



The Sunset of Life

BEGINNING THE
CONVERSATION
ABOUT
END OF LIFE



Quality of Life and Death

There is no easy time to think through end-of-life planning for our horses. Yet, we all need to understand that, with a little support, having a plan for that transition--whether planned or not--will always benefit both our beloved horse and ourselves.

This brief guide is the first step, like a friend holding your hand while you start to think through what you want for your horse. Importantly, this will lead to having essential conversations with those people who are most important to your horse: family, care-givers, veterinarians, bodyworkers, etc.

A Journaling Exercise

- On this date, how would I describe my horse's current state of health?
- What am I most concerned about when thinking about my horse's future?
- What do I need to be prepared for?
- How well does he/she move, eat, and drink?
- What does a good day look like for my horse? What is the best part of that day?
- What does a bad day look like for my horse? What is the worst part of that day?
- If my horse's health worsens, what do I want to *never* have happen?
- If my horse's health worsens, what do I want to ensure does happen?
- If I am fortunate to see my horse through old-age, how do I feel about the possibility of palliative care or hospice care?
- What are my thoughts about equine euthanasia, along with the method and the process that my veterinarian follows?
- Do I want to be present with my horse during his/her last moments? If yes, what do I want that to look like? If not, who would I like to be present for my horse?

A Good Start...

- Keep a written list of your horse's full healthcare team (with contact info) in several easy to access locations (barn, home, office, mobile phone, etc.)
- Who are the key support team members (family, friends, barn owner/manager, veterinarians, bodyworkers, etc.) that you need to have a conversation with about your preferences and wishes for your horse?
- Who are the veterinarians and healthcare practitioners you want to support your horse when in need?
- Make a list of concerns you would like to discuss with your team.
- Write down what you want your key support team to know about your wishes and preferences for your horse.
- Consider completing an Advance Directive for your horse and then sharing copies with your veterinarians, barn owner/manager and key family and friends. *(Please reach out to Sam for a free copy of the AD that she uses with clients)*

Next Steps...

Now that you have started thinking about your wishes for your beloved horse and getting a good start with preparations, you may want to consider having a conversation with an Animal End-of-Life Doula, like Sam, about more advanced care planning. As an Animal End-of-Life Doula, Sam offers completely customized services to support your horse, the herd, family & friends and yourself. Some of the services include:

- Calming & comforting bodywork for the horse
- Support and care for the guardian, herd, and family
- Coordination of care
- Celebration of life
- Rituals and more...

Questions about end-of-life support?
Please reach out to Sam at Red Dog Ranch Equine LLC
414-791-5696 | sam@rdrequine.com
Please visit www.rdrequine.com