



Position Statement: Euthanasia

GFAS believes that the humane euthanasia of an animal is an acceptable final option when all other options to relieve pain and suffering have been assessed. It is not to be used as a management tool, to create space for more animals, but is a decision governed by an ethical humane euthanasia policy developed by the sanctuary/rescue/rehabilitation organization.

Consistent with such a policy, a euthanasia decision should be made by designated personnel in consultation with a licensed veterinarian and/or their authorized representative, with final approval by any necessary parties. Euthanasia is performed in compliance with any national or local law, using the most appropriate and humane method available, and administered under the strict supervision of a licensed veterinarian and, where applicable, any required governmental authorities.

Euthanasia shall be based on health and quality of life issues of the individual animal concerned.

Euthanasia may be considered under the following situations:

- Incurable medical/behavioral health status that is likely to cause unmanageable pain or suffering;
- Medical/behavioral health status where treatment is likely to cause unreasonable pain or suffering;
- Medical/behavioral health status where treatment will not be effective in restoring the animal to an acceptable quality of life;
- Medical/behavioral health status where treatment is beyond the normal community standards of monetary expenditure and would cause an excessive burden on the sanctuary resources, and no other facility/placement provides a reasonable alternative option;
- The process of aging has resulted in an unacceptable quality of life for the animal;
- In the event of presenting an infectious disease risk to other animals and/or humans;
- In the event of presenting a high risk of harming themselves, other animals and/or humans.

Additional considerations for facilities engaged in rehabilitation and reintroduction of wildlife:

For facilities engaged in the rehabilitation and reintroduction of wildlife and which do not provide permanent sanctuary care, consideration of an animal's ability and/or potential to survive as a free-living animal may also form a basis for euthanasia, as this is part of consideration of the animal's quality of life. For those facilities, this determination should be in accordance with an appropriate protocol or other "decision tree" analysis that an animal cannot be reintroduced to its natural habitat and there is no appropriate short- or long-term care option.



Additional considerations for equine disposition/placement:

GFAS believes that sensible, thoughtful, and humane solutions are available to manage equine populations, such as responsible breeding and ownership practices, safety net programs, placement in sanctuary/rescue care, rehoming/adoption to private individuals, and humane euthanasia under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian, per GFAS Standards. Equines residing with GFAS Accredited and Verified facilities are not to be disposed of at livestock auctions, dealers, brokers, “kill buyers”, or slaughterhouses.