The intent of this SOP is to establish a minimum code of practices for all parties associated with
the Lost Meadows Mule Refuge. It is important to remember that animal rescue is a "fluid
business" with many variables. These rules are not intended to cover every aspect of our work
but merely establish standardized guidelines. The Lost Meadows Mule Refuge strives to remain
transparent in our operations while still providing a level of safety to the mules in our care and
security to the information entrusted to us by our supporters. LMMR holds itself to the highest
level of ethical stewardship and expects the same from those that choose to align themselves to
it.
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SECTION 1
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

100 Mule Operations

Due diligence is important. LMMR cannot rescue every mule. We must steward our resources and choose the cases in which the mules are in imminent peril.

LMMR does not accept mules from people or groups who have "rescued" mules from kill pens or auctions. LMMR reserves the right to evaluate which mules come into our care. If LMMR allows others to accept mules with the expectations that LMMR will take them in, LMMR will lose control over our system.

101 Rescue Cases

Every mule at the Lost Meadows Mule Refuge began its journey in our system as a rescue case. Rescue cases are submitted online on our website www.mulerescue.org and recorded on Lightspoke. Each case is automatically assigned a rescue case number that will stay with the mule's file allowing us to remember the circumstances that brought the mule into our care.

Rescue cases must be verified prior to any decision to offer assistance. The Director must approve a rescue case before any arrangements can be made.

102 Mule Acquisition Policy

All mules being considered for rescue must have a completed Rescue Case Form and Number on file.
Law enforcement and government agencies will be given preferential treatment.
All mule rescue cases must be pre-approved by the Executive Director.
Mules become the sole property of Lost Meadows Mule Refuge.
LMMR does not guarantee that surrendered mules will remain together.
A release of ownership or a bill of sale must be signed by the surrendering party.
LMMR will not enter any property without the owner’s permission or law enforcement accompaniment.
LMMR will only take other livestock under special circumstances.

103 Loading Mules Onto Trailers

Loading is one of the most stressful situations that a mule can be placed in. Extreme care must be taken with dealing with mules in these situations. LMMR does not allow the use of electric prods by any employee, contractor or volunteer.

If panels are used to crowd mules onto the trailer, take the time to properly secure the panels to the trailer and each other. Mules are capable of exerting tremendous force. A failure in your panels will not only complicate your loading process but may lead to the mules escaping the property all together. It is always best to load within a fenced area.
Group mules by size whenever possible. This is especially important with miniature mules. During transport miniatures are the most susceptible to being kicked and trampled. LMMR does not tie mules inside the trailer while in motion. This allows the mules to find their own balance.

As mules can be especially difficult to load and reload, it is impossible to feed and water large quantities of them while in transport. Because of this, it is our policy to limit the amount of trailer time to 48 hours. After 48 hours, the mules must be unloaded for a minimum of 24 hours and allowed to eat and drink. Mules can only be subjected to one 48 hour transport without food and water once in a 7 day period.

Keep accurate transfer/processing forms if you have multiple pick-ups. Enter information into Lightspoke immediately and accurately.

104 Quarantine Protocol

All mules arriving into the LMMR system must be placed in quarantine upon arrival. Mules who arrived together stay together in quarantine. Trailer loads from separate rescue cases may not be combined into the same pen for any reason.
Any mules showing signs of nasal discharge, coughing, or labored breathing shall be kept apart from any other mules.
If, during the quarantine period, any mule within a group becomes ill, all mules within that group must be assumed ill and kept in quarantine for an extended time.
When a mule or mule group has cleared quarantine, they must be removed from the area in a way that they do not come in contact with any other quarantine pens. If they do, then the quarantine period must be done again.
If there is an escape from the primary quarantine pen and a mule cross contaminates other quarantine pens, the quarantine period must begin again for all pens.

104.1 Quarantine Time

All mules entering into the LMMR System, regardless of origin, must be quarantined for a minimum of 21 days.

104.2 Quarantine Facilities

Quarantine facilities should be no less than 400’ away from all other non-quarantined animals. Each pen shall have its own water receptacle. Automatic waters should have back-flow preventers.
Each pen must have a receptacle to hold hay or grain.
Each pen must provide a wind block and overhead shelter.
Hand sanitizer is to be mounted at each pen.
Quarantine area must have a secondary perimeter fence in case of escape.

104.3 Quarantine Regulations
Mules will receive deworming, Vetera Gold and RFID chips upon arrival. The mule’s information must be recorded in Lightspoke.
Whenever any contact is made with a mule, or any item that comes in contact with a mule, employees must sanitize hands upon leaving the pen and prior to moving onto the next pen. If any mule is seen to have nasal discharge, coughing, diarrhea, not eating, holding head low or at a strange angle; notify your supervisor immediately.
Rubber gloves must be worn whenever a staff member is dealing with any obviously sick mule. Gloves are to be thrown away immediately upon exiting the pen.
Water troughs are to be cleaned every day with diluted bleach.

104.4 Quarantine Equipment

Quarantine must have its own rakes, shovels and wheelbarrows. All equipment will be sprayed with bleach after each pen is cleaned prior to moving onto the next pen. Sprayer with 25% bleach/75% water must be kept in quarantine at all times. Trailers used to transport ANY new mules must be sanitized with bleach after each use. A 30 gallon trash can marked “Quarantine Only” is to be kept in the Quarantine area at all times. Spare 30 gallon liners are to be kept in the bottom of the can with one in place at all times. Quarantine trash must be tied and disposed of off-site. Quarantine will have its own chute and alleyway system. Under no circumstance should Quarantined mules be in contact with ANY non-quarantine equipment except for the trailers. Under no circumstance should resident mules be in contact with ANY quarantine equipment.

105 Feeding

LMMR feeds its mules by weight, not volume. It is important to know the bale and flake weight of your particular hay. This weight will vary from load to load, so it is important to recalculate on a regular basis.

A mule, in normal condition and in a normal climate, requires 2% of its body weight in feed every day. LMMR averages this to 20 pounds per mule, this is based on a 1,000 pound mule. This is slightly more than most mules actually need but allows for waste and competition.

Whenever possible, hay should be fed in large feed areas that do not require individual hand feeding every day. Free choice or a designated feed area are preferable as it allows the mules ample time to eat and it saves man-hours.

It is a good practice to group mules with similar needs in the same pens. This allows for the mules to be monitored and saves time in feeding. If multiple mules are fed in the same pen, there must be room for all mules to eat without fear of competition.

Special needs mules must have their nutritional needs assessed on an individual basis. Elderly mules with missing teeth may need a feed ration mixed with water. Feed can also be used to administer supplements and medicines.
All equines require a fresh, clean water supply for proper digestion. Never feed mules unless water is available. If there is a problem with the water supply, immediately remove the mules from the feed and address the water issue.

106 Water

An average mule on an average day consumes 10 gallons of water. This amount will vary based on climate conditions and feed types.

Automatic waterers should be used whenever possible. The actual size of the water receptacle should be sized to accommodate the mules that it serves. Ensure that the water pressure is strong enough to recharge the trough so that it cannot be emptied should many mules drink at the same time. High capacity troughs should be used for larger herds, while smaller ones will be adequate for a pen holding only a few mules.

The minimum cleaning cycle during the summer months of all water troughs is once per week. During the colder months where ice is accumulating, the period can be extended for favorable weather conditions. A 10% bleach solution should be used on any trough that can be thoroughly rinsed. A stiff bristled brush should be used to completely remove any algae, dirt or other pollutants.

During the freezing portions of winter, ice must be removed from the water troughs every morning or heated to melting. Breaking the ice is not sufficient as the ice will continue to chill the water and allow for a quicker freeze. By completely removing the ice, the sun can warm the water to a more suitable temperature during the day.

Automatic waterers do not perform well in winter. Ice can block hoses even after the ambient air temperature has risen above 32 degrees. It is a good practice to ensure the waterers are filled during the later part of the afternoon and then shut off and drain the hoses. This will allow for an easier time in refilling the waterers in the morning.

All water troughs must be visually inspected each day.

107 Enrichment

Enrichment provides positive physical, psychological and social experiences, leading to overall good health and well-being. Offering enrichment is providing preventative care because it reduces boredom and stress and provides an outlet to utilize excess energy.

Enrichment is not a convenience or a luxury, it is a daily necessity for the mules in our care. All mules that are kept in pens must receive daily enrichment in a 2:1 ratio. This means providing two enrichment items per head to minimize resource guarding and aggressive behavior. Enrichment should be ½ the daily hay ration per pen. Excess can be given during cold weather to help their body metabolisms.

108 Health Maintenance
108.1 Worming

Mules should be wormed upon arrival and then placed on a six month worming schedule. LMMR mules are dewormed when the weather changes in the spring and again in the fall. Fecal studies will be performed during the summer months. The scheduled worming should rotate products with Ivermectin, Strongid and Anthelcide. All wormers are given based on weight. Mules with a heavy parasite load should be given the product Quest. Contact a veterinarian in these cases prior to the commencement of treatment. For very sick mules, the starting dose should be set at 200 pounds. After two weeks, a full dose can be given.

108.2 Vaccine Protocol

Vaccines are administered when a mule arrives into the LMMR system. A booster dose is given three weeks later, when the mule clears quarantine. The preferred product is a combination vaccine containing: Influenza, Rhino, Tetanus and West Nile. Annual boosters are given every 12 months. All residents are given annual Tetanus Toxoid vaccines.

Vaccines must be refrigerated upon arrival. Heat will kill the vaccine and render it useless. Only take the amount of product that you will use that day. Keep extra vaccines in an ice chest during the vaccination process.

Vaccines are given in the neck. It is important to aspirate the syringe to ensure that you are in the muscle and not in a blood vessel. Vaccines are given using a 3 cc syringe and a 1" 24 gauge needle.

Use a new needle and syringe for each mule. Dispose of needles in an appropriate sharps container.

The rabies vaccine is to be administered to all adoptable mules before adoption. Also, any mules traveling to states where rabies vaccine is required by law shall also be vaccinated.

108.3 Teeth

A mule's teeth can acquire sharp edges from years of grinding their food. These edges can cut the inside of the mouth making it difficult for a mule to chew properly. A warning sign is wet clumps of undigested hay laying in the feeding area.

All mules teeth will be checked annually by a certified equine dentist. This can be done in conjunction with annual vaccines. They should also be assessed for additional feed requirements. All dental work must be recorded on Lightspoke.

108.4 Hoof Care

Upon arrival, the mule's hooves should be evaluated. Many mules come into the LMMR system with overgrown hooves.
The growth of a mule’s hooves is affected by many things. Quality of feed, air temperature, overall health and the amount of pen space all can speed up or slow down the hoof growth. Because of this, it is impossible to create a policy based on a timed interval. Each mule group should be checked regularly for hoof growth.

Chutes, tilt chutes and squeeze chutes are all used to facilitate hoof trimming.

108.5 Low Body Score Mules

Upon arrival mules are evaluated for any health issues contributing towards their weight loss. Any conditions present are treated by our in-house staff or our veterinarian depending on severity. Mules who have a body score of 4 or less are placed into a special feed pen called a “TLC pen”.

Mules placed in our TLC pens are given free-choice coastal hay. 1 flake of alfalfa per head and 10 pounds of Purina Senior grain per head are evenly distributed into several troughs throughout the pen every day. This enables our special feeding mules to “graze” all day and digest on their own schedule, whereas forced individual bucket feeding may result in colic, digestive issues and choke.

All mules are continually monitored and evaluated while in TLC pens.

Once the mules have returned to a body score of 7, they are returned to the main paddocks, unless they are “hard keepers”, otherwise they will remain in the TLC pens for the duration of their time at LMMR.

109 Herd Assignment and Separation

Once a mule has cleared quarantine, it should be given a herd assignment. Dealing with large numbers of mules takes a great deal of manpower. This task is made somewhat easier by grouping the mules into larger herds.

The typical herd assignments are training, sanctuary, general population, and senior special needs.

110 Castration

All male mules in the LMMR system must be castrated. The date of castration must be recorded on Lightspoke. The exception to the castration rule involves very old mules and mules with chronic health problems. These mules, when it has been determined that they cannot tolerate the procedure, shall be identified with a neckband and kept separate from female equines.

111 Euthanasia

Lost Meadows Mule Rescue provides the utmost care to the mules within our system. We have
made a commitment to long term care to every mule that we rescue. A reality of this commitment is that some mules are suffering and there is no more that can be done for them.

Equine quality of life is defined as:

1. Ability to interact with the herd in a normal manner without fear or pain
2. Ability to eat and drink without fear or pain
3. Ability to move in a normal manner without fear or pain
4. Ability to urinate/defecate in a normal manner without pain
5. Ability to thrive, not just survive

Lost Meadows Mule Refuge uses this personally-designed QOL assessment sheet to provide a guide for the euthanasia decision-making process Quality of Life Assessment

Two senior staff members or one staff member and a veterinarian must agree that the mule needs to be euthanized. A Morte form must be completed before disposal of the body and the date of death must be recorded in Lightspoke.

Where it is possible to bury the mule a minimum of six feet, the preferred method of euthanasia is an inter-venous drug administered by a veterinarian. The mule's remains must be disposed of immediately as any carrion eater can die from eating the carcass.

In emergency situations, a qualified shooter may use a large caliber handgun to euthanize the mule.

AAEP Equine Euthanasia Guidelines

1. An Equine should not have to endure continuous or unmanageable pain from a condition that is chronic and incurable.
2. An Equine should not have to endure a medical or surgical condition that has a hopeless chance of survival.
3. An Equine should not have to remain alive if it has an unmanageable medical condition that renders it a hazard to itself or its handlers.
4. An Equine should not have to receive continuous analgesic medication for the relief of pain for the rest of its life.
5. An Equine should not have to endure a lifetime of continuous individual box stall confinement for prevention or relief of unmanageable pain or suffering.

AAEP Techniques for Euthanasia

1. Intravenous administration of an overdose of barbiturates
2. Gunshot to the brain
3. Penetrating captive bolt to the brain
4. Intravenous administration of a solution of concentrated potassium chloride (KCI) with the horse in a surgical plane of general anesthesia
5. Alternative methods may be necessary in special circumstances
112 Adoption

To ensure the safety and well-being of LMMR's mules, we have established a comprehensive Adoption Policy. This policy is a minimum set of requirements that covers most adoptions. There may be special circumstances involved that require additional guidelines.

All prospective adopters must begin the process by filling out the online adoption form found on our website at www.mulerescue.org and recorded on Lightspoke. The adopter is contacted and screened over the phone. If the adopter passes the screening process, they are invited out to the facility to pick out their mule(s).

112.1 Adoption Contract

LMMR Adoption Policy

113 Water Systems

Water is one of the most important features of the LMMR properties. In most cases, water is pumped from underground wells and usually stored in above ground tanks. To ensure a consistent water supply, the water systems are designed with redundancy, allowing for an uninterrupted water supply at all times.

All well pumps and pressure pumps should be tested monthly. All storage tanks should be checked weekly to ensure that they are at their maximum capacity. All ranch personnel should be instructed on how the water system works and what to do in the event of a line break, pump failure or any other possible event.

114 Feed Storage

LMMR consumes vast amounts of hay each day. Keeping up with the demand is a difficult and never-ending task. It is important to care for the hay and other feeds that are stored in quantity at the facility. Hay should be stored under cover at all times. If the supply is larger than our storage areas can hold, it may be stored outdoors. Any hay stored unprotected should be used first, saving the stored hay for later use.

Bagged feed must be kept indoors in a varmint proof room. Bags that have been opened must be stored in plastic bins with secure lids. Feed should be rotated monthly to ensure that the oldest feed is fed first. Any bags found to contain mold should be returned to the supplier for credit.

115 Manure Management

Manure management is essential for the health of our mules as well as the protection of the environment. All pens where the mules are kept in confined conditions should be cleaned every 3 days or sooner if labor is available. Larger paddocks should be raked by a tractor every 5-7 days.

The preferred method of manure disposal is composting. Manure can be used as a fertilizer in our large fields by means of a manure spreader.
116 Fencing

LMMR facilities utilize a large array of fencing types. All fences should be monitored daily for any breaks, stretching or other problems. If a "quick fix" is necessary, a more permanent repair must be made as soon as possible.

All gates must have a locking mechanism: latch with clip, chain, etc. Gates and their latches must be "mule proof". No "wrapping" chains, using string or any type of rigging that is sure to fail.

All T-posts must have safety caps in place.

117 Tools and Equipment

LMMR keeps an array of hand tools, power tools and other equipment for use on the LMMR facilities. This equipment is only to be used for rescue related business and should not be removed from the property without prior authorization from the Director.
Tools and equipment must be returned to the tool crib after each use. The tool crib should be locked at all times with access only to approved LMMR employees and volunteers.

SECTION 2
CORPORATE POLICIES

118 Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct (the Code) is to let you know the standards of conduct and business ethics we expect from employees, trustees, and volunteers of Lost Meadows Mule Refuge (LMMR).

If you violate any portion of the Code, or you let someone else violate the Code, or you fail to report someone violating the code, you will be subject to disciplinary action and in extreme cases you will be fired.

The Code applies to immediate family and in-laws as it relates to LMMR business. While we know you may not be able to control or influence what they do, it is the responsibility of trustees, volunteers and employees to fully disclose any matter that would violate the Code. This Code of Conduct isn’t designed to cover every possible situation. It does, however, clearly lay out the principles and ethics we expect from LMMR employees, volunteers, and Trustees.
You are responsible for reading and understanding everything in this document.

118.1 Communications

We expect all communications to be accurate and complete. This includes phone calls, emails, voicemail, Facebook, Twitter, and any other way of communicating we end up using.
Only the Executive Director and certain Trustees are authorized to publicly communicate information about the operations and business conditions of LMMR. When they do so their communications must be complete, fair, accurate, and timely.

Communications with the press are only to be done by the Executive Director or by employees with prior authorization from the Executive Director.

118.2 Confidential Information

Certain information is confidential and is never to be communicated to anyone outside of LMMR. This includes but is not limited to undisclosed financial information related to the operation of the rescue, and donor names and their contribution amounts. The Executive Director may, at their discretion, disclose the names and donation levels of donors if they have documentation ensuring that the donor will allow them to do so.

118.3 Playing Fair

We treat our donors, fellow employees, volunteers, suppliers, contractors, trustees, and anyone else we do business with fairly. We do not take unfair advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresenting the truth, or any other unfair practice.

118.4 Gifts

LMMR employees, volunteers, and Trustees may receive non-monetary gifts of nominal value (less than $20) from vendors and contractors. Gifts of greater value must be declined, returned, and reported to the Executive Director.

118.5 Electronic Mail and Internet Use

All electronic mail, Internet and Intranet facilities provided by LMMR are the property of LMMR and are to be used primarily for business purposes. Limited personal use of electronic media is acceptable, as in the case of personal telephone calls, but only when used responsibly and when the privilege is not abused.

1. You should not expect anything you do on a LMMR computer to be private.
2. You should not expect any emails using your LMMR email address to be private.
3. LMMR reserves the right to monitor, review and disclose your emails.

Additionally, you may not use LMMR computers or your LMMR email address for viewing porn, sending hate mail, participating in political discussions or any other non-LMMR business (with the exceptions noted above).

118.6 Use of LMMR Assets
LMMR assets (for example vehicles, trailers, and computers) are to be used for LMMR business and may not be used for personal business. This includes:

1. Using LMMR assets (trucks, trailers, computers, etc.) for side jobs, side businesses, or any other non-rescue related activity

118.7 Dangerous Animals

Special care must be taken when working around our mules. The wild bred mules can be especially dangerous as they panic easily. Always allow them plenty of room to move away from you.

No Lost Meadows employee or volunteer shall be placed in a situation where they must handle a dangerous animal that is beyond their skill level. Should anyone find themselves in close proximity to an animal that they are uncomfortable with, they must remove themselves from the situation immediately and contact their supervisor.

200 Volunteer Program

200.1 Program Description

The assistance of facility volunteers is an important aspect of Lost Meadow’s mission as well as being good stewards of the finances entrusted to us. Therefore, it is imperative that we maintain a fun, practical and safe place for people of all ages to participate in our work.

200.2 Program Guidelines

While there is no minimum age for volunteers, common sense must come into play when we make our decisions on who is able to assist us. We do not allow unsupervised children at our facility without a parent or guardian. The minimum age for unsupervised minors is 16 years of age (subject to the maturity of the individual). Very young children are the responsibility of their parents and are not allowed into any pen/paddock with live animals.

All volunteers will wear appropriate clothing when working in and around animals.

Volunteers with a history of animal abuse, sex crimes or domestic violence are not permitted to volunteer on any LMMR facility.

200.3 Volunteer Application and Release of Liability

All volunteers must fill out a LMMR Volunteer Release Form prior to commencement of work/training. Minors must have the signature of a parent or guardian. This is done for the safety of our employees, the mules and because of various contractual obligations that LMMR is under.

200.4 Volunteer Release Form

LMMR Volunteer Release Form 18+
LMMR Volunteer Release Form <18