

## New Website Offers Support for Blind Appaloosas

**A nonprofit ranch is seeking more research for uveitis and blindness in Appaloosa Horses.**

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For the first time ever, a new website—BlindAppaloosas.org—has documented in one location all the available veterinary research showing how Appaloosas are at increased risk for both uveitis and blindness, compared to other breeds. BlindAppaloosas.org was developed by a Montana-based nonprofit, the Rolling Dog Ranch Animal Sanctuary. The ranch specializes in caring for disabled animals, including blind horses. Thirteen blind Appaloosas are among them.

“While the research to date clearly demonstrates the Appaloosa’s greater risk for uveitis and blindness, what we don’t know is why the breed suffers disproportionately from this disability,” says Steve Smith, co-founder of the Rolling Dog Ranch. “That’s why we are calling on the Appaloosa Horse Club, the official breed association, to begin funding research into this problem and taking other steps to address this issue.”

“Funding further research is critical,” Smith says. “The sooner we understand the genetic factors that put the Appaloosa at greater risk for uveitis and blindness, the sooner we can act on that information to reduce the risk.”

In addition to documenting past and current research studies on the subject, the website offers a detailed discussion by a distinguished equine ophthalmologist of how uveitis in the Appaloosa is a different form of the disease.