

## High Price Of Hay Causing Horses To Be Given Up Or Neglected

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Some Kansas horse owners are having a hard time feeding their horses. They're feeling the pain after drought conditions over the past few years caused hay prices to skyrocket. The price of hay is so high, horses are being given up, even neglected as a result.

Hope In The Valley Equine Rescue and Sanctuary was built to house about 20 horses but now they're at double that. The same reason they're full is one of the same reasons sheriff's deputies have seen an increase in horse neglect complaints.



Most of the horses at Hope In The Valley were abandoned, neglected, or given up by their owners but recently Ande Armstrong says the high price of hay has kept her phone ringing off the hook.

"Definitely people who couldn't afford to buy the hay anymore. They either were calling around frantically to see if they knew anyone that could take them or they were calling us asking did we have room could we take their animal," Ande Armstrong with Hope In The Valley Equine Rescue and Sanctuary said.

Sheriff's deputies say they've received a lot more calls in the past few years about possible neglect cases also because of the hike in hay prices.

"We hear that quite often you know that horse owners, especially in the last 6 months, that horse owners are finding a good quality hay source," Deputy Christy Fischer with the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office said.

For horse owners out there who are struggling to afford hay, Deputy Fischer says the best option may be to find your horse another home, otherwise you might be guilty of criminal neglect.

"If someone's knowingly not providing their animals with enough food, that is criminal neglect. Even though it may be difficult for the horse owner to think of other opportunities for that animal, that may be in their best interest," Deputy Fischer said.

Ande Armstrong says her rescue group is always there to help horse owners when they can but even they've been affected by the price increase of hay.

"I can't tell you the number of horses I've had to turn away because we're full we're at capacity and I have to make sure I have enough hay for our horses to eat," Armstrong said.

"If you think you know a horse that's being neglected or if you yourself just think you can't afford to feed your own horses, you're asked to call the Sedgwick County Animal Control or contact one of your local horse rescue groups. They will be able to provide with options to get the care your animal needs.