

Coming Home

By Alex | April 8th, 2015 | [Ranch Updates](#) | [No Comments](#)

This was written by one of our new boarders and posted on her website, www.farriersandiego.com. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

I am a tad nostalgic and sentimental when it comes to missing Northern California (obviously, since I mention it in every. single. post). I took pride in having barefoot and healthy horses on my own property, living in a herd environment. They were happy, their coats gleamed, I fed high quality Orchard grass, and their feet were darn near perfect. Moving down here though, all that changed. Was my Mustang in a stall? No, but a pen the size of a round pen is still a cage in my mind. Was he abused or neglected? Absolutely not. Was it my ideal place for him (other than with me)? Nope. Not even close.

I preach to my followers and clients about always striving to do better for your horse, to give them more space, better hay, etc. I push you to raise the bar, to keep the standard high for your equine partner, and yet here I was, secretly in agony over where I had placed my horse. (Kind of sounds like a hypocrite if you ask me...) I struggled and even shed tears about my boarding situation. I began to hate seeing him in his pen, I felt guilty leaving him, and on the days I couldn't make it out I felt a huge nagging weight on my shoulders. I feel I can "read" my horse quite well, and felt a change in his energy. He may have entirely well been feeding off my negative attitude, but one day (and I swear to this) he was staring off and a tear rolled down his big handsome cheek. My heart broke then and there. Now don't get me wrong, I was thankful for my hippie range rat to be accepted where he was, and most caged horses would give half their hay ration to live in a pen his size, but in my heart I knew there was something else out there, not only for HIM, but for US. There just had to be more, right? I'm not the only one with this standard and "vision," right?

Well, guess what? I did it. I found it. I found paradise. Or, as close as I think going to get to paradise down here. This amazing woman, Ansley Marlow, and I connected on Facebook. You should really follow her and watch her work her magic. Through social media she has saved over a thousand horses from slaughter. The self-proclaimed "little house wife from San Marcos" is secretly sporting wings and a halo. Long story short, we connected on Facebook and she came out to meet me and the range rat in person the very next day. I actually think she would have taken him home if she could have fit him in her little Civic. We talked and it seemed we shared the same vision for what horse boarding should and could be. She insisted she drive me out to "this place she knew." A week later, after major tears were shed about possibly sending my boy back north to live the life of a happy horse, Ansley and I got in her little car and headed towards Bonsall. (And yes, I really would

have driven my horse back home to stay with friends. His happiness and well being truly comes before mine.) We pull into this property and my eyes filled tears, because I knew instantly that THIS was IT. The energy was so peaceful. The space was wonderful. The sun was dipping down behind rolling hills, casting a soft orange light over fields and grazing horses. I was welcomed with warm smiles and handshakes, soft whinnies, and most important, a sense that I was home.

Maybe I should start at the beginning. A woman, Lynne Hayes, also shared my vision, and after getting fed up with the boarding situation in Southern California, decided to do something to change it. And so became Horse Spirit Ranch in Bonsall, Ca. Once the Khemosabi breeding farm, the property is set up with a barn, pastures, paddocks, and mare motels. The barn, even though I detest them, is stunning and immaculate. In a pasture the horses are currently in small herds of 2-4. They are fed quality Orchard hay and the pastures are hand cleaned twice a day and manure is hauled off the property(buh-bye flies!). The pastures are hard packed dirt(hello, rock hard tootsies!) and have shelters to protect the horses from the heat and rain. The herds are monitored to make sure no one horse is bullying or being picked on, and if need be, horses will be shuffled to different pastures so the herd remains peaceful. Needless to say, I couldn't get my horse out there fast enough.

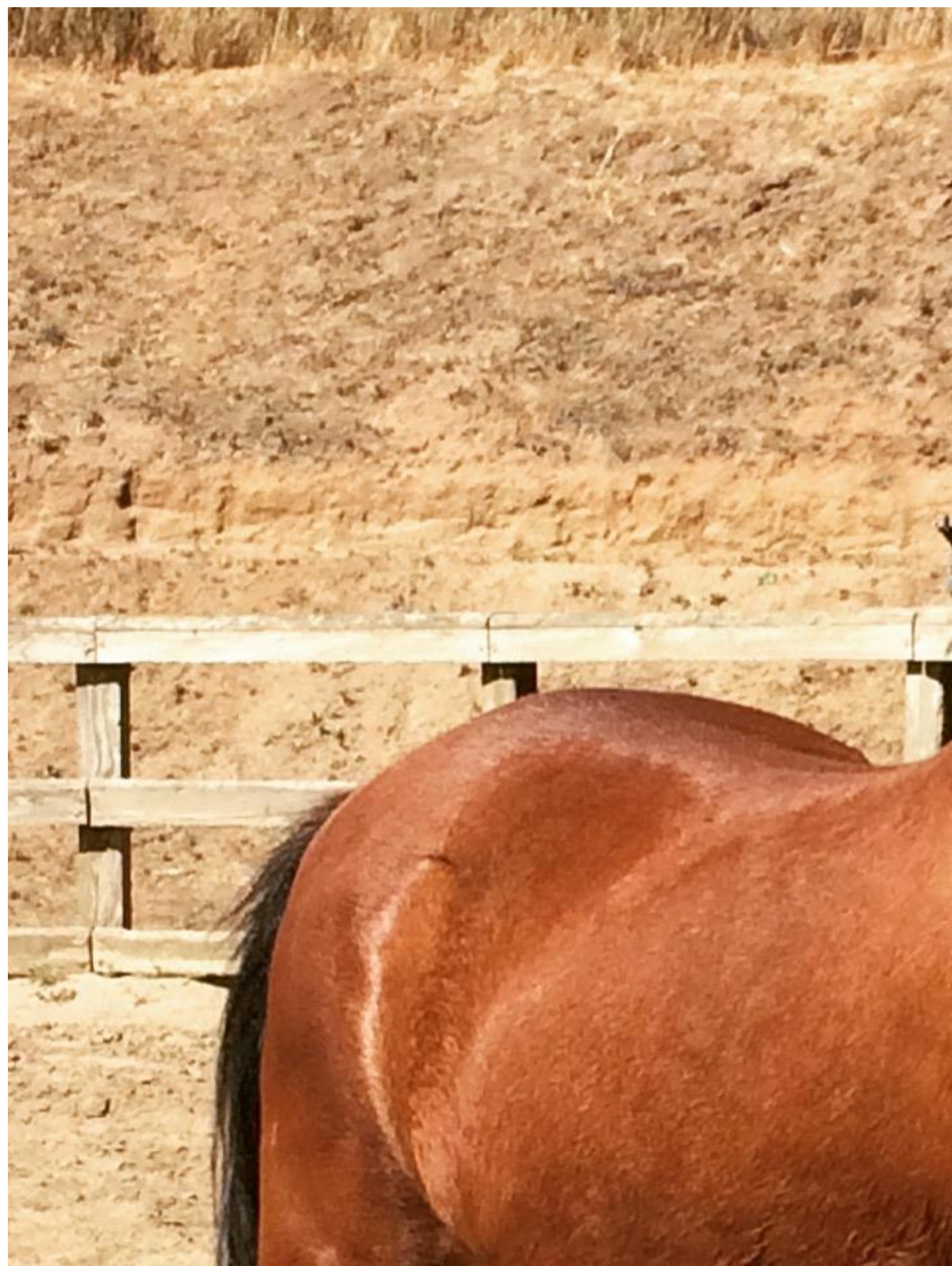
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We moved the 'stang a week ago. A week ago his coat was a little dull, and the thrush in his feet was downright goopy and embarrassing. Made me sick to my stomach to see the decline in his hooves. Oh, and maybe he was a little chubby, but don't tell him I said that...I moved him into the largest pasture(almost an acre) and after watching the initial herd integration drama(which always captivates me to see them communicate and establish the pecking order), I left. By that evening I had updates from Lynne on how he was doing in the herd! I went out a few times to check on him, but really just left him alone for a week to settle in.



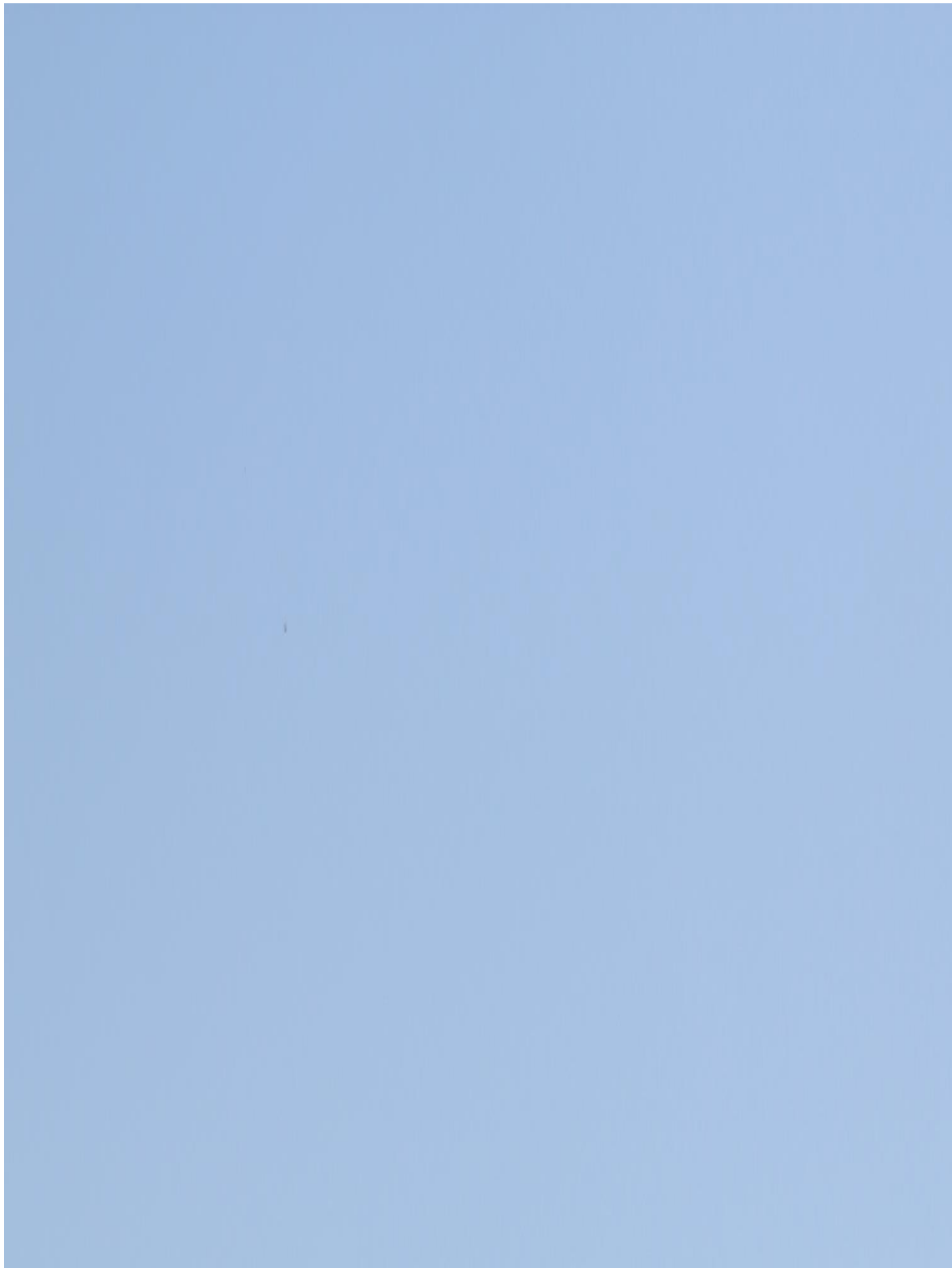
When I went out yesterday to play with him in the arena, I noticed a few changes with him. First, the physical, in which Chubby shed some much needed pounds from moving around in a herd, on a hill, gaining his muscle back. His coat has already started to brighten, and his feet, oh, his feet—I didn't even have to use a hoof pick to scrape out impacted feces, and they had already started to dry out and toughen up. Mentally he seems happy and content. He is alert to all the new sights and sounds of a barn, but overall much more relaxed.





I am beyond thrilled with his new location, not just for him but for both of us. There is relief in knowing he is happier and healthier, and a lack of guilt if I don't make it out, because I know that if I'm not there he is happy just being a horse. The community at this barn is really quite wonderful, as Cinco and I have been welcomed with open arms. There are natural horsemanship clinics for us to attend, cows next door to work, and friendships to be made.

The point of all of this, is to show that environment truly plays a role in your horse's health. Seeing the changes in my horse in just one week makes me believe even more firmly in viewing the whole horse. Diet, space, herd environment, and hoof care are all connected in making a happy and healthy horse.



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