

Euthanasia:

Euthanasia of the horse is always an upsetting time for all involved. Knowing what to expect can make a difficult decision a little easier and less distressing.

The humane destruction of a horse can be undertaken by a vet or a licensed slaughterman. There are 2 methods of euthanasia currently available.

- **Lethal injection:** The vet may sedate the horse prior to administering the injection, particularly if the horse is fractious or in severe pain. The injection most commonly used consists of a barbiturate that induces anaesthesia and another drug that then stops the heart. Collapse usually occurs within one minute of injection. It is common for there to be some reflex nervous activity following collapse, this includes muscle tremors and gasping. This method is often preferred as it more peaceful although options for disposal are limited and more expensive

- **Shooting:** This is a very quick method of euthanasia and allows the horse to go to hunt kennels, unlike the lethal injection. It is impractical for vets to carry guns with them at all times so this option is not always available, particularly in emergency situations. Shot horses will bleed from their wound and this can be distressing for owners.

Disposal:

Euthanased horses are collected by a company for cremation unless other arrangements are made. Individual cremation can be requested at an additional fee.

Under current legislation the burial of horses is permitted. You must contact your local Trading Standards office for guidelines regarding the burial site. The guidelines are in place to ensure there is no interference with a local watercourse.