” was the reply. I looked around but didn’t see any other horses. At least not yet.

As we wound our way through the maize of electric wire fence, it was soon clear that the calf could not get back to the nasty structure called a barn. “Where can the calf go for shelter?”

“Well, he can go....” the owner waived his hands as he looked around, trying to come up with an area where the calf could go for shelter. There simply wasn’t any. He was fenced off



no food. The calf could actually see a round bale of hay sitting in the driveway, but the he couldn’t get to it. Neither could the pony.

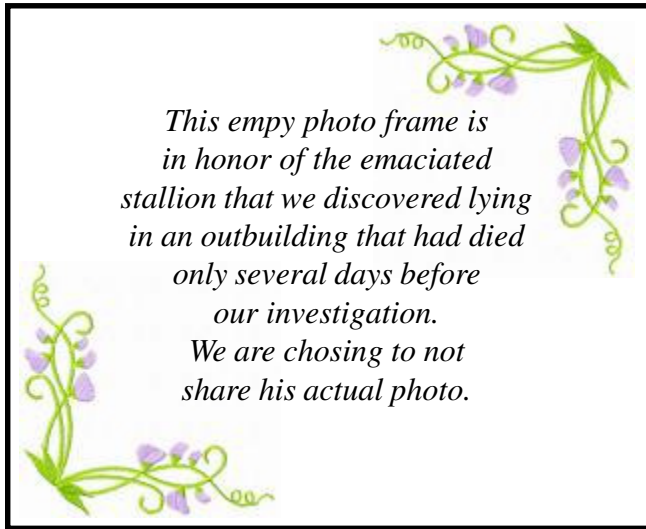


from everything. “Well, the other day he was just laying down right there.” He pointed into the middle of the yard in a pile of snow. There was no shelter anywhere for the calf. There was also no water and

We continued on our journey back to the barn. We waded through a swampy, icy little gully and walked around the back of the shack-like building. With the way the fencing was set up, we had to completely walk around the entire structure to get to the open front. “Here’s where the pony can get into *if* she wants to,” we were told. I walk into the small area littered with snow-covered debris and looked straight up at the bright-blue late-afternoon sky. There was no roof.

Jen was in front of me as we walked toward the second half of the open structure. Suddenly she stopped abruptly and I heard her gasp. I turned to see an absolutely horrified look on her face. “Dear God, what is *that*?” The owner stood back and

casually said, “Oh, that was the stallion. He died about three days ago.” I stepped around the corner of the open doorway to see a full-sized, emaciated,



frozen, dead horse lying across a pile of junk up against the wall of the structure. His hip bones and ribs all clearly stuck out. It was one of those sights you will never forget.

We walked with the owner back up to the front of the property where 35 bunnies, many in open-air cages, sat in misery. There was no bedding and no signs of water.

The decision was made to remove all the animals from this property.

Happy Trails rescue workers went into action and made a place at the sanctuary to welcome the pregnant pony and the hungry calf. Jen was certain that the APL was not going to be able to house 35 bunnies. “Well, we can’t leave them here. We’ll take them,” I offered on behalf of Happy Trails. *What? Bunnies?* In the back of my mind, I knew I’d have to hear about this decision from an assortment of people. The answering machine’s message continued to play over and over in the back of my head, “*Happy Trails does not take in domestic animals such as dogs, cats or rabbits...*” That night the Happy Trails rescue workers also made comfortable emergency arrangements for 35 bunnies. (*Sigh.*)

As usual, all animals are vet checked upon arrival at the sanctuary. The following morning, Dr. Randy Alger gave a thorough check-up to the pony and the



(Above) Gallagher in a warm stall at Happy Trails.

calf. Both were very underweight.

Sadly, he confirmed that the pony was four months pregnant. To make matters worse, he determined that she was somewhere in her twenties. So, we now have an *old* pregnant underweight pony. The

calf was underweight, but very sweet and very social.

The bunnies...well, there's lots of bunnies. The kind of folks at Barberton Vet Clinic are helping us get everyone spayed and neutered, six rabbits at a time.

All the animals have now been signed over to Happy Trails, and we can legally adopt them to caring, loving homes. **I am positive that, together with your networking help, we will find *thee* perfect homes for the animals from this rescue!**

If you have a warm spot in your heart and a big, open stall suitable for birthing, maybe the old pony and her baby will find a way to become a part of your family.

If you have a love for cows, maybe this adorable little calf that we named Gallagher would be just the perfect addition to your farm pet family! He enjoys attention, getting hugs and smooches, and is the perfect animal to educate people on the incredible personality of cows!

Now for the bunnies...

We got it all!!!

Colors:

For you horse lovers who love your paints, we have paint bunnies! Beautiful black and white bunnies who have incredible markings! We have brown and white bunnies who look like they have maps of the world on them. We have gray and white bunnies who look very proper and distinguished! We have solid white bunnies who will go with any home decor! Then there are tan bunnies and bunnies that are mixed shades of brown.

Gender:

All bunnies are in the process of being spayed and neutered, vaccinated, etc., and each bunny will

be released to homes after their surgery is complete. There are plenty of boys *or* girls to pick from.

Personality:

Again, we got it all! Some are laid back, some are energetic, some are simply mellow, some are very curious and inquisitive, and some are rarin' to go! Choose a bunny that fits your personality!

Adopting:

What we look for in an adoptive home is that the bunny will be kept indoors and will be a part of the family. No more sitting alone outside in wire cages or dumped in someone's cold, drafty barn.

Bunnies need space for plenty of exercise and environmental stimulation.

Bunny Specialist:

Bunny behavior experts will be available to talk to you about proper care of bunnies and to go over their special needs. You may have questions like, *how do I*



litter-train my bunny, or how often do I need to trim it's nails? We have folks who can help you out with these types of questions!

For more information on adopting any of the animals from this rescue, call Happy Trails at 330-296-5914.