



Horse Slaughter: Truth and Deception

U.S. horses have never been raised for human consumption. However, due to the foreign demand for horse flesh for wealthy diners in Europe and Asia, America's horses have been bought, stolen or acquired under false pretenses by the foreign-owned horse slaughter industry for the mass killing of our horses for a foreign market. Due to having a vested interest in the deceptive trade, which promotes and contributes to the export of tens of thousands of America's horses for slaughter, companies and special interest associations that support the ruthless industry continually deceive the media by giving biased statements, which are untruthful and unsubstantiated. They also take part in actions that misrepresent the truth by means of actively opposing federal legislation, and by attempting to mislead the public and members of Congress with false claims.

Pro-slaughter lobbyists argue that there are only two sides to the issue and merely two ways to view horses -- either as a business and a source of income or with sentimental emotion and illogical passion. But where do morals and ethics lie? Any true horseman wants to see horse slaughter end based upon moral and ethical values. Money, emotion, and passion don't negate the importance of morals and ethics, because inhumanity is not an alternative.

Horse slaughterhouses are not the solution for preventing equine cruelty or abuse or as a means to end their suffering, because horse slaughter is not to be confused with "humane euthanasia." Horse slaughter and humane euthanasia are on opposite and conflicting ends of the continuum. Instead, slaughterhouses have been concretely proven to exacerbate the very thing they're intended to eradicate -- equine cruelty and abuse. The most recent legislative action has put the American horse that has partnered with us in war, work and sport in critical risk.

Past Legislation

In 2006, Senator Jim Moran (D-VA) of the Agricultural Committee, inserted language into the Agricultural Appropriations Bill, termed the "Moran Amendment," which ended federal government funding for inspections of horses for slaughter at plants and transit for slaughter for five years. Stopping horse meat inspections by cutting its funding was intended as a short-term solution until official horse slaughter legislation can get passed through federal legislation. Although there has been significant support and congressional sponsorship for both the House and Senate Horse Slaughter Prevention Act Bills, they haven't moved out of Congressional committees and to the Senate floor for a vote.

The three remaining U.S. horse slaughter plants were closed in 2007 as a result of state legislation following the 1998 closure of California's plant, which passed with 60 percent of the vote. In 2007, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a 1949 Texas state law, which made it illegal to sell horsemeat and the two Texas slaughterhouses were closed. The last remaining plant, located in Illinois, was closed following a ruling by the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, which prohibited the transportation and slaughter of horses. In the 5th Circuit's decision, Judge Fortunato Benavides wrote "The lone cowboy riding his horse on a Texas trail is a cinematic icon. Not once in memory did the cowboy eat his horse." However, American horses continue to be transported and slaughtered in Canada and Mexico for wealthy diners in Europe and Japan where their meat is considered a delicacy. The overwhelming majority of horses sent to slaughter are the by-product of the for-profit horse industry.

Current Legislation

Congressman Jack Kingston (R-GA), Chairman of the Agricultural Appropriations Committee and committee members, Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) quietly stripped the "Moran Amendment" language from the 2012 Appropriations Bill during a closed-door conference, ignoring their own colleagues and the voices of the American people, which resulted in the lifting of the five-year horse slaughter ban, thereby allowing federal government funds to be used for horse meat inspections.

On November 18, 2011, President Barack Obama signed this Bill, called the Agricultural Appropriations Bill H.2112, which effectively lifted the five-year ban on horse slaughter in the U.S., allowing the federal government to fund USDA inspections of horses for slaughter. Because Kohl, Blunt and Kingston held the Appropriations Bill until the last minute, it forced President Obama to sign it in order to prevent a government shutdown, thus, breaking his 2008 campaign promise to the American people to end horse slaughter, as well as the transport of horses to slaughter. However, President Obama has had ample opportunity to address the issue by making a statement to the American people and those whom he made his campaign promise to, in addition to issuing an Executive Order to save American horses from slaughter, none of which he has done. His silence and inaction is the equivalent of endorsing the pro-slaughter lobby and signing a death sentence for America's faithful horses.

Immediately after lifting the horse slaughter ban, the White House began receiving tremendous opposition from the American people, which resulted in the USDA issuing an official statement on December 13, 2011, which coincided with the federally recognized "Day of the Horse" that "...there will be no horse slaughter likely in the foreseeable future." Interestingly, the White House sent an email to those who signed an official White House online petition to pass federal legislation that would outlaw horse slaughter, as well as transport to slaughter, which informed recipients "While some horses continue to be exported to other countries for slaughter, USDA makes it a priority to ensure that these horses are transported and treated humanely." However, the USDA continues to fail in its job to ensure humane transportation conditions, as proven by first-hand investigations and testimonies of buyers, horse transport truck drivers and horse slaughter trade workers who have described the abuse and cruelty despite the assertion that it's being effectively managed.

It was not specifically a "horse slaughter Bill" and the Appropriations Bill contained no reference exclusively tied to the slaughter of horses. Since the Agricultural Appropriations Bill doesn't allocate funds for horse meat inspections and the USDA is expecting additional budget cuts, resuming horse slaughter could potentially cost American taxpayers \$5 million a year. In addition, the policy will pull an already limited number of USDA inspectors from overseeing vital safety programs for the nation's largest food supply market. According to Chris Heyde, Deputy Director of the Animal Welfare Institute's Government and Legal Affairs Department, "...this was all done to appease a few foreign companies and Big Ag."

And "This action shows the true nature of some elected officials -- that they are more concerned about helping special interests than doing what they were elected to do." Despite this setback, Representative Moran, stated "I am committed to doing everything in my power to prevent the resumption of horse slaughter and will force Congress to debate this important policy in an open, democratic manner at every opportunity."

Federal regulatory policies and related approval guidelines for the re-opening of horse slaughterhouses could potentially cost Americans approximately \$50 million in the midst of a recession, and when Congress should be focusing on reducing spending and creating U.S. jobs instead, as opposed to forcing American taxpayers to subsidize a foreign market which is endemic of cruelty and predatory business practices, and involves animals that have never been raised to enter the food supply.

Opening U.S. horse slaughter plants will not produce an abundance of new jobs as Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) asserts on his website, where he promises a return of "jobs shipped to Canada and Mexico." However, slaughter industry jobs were never exported to Canada and Mexico, since they existed in the same capacity before, during and after the U.S. slaughter plants were closed. Senator Max Baucus wants Americans to believe that opening U.S. horse slaughter plants will improve the economy and job conditions, as revealed in his statement, "Lifting the ban will give Americans a shot at regaining lost jobs..." even though an insignificant number of jobs were created by means of the three slaughter plants combined, all of which existed before the ban.

Simone Netherlands, founder of Respect4Horses, questioned the fiscal justification for opening horse slaughter plants by stating, "In this time when the focus of Congress is supposedly on reducing spending and creating jobs, it is a ludicrous measure to spend tax dollars in order to reinstate an inherently cruel predatory business, from which Americans stand to gain nothing. Horse slaughter plants operating until 2007 have never created a total of more than 178 jobs." According to Paula Bacon, the former Mayor of Kaufman, Texas, which was home to one of the operating slaughter plants, "Horse slaughter means very few, very low wage jobs. This so-called business brought in virtually no tax revenues."

Abuse, Neglect and Abandonment

Contrary to horse slaughter supporters, closing U.S. slaughter plants has not resulted in severe hardship to the horses or caused mass cruelty, starvation and abandonment for those who don't or are unable to feed or care for them. All states have enforceable anti-cruelty laws designed to prevent irresponsible owners from starving, neglecting, abusing or turning their horses loose, all of which are a criminal issue. In addition, horse rescues typically work alongside law enforcement agencies by legally removing abused or neglected horses, assisting law enforcement in court proceedings and educating owners regarding proper care and medical attention when possible.

The poor economy has understandably caused hardship for some horse owners, and hay prices have doubled in a number of states as a result of an increase in demand from Texas due to drought conditions. The spike in neglect from those who couldn't afford to properly care for their horses occurred in 2009, which correlates with the recession. Due to the fact that U.S. plants closed in 2007, yet the rise in neglect didn't ensue until two years later, is proof that it was in fact the economy, not the U.S. horse slaughter ban that was the cause. In addition, it's noteworthy that, according to the Humane Society of the United States, all types of animals suffered from neglect or abandonment during the economic downturn, not just horses. If you follow the pro-slaughter logic, it would conclude that horse slaughter results in a decline in neglect, whereas the opposite is true. In Canada, where there are four operating horse slaughter plants, they have experienced the same increase in neglect cases since the recession as the United States.

According to the California Livestock and Identification Bureau, the state saw a 34 percent decrease in horse theft, and there was no documented rise in neglect or abuse cases following California's horse slaughter ban in 1998. In addition, since the closure of the Illinois horse slaughter plant, there has been no corresponding rise in abandonment, neglect or abuse cases according to authorities. Conversely, the horse slaughter industry promotes over-breeding and neglect by encouraging a throw-away mentality for careless owners, insatiable breeders and ruthless kill buyers looking for a financial gain.

Supporters of horse slaughter, which includes Senator Max Baucus and Representative Jack Kingston, who were instrumental in the secretive lifting of the horse slaughter ban, assert there has been a marked rise in horse abuse, neglect and abandonment, and argue it necessitates a reinstatement of horse slaughter in the U.S. Kingston stated "We wanted to allow horse slaughter again in America because of an unanticipated problem with horse neglect and abandonment." Other pro-slaughter groups maintain that horses have suffered in the long run, with an excessive amount of those being underfed or starved, as well as those who are being abandoned at alarming rates. They also contend that the ban has depressed the horse market and that more horses are being slaughtered now than when U.S. plants were in operation.

These statements are not only misguided, but completely false according to research statistics. A total of one percent of the horse population was being slaughtered between the Texas and Illinois plants, in addition to those being sent to Canada and Mexico, and one percent of the total horse population has continued to be slaughtered since U.S. slaughterhouses were closed. Therefore, there has been no corresponding rise in the number of "unwanted" horses being sent to slaughter. Since the same one percent of "unwanted" horses are continuing to be slaughtered, clearly, the pro-slaughter argument that closing U.S. slaughterhouses resulted in destruction of the equine market has failed miserably. Where is the increase in the number of "unwanted" horses? There is none. Additionally, the Animal Law Coalition studied the cause and effect relationship between the rate of horse neglect and the closing of U.S. slaughterhouses, which their researchers concluded "On the question of whether the closings were the cause of a pronounced increase in abuse we find that neither the cause nor the effect actually happened."

Unwanted Horses

The majority of horses that go to slaughter are not unwanted, but purchased by "kill buyers," which are middlemen who work on behalf of the foreign-owned horse slaughter industry. The horses they buy are not sick, old, diseased or dying, but in good health because they bring the best price per pound for their meat. According to the USDA Guidelines for Handling and Transporting Equines to Slaughter, more than 92 percent of horses slaughtered are "in good to excellent condition." According to a 2001 Animal Sciences Research Report by The Department of Animal Sciences, Colorado State University, titled *Characterizations of Horses at Auctions and in Slaughter Plants*, "...more than 70 percent were in good, fat to obese condition..." Opposite of pro-slaughter claims that ending horse slaughter will result in a surplus of unwanted horses with nowhere for them to go, the National Agricultural Statistics Services stated that since the decline in the number of horses slaughtered, those horses have been absorbed into the current population through re-homing, adoption and rescue organizations.

Since it's estimated that approximately one percent of the horse population goes to slaughter, it can be assumed, based upon pro-slaughter arguments, that that one percent is "unwanted." However, according to the American Horse Council, "We do not have reliable statistics on the number of horses that become unwanted each year. We do know that 90,000 to 100,000 unwanted horses have been sent to slaughter annually, and that the total number of unwanted horses is substantially greater than this."

It's interesting to note that the total number of "unwanted horses" seems to align perfectly with the number of horses being slaughtered each year. And, with regard to the American Horse Council's research, it would be worthy to know if they took into account the total number of horses that were and continue to be stolen on behalf of the horse slaughter trade, as well as those that are purchased by kill buyers under false pretenses from private owners and at auction.

With regard to horse abandonment allegations, according to [Habitat for Horses](#), there were nearly identical reports of horses being turned loose in state parks, which were appearing in newspapers across the country written by local reporters. The stories followed similar patterns, which included people abandoning horses in the woods and left to starve to death, and typically quoted a local official or state park representatives. However, when the stories were investigated and all sheriff and park representative denied making statements that they were quoted as making, it became apparent they were not only false, but planted in an attempt to convince people that horse slaughter is necessary. As stated by Habitat for Horses, "One park in Kentucky did have 20 horses running around, but the owner said he did that every year -- same 20 horses. Whenever an "authority" stated that unwanted horses were being dumped by the hundreds, they could not produce any proof."

Types of Horses Slaughtered

The horses that end up in slaughterhouses don't need to be killed, but are young and healthy, and the result of over-breeding by those attempting to produce the "perfect horse," to supply the horse racing industry with a constant influx of rising stars, riding school and show horses, carriage horses, family pets, [wild Mustangs](#) rounded up by the BLM, mares and foals that are by-products of the [Premarin industry](#), which is an estrogen replacement drug for menopausal women; those excessively being bred and culled by indiscriminate breeders because they are the wrong color or conformation, horses purchased by kill buyers from unsuspecting individual owners that are unaware of whom they're selling their horses to and stolen horses.

Those who support horse slaughter argue that it's a necessary means of getting rid of older, diseased and neglected or starved horses. However, according to the USDA and a survey by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service or APHI, 92 percent of the 138,000 slaughtered in 2010 were in "good health" and "good to excellent condition." And since the slaughterhouses refuse to accept thin, skinny or malnourished horses, this argument is unmistakably false. Kill buyers don't purchase skinny, ill or injured horses because they have difficulty withstanding the long, crowded transportation conditions to the slaughter plants and they aren't allowed to cross the border for slaughter. John Severeide, a brand inspector for the Wyoming Livestock Board stated "Ironically, it was often younger horses that ended up with no place to go." The presumption that horse slaughter is an answer to ending a horse's suffering is a lie told by the pro-slaughter industry, which is in pursuit of the almighty dollar.

Reality of the Slaughter Pipeline

Although some horses are sold directly into slaughter by irresponsible owners, the majority arrive at the slaughterhouse through livestock auctions where unsuspecting owners sell their horses to kill buyers often for minimal sums of money. Many of these horses are faithful and trusting pets whose owners list them for sale in ads where kill buyers lurk. Despite the closing of U.S. slaughter plants, the buyers continue to purchase and haul as many horses as possible and transport them to Mexico and Canada for slaughter.

Horses are often acquired by kill buyers without truthful or full disclosure, contributing to both consumer fraud and horse theft. A large number of horses aren't bought legally and end up in the slaughter pipeline for the horsemeat trade through theft and some of which are sold illegally at auctions, where original ownership becomes difficult to trace. Once the horse is purchased by the kill buyer and sent to slaughter, all evidence is destroyed, making it nearly impossible for law enforcement to prosecute the thieves.

Kill buyers can earn up to \$1,000 per horse depending on the slaughter plant. Horse theft has been a recurring problem since the early 70s, which is when the U.S. began exporting horsemeat to other countries. Horses are regularly stolen out of barns and pastures for the slaughter trade, facilitating private property rights violations since the horses are sold for a profit. The large number of horse thefts in the U.S. necessitated the creation of a wide network of individuals and organizations working together to locate stolen horses and reunite them with their owners, called [Stolen Horse International, Inc.](#) Statistics from states which were home to horse slaughter plants, such as California, Texas and Illinois, as well as areas that have transport to slaughter holding facilities has shown horse slaughter not only increases, but encourages theft.

Mass Abandonment Allegations

Horse slaughter lobbyists have made reports that mass horse abandonments have been occurring since U.S. plants closed because owners couldn't afford to feed them and that the U.S. horse slaughter ban caused horses to suffer in the long run because owners "no longer had a slaughter option." Slaughter statistics show, however, that since the same numbers of horses are continuing to be slaughtered as there were before and after U.S. plants were closed, the allegations failed to support the pro-slaughter theory. Additionally, if owners are having difficulty properly caring for their horses and choosing to abandon them, why would they also suffer the expense of transporting their horses hundreds or thousands of miles just to turn them loose as opposed to euthanizing them at a much lower cost?

Following the closure of U.S. plants in 2007, pro-slaughter stories have been published claiming horses were being abandoned in the Florida Everglades, at strip mines in Kentucky and on ranches in Oregon. All of the stories were investigated and proven to either be drastically distorted or completely false. Since 2009, there have been an increasing number of seemingly legitimate reports of abandoned horses in remote areas of states along the southwest border.

Due to the highly suspicious nature of mass abandonment allegations, the [Equine Welfare Alliance](#) conducted a six month investigation, along with other animal investigation organizations. Their findings revealed most or all of the more than 5,000 horses a year are being abandoned after being rejected for slaughter at the Mexican border. According to the Equine Welfare Alliance, "Most of these horses could clearly be identified as domestic stock from such indications as nail holes in their hooves (where shoes had recently been removed) but no other clues to their source were found." And "A few of these horses actually had hide removed, apparently to obscure a brand."

A significant part of their investigation came from the European Union's report, which stated the Mexican horse slaughter plant rejected 5,336 horses at Border Crossing Offices or OISAs during the audit period between January and October, 2010. In addition, in August of 2011, approximately 300 horses were found dead and at various stages of starvation in a secluded feedlot near Presidio, Texas, indicating they had been disposed of at different times. In an effort to explore why the horses had been left to perish within a few short miles from the border, where they could have been sold to the slaughter plants in Mexico, the Equine Welfare Alliance was told horses simply "fall out of the system" when rejected at the Mexican border when researching the owner/shipper certificate system from the Animal and Plant Inspection Service or APHIS.

The most economical way for kill buyers to dispose of rejected slaughter horses is to abandon them in nearby, isolated lots or deserted stretches of roads. Ironically, while the horse slaughter lobbyists have been so vehemently declaring abandonment was a result of a lack of legal U.S. slaughter, it's been established that the horse slaughter industry is the culprit and cause of the mass abandonments, and a lie told to support a greedy, immoral and criminal industry which fails to prove its efficacy.

Overbreeding

In addition to the Thoroughbred horse racing industry, the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) is the biggest offender with regard to overbreeding in the horse industry. Interestingly, the Quarter horse is also the most slaughtered, with 70 percent of them being slaughter-bound, as per 2010 statistics from the USDA. The AQHA promotes a self-destructive business model of breeding as many horses as possible and disposing of those that don't meet predetermined criteria, thereby contributing to the inhumane treatment of horses and the slaughter industry. Consequently, there are approximately 70,000 Quarter horses slaughtered every year in Canada and Mexico, which is subsequently higher than when the U.S. slaughter plants were in operation. Interestingly, the AQHA has publicly supported the practice of horse slaughter by issuing an action alert with the headline "Don't Let Our Nation's Horses Suffer Any Longer." Their readers were asked to contact their elected officials to ensure that no legislation is passed which would "prevent the USDA from paying the salary of any employee to inspect horse processing facilities." Since more than 70 percent of Americans oppose horse slaughter, the AQHA was careful not to use the words "horse slaughter," but instead refers to it as "horse processing."

Despite the recession, American horse breeders have continued to perform haphazard and destructively excessive breeding patterns when the market couldn't bear it, and the economy couldn't effectively manage it. Breed associations continue to offer millions of dollars in breed incentives every year, yet refuse to use a portion of the proceeds to support horse rescues for low-cost gelding clinics/programs or as funds for humane euthanasia for those who can't afford it -- all of which could be highly successful solutions to overbreeding.

According to R.T. Fitch, founder of [Wild Horse Freedom Federation](#), horse slaughter creates the problems it claims to solve. He states "As a convenient and lucrative means of disposal, horse slaughter has created an over-population problem of horses, by enabling irresponsible breeding, and encouraging a quick turn around and dumping of horses. Very much like the housing market and the banking industry, the horse breeding industry is self destructing by saturating the market and horse slaughter is the bail out."

The U.S. government has provisions for breeding incentives, which encourages a market in which a horse's value is highest during the first two years of its life. According to [Respect4Horses](#) "A non-horse person might be surprised to learn that the breeding farms receive both huge breeding incentives from their perspective breeding associations, as well as huge tax advantages and write-offs from the IRS. When you throw in the current state of the economy on top of the overpopulation problem and add in the breeding plans for coming years, the future seems rather bleak for American horses."

According to Marjorie Miller, DVM, of Tampa, Florida, uneducated breeders contribute to the slaughter of thousands of horses each year by indiscriminately producing horses that have insignificant market value due to inferior pedigree, limited talent and problems with confirmation, soundness and temperament and therefore, run a higher risk of ending up at auction and entering the slaughter pipeline. According to Dr. Ellen Buck, DVM, and Director of the [Equine Protection for The Humane Society of the United States](#)

“The HSUS considers irresponsible breeding to be one of the major concerns facing horses and their owners, yet arguably one of the more easily corrected.” And “With thoughtful and responsible breeding, we could get this problem under control in just a few years.”

Promoting easily accessible and low-cost gelding clinics, in addition to launching a national campaign that would encourage responsible breeding, and controlling and regulating breeding practices would help reduce horse populations to a manageable level. In addition, discontinuing breeding incentives, which is the root cause of the horse market crisis; creating a foal impact fee for all breeders, making them not only assume responsibility, but saving and generating funds for costs associated with gelding and euthanasia programs; and persuading Congress to provide grants to veterinarians for euthanasia programs for those who can't afford it, and cremation for areas that don't allow equine burial. Federal veterinarian equine welfare grants would be drastically less costly to the government, as well as the American taxpayer than beginning USDA inspections of horses for slaughter.

Horse Racing

Of the 35,000 Thoroughbreds born each year, it's estimated that only 5 to 10 percent make it to the racetrack. It's estimated that more than 30 percent or 30,000 horses slaughtered each year are Thoroughbreds, most of which are taken directly off the track. Which means only 10 percent or 5,000 racehorses are lucky enough to find other careers after being disposed of by the horse racing industry, and only 20 percent or 7,000 of the 35,000 bred are given a chance. The rest are discarded as yesterday's trash. The Thoroughbreds who don't quite have the stamina and speed that it takes to become a champion and even those that do, find themselves at the slaughterhouse.

Thoroughbreds begin training and racing at two to three years of age, and while their skeletal systems are still in the growth stage and unable to cope with the pressures of running at high speeds, which leads to serious breakdowns and fatal injuries. According to the [Jockey Club's Equine Injury Database](#), an average of two fatal injuries occur per day, and approximately 750 die on the track, while another 3,500 suffer devastating injuries every year. Since the database estimates the registered American foal crop to be 30,000 and that's also the amount sent to slaughter on a yearly basis, it seems the attrition rate is in equilibrium with the birthrate. Clearly, the racing industry is disposing of the same number of Thoroughbreds on an annual basis, and as stated by the International Fund for Horses, “Overbreeding takes care of itself through the expedient clearance measure of horse slaughter.”

Racehorses aren't raised on the traditional equine diet of hay, oats and water. Their regimen also includes a regular prescription of drugs, which most become addicted to. They're given Lasix, which controls bleeding in the lungs; phenylbutazone or Bute, which acts as an anti-inflammatory; various steroids for pain and inflammation; and even morphine, which is used to mask pain after injury. “There are trainers pumping horses full of illegal drugs every day,” according to a former Churchill Downs Public Relations Director. “With so much money on the line, people will do anything to make their horses run faster.” It can take weeks or months of withdrawal symptoms for an ex-racehorse to become weaned off the medications they're pumped full of to keep them on the track. Add to this, the amount of time it takes for them to recuperate from their racing injuries and remember -- these are the “lucky” ones.

Race horses earn enormous sums of money for their owners, who maintain profitable relationships with kill buyers, thus ensuring their betrayal after the races end. Racehorses are an investment to their owners and lose value easily and quickly with injury, lost races and age. However, owners stand to benefit from the slaughter of their horses, which has nothing to do with the money that exchanges hands between them and the kill buyers. It's not about the money, as most of them don't need it and the sum they make is negligible,

to say the least. Oftentimes, adopters and rescues offer an equivalent price as the kill buyer, yet are turned down simply because the owners have a vested interest in ensuring the horse is slaughtered, since it removes the possibility of the horse being used as competition or breeding stock. Kill buyers frequent race tracks to purchase under-performing horses after the races end. Nearly all Thoroughbreds sold to slaughter are young and healthy. Some have minor injuries that would require time for rehabilitation, which the majority of owners are unwilling to pay for since they've reached the end of their racing careers at four to five years of age, and despite the fact that they could be adopted or sold to rescues or private individuals, and have long and healthy lives in other careers.

Thoroughbred Deputy Broad raced at Mountaineer Race Track in Chester, West Virginia on July 11, 2011, and less than 48 hours after coming in last, his trainer, Danny Bird, had the colt picked up for slaughter without being given a chance to be adopted by a rescue. Deputy Broad was confirmed slaughtered one week later, not because he was "unwanted," but because he was disposable. Ricardo Hernandez, an owner/trainer, arranges for weekly pickups from kill buyers at Mountaineer Race Track to rid his barn of slower horses. Although Mountaineer has rules against trainers selling to kill buyers, they don't enforce them. However, it's not always under-performing horses that get slaughtered, as some of the most successful and major money earners do, as well.

The famous racehorse [Ferdinand](#), who won the 1986 Kentucky Derby, the 1987 Breeders' Cup Classic, the 1987 Eclipse Award Horse of the Year and had \$3.7 million in lifetime earnings, making him the fifth leading money earning Thoroughbred in the world, with a stud fee of \$30,000 following his retirement from racing and after having become a highly sought-after stud horse in 1989, was sold to Japan where he was slaughtered in 2002 because he stopped producing foals at age nineteen. In addition, [Exceller](#), the only horse that defeated two Triple Crown winners, Affirmed and Seattle Slew, and had lifetime earnings of \$1.6 million, was ordered slaughtered in 1997 by his owner, Göte Östlund. After his slaughter two years later, Exceller was elected to the National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame in Saratoga Springs, New York. Consistent with its mission to "interpret the history and convey the excitement of Thoroughbred racing in America to the broadest possible audience," the museum avoids revealing how he died on his honorary plaque, which simply states the year. When celebrated and highly recognized race horses meet such cruel ends to their storied lives, it proves no horse will be safe until a federal ban on horse slaughter is passed.

On December 10, 2011, the New York Racing Association announced a new anti-slaughter policy, which states that any owner or trainer who stables horses at NYRA tracks found to have directly or indirectly sold a horse for slaughter will have their stalls permanently revoked. The policies introduce harsh penalties to offending horsemen while encouraging them to support horse rescue and adoption initiatives, thus finding humane ways of dealing with horses unable to continue racing. NYRA's President and CEO Charles Hayward announced "We are fully committed to protecting our sport's equine athletes," and "This policy sends the message that horse slaughter will not be tolerated and that those participating in this practice, either knowingly or for lack of due diligence, will not be welcome at Aqueduct, Belmont Park, or Saratoga." In addition to its position against horse slaughter, the NYRA makes donations to numerous equine retirement, anti-slaughter and research organizations, such as the [Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation](#), the Columbia Green Humane Society, the [Grayson Jockey Club Research Foundation](#) and the Exceller Fund, which transitions Thoroughbreds to new off-the-track careers. Diana Pikulski, Executive Director of the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, added "This policy is important because it makes everybody involved with a horse aware that they need to plan for its retirement and educate themselves about the options." Furthermore, "It is also significant that NYRA, NYTHA, the NY Riders and The Jockey Club have already donated \$100,000 for retirement in NY and committed themselves to developing a long term plan for retirement funding. We have had several follow up meetings to develop that plan and all the parties have participated."

Treatment of Slaughter Horses

[Animals' Angels USA](#) conducted investigations of the horse slaughter system from 2007 to 2009, which included the conditions and treatment slaughter horses undergo at auctions, feedlots, during transport and at the slaughter plants. In their comprehensive report, the organization found that "...horse slaughter encompasses public safety issues, public health concerns, environmental issues as well as the obvious and very significant concerns regarding cruelty and inhumane treatment. Our investigations during 2007 to the present made clear that at the instant a horse is designated a 'kill horse,' handling and treatment change radically from that normally given horses. A 'kill horse' is treated with cruelty, with indifference at best, but more typically with violence and aggression. Cruelty increases, while safety, health and welfare - its care and humane treatment are so diminished it is virtually nonexistent. These horses are "only passing through," say the veterinarians as well as the 'kill buyers.' If the 'kill horses' had been normal horses under the care of a different type of owner, humane officers and police would have required, in keeping with state animal cruelty laws, proper veterinarian care and sufficient access to food, water and shelter. The 'kill horse' is outside the protection of cruelty laws."

Based upon their investigations, horses destined for slaughter are subjected to being transported with no rest, water, food or shelter for dangerously extended periods of time and beyond that required by law. And, in fact, horses are purposely dehydrated so that the slaughterhouse can obtain a more accurate weight of their meat. Horse slaughter is the leading cause of the cruel and inhumane treatment of horses, not owners who aren't able to care for them due to economic difficulties or because they're simply unwanted. The abuse of slaughter horses begins long before they are hit with the captive bolt, stabbed with the puntilla knife or hit with a gunshot at the slaughter plant.

Brutality and Cruelty of Horse Slaughter

The idea that horse slaughter is humane euthanasia is false based upon factual statements given by slaughterhouse workers, video footage of the slaughter process, as well as statements given by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), which claims to support horse slaughter. The definition of euthanasia is "a gentle, painless death that prevents suffering." Horse slaughter, however, is filled with cruelty, brutality, pain and suffering from the abuse they endure while kept in holding pens or feedlots, during transportation to the plants and the actual slaughter process. The AVMA contradicts itself in its public thesis on humane euthanasia, when it states "Animal welfare is a human responsibility that encompasses all aspects of animal well-being, from proper housing and nutrition to preventive care, treatment of disease, and when necessary, humane euthanasia. The AVMA commitment to animal welfare is unsurpassed." When describing what humane euthanasia is, they stated "When the horse is euthanized, death will come quickly and painlessly. If the horse is standing when the death-inducing drug is given, the horse will become unconscious and unable to sense fear or pain while still standing. After the horse has fallen, unconscious, to the ground, death will ensue." The AVMA's guidelines state that unless a horse's head and neck are restrained, the captive bolt pistol or "stun gun", which is a pneumatic device intended to render a horse unconscious prior to slaughter, is not deemed humane. However, undercover videos and witness testimonies from slaughter plants in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Japan and Great Britain reveal a very different story.

Horses are intelligent animals that are highly sensitive and acutely aware of their environment. They react to the smell of blood, the sounds of other horses being slaughtered and react violently to death when they see the instrument or "stun gun" aimed at their heads, which drives a four-inch spike into their skulls. They make desperate attempts to flee, exhibiting typical equine "fight or flight" behavior and extreme panic and fear.

They prance back and forth with their ears pinned back and their eyes wide open. This inevitably results in the instrument hitting the horse and wounding it and not rendering it unconscious, but rather resulting in repeated blows and immense suffering.

Video evidence demonstrates a horse being hit 11 times while crying out repeatedly. Slaughter workers follow the assumption that a horse's brain is no different from a cow's, which is wholly incorrect. The distinction is related to the anatomy of the horse's skull and long neck, its natural fight or flight instinct, its explosive strength when in an extreme state of fear, and its intelligence and heightened ability to understand what is happening. Although the captive bolt gun is intended to render the horse unconscious, the vast majority of horses are entirely aware of what is happening as their throats are slit and they are bled out. The truth and reality is that the initial strike to the horse's brain isn't intended to kill it, as the pro-slaughter supporters and AVMA claims, because the heart must continue to pump in order for the blood to bleed out of the horse's 1,000 lb body after entering the kill box and having its throat slit, hoisted up with chains by its hind legs and hung upside down before being slaughtered. Every horse hears the screaming and observes other horses being brutally slaughtered before befalling it, themselves. Video inside a "humane" U.S. slaughterhouse shows a horse continuing to flail and struggle inside a kill box after regaining consciousness from being hit with the captive bolt gun.

A hidden-camera videotape taken at Beltex by the Humane Society of the United States in 1994 shows animals writhing and shuddering well after the stun gun is applied. In a sworn statement before Cook County, State of Illinois, a former employee [name withheld] of Cavel International, a horse slaughtering plant now closed but owned by the same company as Beltex and Dallas Crown, testified the following: "In July 1991, they were unloading one of the double-decker trucks. A horse got his leg caught in the side of the truck so the driver pulled the rig up and the horse's leg popped off. The horse was still living, and it was shaking. [Another employee] popped it on the head and we hung it up and split it open. ... Sometimes we would kill near 390, 370 a day. Each double-decker might have up to 100 on it. We would pull off the dead ones with chains. Ones that were down on the truck, we would drag them off with chains and maybe put them in a pen or we might drag them with an automatic chain to the knock box. Sometimes we would use an electric shocker to try to make them stand. To get them into the knock box, you have to shock them ... sometimes run them up the [anus] with the shocker. ... When we killed a pregnant mare, we would take the guts out and I would take the bag out and open it and cut the cord and put it in the trash and sometimes the baby would still be living, and its heart would be beating, but we would put it in the trashcan."

In U.S. slaughterhouses, where pro-slaughter lobbyists claim horse slaughter is more humane than in Mexico and Canada, where the USDA is reportedly able to monitor and regulate the process, video evidence shows horses being beaten on their faces, necks, legs and backs; purposely blinded by bludgeoning their eyes out to get them under control, electric cattle prods inserted into their rectums to get them to move into the kill box, mares giving birth on the kill floors, and remaining alive and conscious when they were shackled and hoisted by a rear leg to have their throats cut. The horses stand in line sensing the terror and electrocuted or speared into the kill box where they shake violently, falling and unable to stand from fear. The USDA released photos of horses with broken bones protruding from their bodies, eyeballs hanging by a thread of skin, and open wounds, all taken at former U.S. horse slaughter plants.

Slaughter practices in Mexico are particularly barbaric. In 2007, an investigation by The San Antonio News-Express revealed workers using the puntilla knife to repeatedly stab horses in their necks to paralyze them prior to slaughtering. The horses were still fully conscious during the beginning of the slaughter process. The slaughterhouse in Mexico is owned by Beltex, which previously operated out of Texas.

Impossibility of Regulating Horse Slaughter to be Humane

Horse slaughter is not a public service, but a foreign-owned business operating for profit and paid for by the wealthy. The failure to enact a federal law prohibiting horse slaughter, the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, has allowed the export of American horses to Canada and Mexico, exacerbating the brutality of already cruel transport and slaughter practices. Those who support horse slaughter and advocate for re-opening more “humane” U.S. slaughterhouses, including Representative Jack Kingston, who was instrumental in reinstating USDA funding to inspect American horses for slaughter, argue American slaughterhouses can be monitored and regulated to be humane through USDA oversight and monitoring. However, when U.S. slaughterhouses were in operation, the USDA wasn’t able to ensure horses were slaughtered humanely because it’s not possible.

There is no process or design capable of making horse slaughter humane, and there never will be. In addition, those who state U.S. horse slaughter will result in sparing horses from long, grueling and inhumane transport, including Bette Brand of the Virginia Horse Council, who stated, "It's better if [they are slaughtered] here in the U.S. in a supervised, humane way rather than shipped long distances on rickety trailers" fail to recognize that horses were subjected to the same grueling and inhumane transport over long distances before the U.S. ban. The reality is that when horses are shipped to Mexico and Canada, it decreases their market value, and those in the horse slaughter trade will earn more money if horses are slaughtered on American soil, instead.

Dr. Temple Grandin, Professor of Animal Sciences at Colorado State University and the U.S. Livestock Behavior and Welfare Authority, designed a supposedly “humane” method of slaughtering horses that employs more effective stunning methods. Dr. Grandin has received accolades for her work for constructing the most humane methods available to the slaughter of livestock and which are subsequently used on horses for slaughter. She says her goal is “...to reduce both fear and stress in animals in the chute and stun box and to ensure a quick, humane stun so they can be bled out and butchered in a deep, unconscious state.” Upon numerous allegations that Canadian slaughter plants were engaging in horse abuse and cruelty, the Canadian Horse Defense Coalition (CHDC) launched an investigation. Disturbing footage captured at Les Viandes de la Petite-Nation, Inc. in St. Andre-Avellin, Quebec in July, 2011, shows severe abuse and grave violations of assumed humane slaughter regulations. According to Alex Atamanenko of Canada’s New Democratic Party “This is the fourth plant to be exposed by undercover investigations indicating that an ingrained culture of abuse is still firmly in place.”

Other observers also contradict Dr. Grandin’s assessment of her designs, which theoretically ensure the humane slaughter of horses. Dr. Nicholas Dodman, an anesthesiologist and veterinary behaviorist at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, audited the footage from the CHDC. “My final conclusion, after reviewing 150-plus horse slaughters in this series of videos, is that the process was terrifying for most of the horses and, in many cases, horribly inhumane,” he states.

The USDA, which supposedly ensured the “humane” slaughter of horses when the process was performed in U.S. slaughterhouses, has a document containing more than 900 pages of graphic photos revealing the horrors that slaughter horses are subject to. Behind the privacy fences of these plants, slaughter transport trucks arrived, exacerbating the very cruelty and inhumane violations that the pro-slaughter advocates claim U.S. slaughter plants will solve, including trampled, mangled and dead horses, mares birthing foals, horses with eyes dangling from their sockets and having their eyes purposely bludgeoned and legs ripped from their bodies.

The very methods that Dr. Temple Grandin designed to effectively and “humanely” slaughter horses in state-of-the-art facilities have been proven to be neither, as shown in undercover videos. Her methods and designs are reportedly the “best” at ensuring a horse’s humane slaughter and it’s still wrought with horrific cruelty and brutality. As has been demonstrated, it’s not possible to regulate horse slaughter to be humane simply due to the heightened sentient nature of horses. No matter how horse slaughter is carried out, it isn’t and will never be “humane euthanasia” or a benevolent way of ending a horse’s life by anyone’s standards, including that of the AVMA. Horse slaughter is synonymous with cruelty, is prolonged and excruciating and is man’s ultimate betrayal of the noble horse. And we, as Americans, should be ashamed.

Alternatives to Horse Slaughter

Horse slaughter proponents claim that if federal legislation is passed, all the horses that are currently being sent to Canada and Mexico for slaughter will have nowhere to go and there are no systems in place which can effectively handle “unwanted” horses. They not only assert horse slaughter is the only economical way of managing America’s excess horse problem, but they use the hypothesis that it’s necessary because no other alternatives exist. Since the recession in 2008, leading horse rescues and sanctuaries across the country have developed new and innovative programs to safely and effectively manage horses displaced by the economy. Therefore, rescues have the ability to play a major role in re-homing and caring for the horses being slaughtered while long-term measures can be implemented to reduce future horse population numbers.

According to Allen Warren of [Horse Harbor Foundation, Inc.](#) “...not only does an alternative already exist, but it can be quickly expanded to accommodate America’s not unwanted but displaced horses if the commercial equine industry will stop using slaughter as a dumping ground for its byproduct and participate in providing for the true welfare of the animals upon which its businesses are based. Elimination of horse slaughter would also remove the present incentive for bad equine husbandry and therefore reduce the number of displaced horses in itself by the simple laws of supply and demand, and also serve to improve the quality of all breeds.”

Owners who, for whatever reason, may be unable to care for or maintain ownership of their horses have many safe and humane alternatives to slaughter. In addition to selling them to caring individuals, owners can donate or lease them to a variety of equine organizations. There are a large number of [equine rescues](#), [adoptions](#), [sanctuaries](#), [retirement farms](#), [ex-racehorse Thoroughbred organizations](#), pony clubs, private riding schools, [equine therapy facilities](#), [assisted physical therapy](#) and [psychotherapy riding programs](#), police or parks departments, [prison inmate training programs](#) and veterinary schools.

Horse rescues, sanctuaries, and farms have the ability to find slaughter horses new homes by retraining horses with behavior and temperament issues due to abuse and cruelty or incorrect training, [re-training](#) Thoroughbred ex-race horses for new careers or providing long-term care for aging or ill horses. There are horse rescue foundations across the country and new ones continue to become established, which are either run by volunteers, non-profits or are privately funded. If horse slaughter ended, the overflow of horses could be handled by a variety of viable systems which are already in place. There is sufficient evidence to support the fact that these horses could easily be absorbed back into the population and that overbreeding would subsequently decline, as a result. Proper management of horses combined with responsible breeding programs, in addition to the efforts of rescue and adoption agencies are and will provide the solutions needed.

The argument that owners have no other choice than to send their horses to slaughter, and that horse rescues are at or beyond capacity is inaccurate. Rescues are and have always been at capacity, and are in a constant ebb and flow, and many have the capability of taking in more than they’re being allowed. The amount of

horses going to slaughter isn't indicative of there not being enough rescues or their inability to take them in. Conversely, if U.S. slaughterhouses open, owners may be more likely to send their horses to slaughter as opposed to looking for other more humane alternatives, such as rescues and adoption organizations.

Essential solutions to reducing the horse population include public education, responsible breeding practices, promoting castration, and proper training and re-homing displaced horses through the combined efforts of the commercial equine industry and rescues. Horse rescues around the country are being forced to bid against kill buyers in order to try and save horses using limited funds and without assistance from the \$102 billion a year breeding industry which creates the problem. Oftentimes, the individual selling the horse purposely inflates the selling price of the horse when a rescue is bidding against a kill buyer. The issue isn't that the rescues aren't able to take in more horses; the problem is that rescues are being forced to bid against kill buyers at deliberately inflated prices, thereby decreasing the amount of horses rescues can save.

What began as a castration service for stallion owners in Oroville, California, by the NorCal Equine Rescue - now the [Horse Plus Humane Society](#), in 2008, has since turned into a nationwide effort to offer low-cost castration programs. One such program is the [Minnesota Horse Council's "Gelding Project,"](#) which has the slogan, "Helping the Unwanted Horse 1 Stallion at a Time." The initiative began in April 2009 by a consortium of organizations, including the Minnesota Horse Council, Minnesota Association of Equine Practitioners, Animal Humane Society, several equine rescue organizations, Julie Wilson, DVM, Dipl. ACVIM, of Turner Wilson Equine Consulting LLC, and Krishona Martinson, PhD, equine extension specialist for the University of Minnesota Extension Service. According to Dr. Martinson, more than 40 stallions were castrated within the program's first year and "We've also eliminated 1,000 possible foals that could someday have been taken to rescues." Additionally, as of January, 2012, the Kentucky Horse Park began offering a \$20 gelding service to help reduce the number of unwanted foals.

Horses that receive proper training are not only more valuable to their current owners, but they are less likely to become "unwanted" and more likely to become adopted by buyers with good intentions toward the horse's future. Properly trained horses have a higher long-term value because they're more appealing to prospective owners and easier for rescues to place whether it's an individual, family, prison inmate program, at-risk youth therapy riding program or a teaching program. As indicated by Morgan Silver, Executive Director of the [Horse Protection Association of Florida](#), "Good training is a horse's insurance policy."

However, according to Diane Panetta, founder of [Rescued to Ride](#), a Colorado-based organization that promotes training for relinquished horses, owners and rescue operators frequently overlook training as a factor in solving the unwanted horse dilemma. She believes an effective solution would be one in which horse industry organizations encourage owners to partner with trainers to ensure horses reach desired performance levels. Furthermore, rescues should ultimately budget training costs into their operating plans and require prospective owners commit to at least 30 days of additional training for horses acquired from rescues prior to adopting. "In some cases you see the same horses coming back to a rescue again and again because of training issues," Panetta says. "That doesn't have to happen."

Allen Warren suggests that the horse rescue community can provide a practical alternative to slaughter through financial support of the equine industry. He explains, "...a simple way to provide this is to add a long-term care and re-homing surcharge to the fee for every horse being registered in the country each year. The various U.S. breed registries add approximately 500,000 horses to their rolls each year, and a surcharge of \$25 (which could be viewed as a one-time long-term care insurance premium for these animals) would provide \$12,500,000 annually toward making sure they never suffer the horrors of the slaughterhouse. This plan would cost the registries nothing because the cost is passed along to the end consumer, the horse owner."

Euthanizing Horses

Horses that are sick, elderly or dying should be humanely euthanized by a licensed veterinarian using lethal injection. After euthanizing a horse, rendering, incineration and burial are all options for disposal of the remains, depending on state laws. Approximately two percent or more than twice as many horses die each year and are disposed of safely and by means other than slaughter and it doesn't have a negative impact on the environment. However, there were numerous legal complaints and actions against the horse slaughter plants in both Texas and Illinois, resulting in critical local law violations related to the disposal of blood and waste materials.

Lynne Chadwick, a veterinarian from Cody, Wyoming stated, "There are many people who just turn out their horses because the horses are old, and they can't kill them, or can't afford to pay somebody to kill them." She also commented that, to her knowledge, horse deaths in slaughterhouses are quick and humane.

It's been established that horse slaughter isn't nor will ever be humane, and her assumptions are clearly false. Nevertheless, having a horse humanely euthanized is easily available and highly affordable. The average daily cost to keep a horse is roughly \$7 per day and the monthly costs are approximately \$200, while the average cost of euthanizing and disposing of a horse is between \$40 and \$225. Some rendering services will pick up the body free of charge if the owner is unable to bury it. Therefore, there is no acceptable excuse that justifies subjecting a horse to the horrors of slaughter as opposed to having it humanely euthanized.

In reality, the kill buyer is going to offer the owner approximately \$100 for their horse, while the average cost to euthanize it is \$150. Do the majority of owners really care that little for their horses that they would rather subject them to the violence of the slaughterhouse as opposed to a peaceful death? If owners take the responsibility of having and caring for their horses, they can certainly give them a painless, peaceful and respectful death, not one highlighted by fear and brutality which is characteristic of transport to and killing at slaughterhouses. Consider the fact that approximately two percent of the horse population dies every year in other ways than slaughter, typically by being humanely euthanized or by means of natural causes. These horses are also disposed of properly and caringly, generally through the owner's veterinarian and without a negative impact on the environment.

Health Risks and Disease Implications Associated with Consuming Horse Meat

The pharmaceuticals and antibiotics given to horses throughout their lifetimes are substances which are "not prescribed for food animals" and render their meat potentially dangerous to human health when consumed. Drugs routinely given to horses, such as de-worming medications, which is a pesticide, vaccinations, anti-inflammatories, antibiotics and anti-fungals are prohibited for use during the life of any animal that's destined for human food. One such drug regularly administered to horses which is a known and highly toxic carcinogen and considered illegal for use in a food-producing animal under FDA regulations, is phenylbutazone or Bute. According to the FDA, Bute is prohibited in animals for slaughter because it causes a-plastic anemia, birth defects, leucopenia, granulocytosis, thrombocytopenia and death according to a national toxicology program. The reason wild horses are so sought after for the horsemeat trade is because they aren't given drugs which are administered to domestic horses on a regular basis, making their meat a special delicacy and the sale of it more lucrative.

Canada's Democratic Agriculture Critic Alex Atamanenko has re-introduced a Private Members Bill that was initially presented to British Columbia's last Parliament, and which garnered tens of thousands of Canadian supporters to end horse slaughter in Canada due to the serious health consequences of consuming horsemeat. The largest consumers of horsemeat are France, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Japan.

However, due to recent research conducted by Canadian authorities and their findings regarding horse meat's severe toxicity, the European Union (EU) launched an in-depth investigation, finding EU food safety guidelines are being violated, as well. According to their studies, the consumption of horsemeat has been found to cause not only serious, but lethal side effects, such as ulcers, seizures or severe organ damage. Particularly of immediate concern is the consumption of horsemeat by children, as the results reveal it causes aplastic anemia in the smallest of amounts. Because of this new evidence, the EU has begun issuing new passports on horses more than six months of age, declaring them ineligible for the food supply. Atamanenko has also become concerned over discrepancies in their new Equine Identity Document (EID) System, which records the horse's medical histories and is meant to keep those that have been administered dangerous drugs from entering the slaughter pipeline. The British Parliament stated "The EID system is fraught with loopholes that are obviously being taken advantage [of] by predatory kill-buyers looking for product." Atamanenko concluded, "It is criminal to sell this meat to humans and the government must shut this industry down immediately."

Since the publication of these results and the growing awareness of the general public, a December, 2011 report showed that the sale of horse meat in France has been rapidly declining over the past two years. By the advice of the government's veterinary committee, horsemeat is now banned in French restaurants. Additionally, French horsemeat butchers or 'chevalines' have declined from 1,300 in 1999 to 1,000 in 2010. A French organization called the Ethical Association of the Horse launched a public awareness campaign nine years ago, which helped educate the public with regard to the lofty reasons horses shouldn't be eaten. Their slogan is "Non, un cheval ca ne se mange pas" or "No, a horse is not for eating." Their website states that horses, unlike cows, sheep or pigs, are "extraordinary animals ...which have for centuries shared the work of man, in the rain or the beating sun of the fields, work sites and roads, but have also participated in his insane wars and, even, his struggle for liberty".

Likewise, according to the [Italian Horse Protection Association](#) (IHP), "Drawing together results of research carried out by one French and two American universities, and an inquiry by the Equine Welfare Alliance (USA), IHP can assert that at least part of the horsemeat sold in the European markets has been subjected to no checks whatsoever for drugs present in the slaughtered animals. IHP asserts moreover that since autumn 2010, the European health authorities have been fully aware of this fact yet have done nothing to protect the health interests of the European consumer." Sonny Richichi, IHP Organizational Manager, asserted "With the myth that horse meat contains more iron and is good for the blood those countries where horsemeat is widely consumed are administering to the most vulnerable members of society a cocktail of anti-inflammatory drugs, antibiotics, hormones that control estrous cycle and who knows what other substances." Antonio Nardi-Dei da Filicaja, President of IHP added, "The European health authorities make big news of the checks on meat and how they track and trace it all from source, but then they sweep under the carpet the results of their own inquiries which reveal that not only does a significant percentage of the horse meat on the market NOT have any credible certification regarding the use of drugs prior to slaughter, but moreover comes from countries where pretty well any drug is legally permitted and used, only at the discretion of the owner of the animal. Thus while fully cognizant of the risks that eating horse meat holds for consumers, the authorities have turned a blind eye and tried to conceal the incriminating evidence. According to the FAO, in 2009 approximately 16,000 tons of horse meat entered the EU from Canada and Mexico. In general, around 50 percent of horse meat consumed in Italy comes from abroad."

Correlation of Serious Crimes and Crime Rates with Slaughterhouses

There has long since been a high correlation of serious crime rates, such as rape and murder associated with work in the slaughter houses. Research shows that the prevalence of violence in slaughter houses desensitizes workers and that there is a link between violence inside the plant, as well as serious crime rates within the communities they're located. Cultural implications and significant social problems, such as housing shortages and considerable strains on social services have been documented since the early 1900s, with additional research confirming the same findings between 1986 and 2009.

Amy Fitzgerald, a criminology professor from the University of Windsor, performed research to either verify or disprove Upton Sinclair's findings, which were revealed in his book, *The Jungle*, published in 1906. His novel strengthened the link between slaughter houses and brutal crimes for decades following its publication. Fitzgerald proved Sinclair's findings were flawlessly factual more than 100 years later, after she utilized statistics from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report database, census information, and arrest and offence reports from 581 U.S. counties from 1994 to 2002. In line with her research, she stated, "I have a graph that shows that as the number of slaughter house workers in a community increases, the crime rate also increases."

Her investigations into where the links existed established that an average-sized slaughter house with 175 employees increases the number of arrests by 2.24 percent and the number of reports by 4.69 percent annually and that as the size of the slaughter house increases, so do local crime rates. Her research also found that the violence isn't to blame on the type of work in and of itself. Fitzgerald compared slaughter house communities to those in similar industries, such as dangerous, repetitive factory work, but which didn't include killing animals on a regular basis. She found these communities don't have a corresponding rise in crime rates as do those which are home to animal-based slaughter houses, but, in fact, seemed to bring crime rates down. Her conclusion is that "...workers exposed to the killing of large numbers of animals on a regular basis become disturbed and appear to lose empathy."

According to Michael Broadway in the *Journal of Rural Studies*, 2000; and Donald Stull and Michael Broadway, 2004 in *Slaughterhouse Blues*, 2004, the impact slaughter houses have on communities includes housing shortages, an increased demand for social assistance and a proliferation of crime. Furthermore, Stull and Broadway uncovered that there was a 130 percent increase in violent crimes within five years after two slaughter houses opened, which was only partly accounted for by the 33 percent increase in population growth; that property crimes rose while the prevalence of child abuse tripled, and it was 50 percent higher than the state average. Further proof exhibiting the correlation of crimes and crime rates in communities with slaughter houses include monthly police bookings increasing by 63 percent over a three year period in Lexington, Kentucky; crimes and total associated arrests escalating by 38 percent in the state of Oklahoma; an increase in drug-related felonies in Georgetown, Delaware; and an escalation of domestic violence in all areas. As published in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* in August, 2007, the examination of the multiple effects of meat packing plants and slaughter houses on communities by Goergeanne Artz, Peter Orazem and Daniel Otto, found that it "...lowers wage and income growth without the accompanying increase in total employment growth seen in the estimates for all industries combined. Counties with growth in meat packing also experienced faster growth in violent crime rates over the decade relative to counties without packing plants."

Decline of Property Values and a Decrease in the Quality of Community Health

Communities which were home to horse slaughterhouses, such as those in Texas and Illinois experienced declining property values, as well as critically negative impacts with regard to quality health factors. Paula Bacon, the former Mayor of Kaufman, Texas, which housed one of the three U.S. horse slaughter plants before the state passed legislation to close it based upon serious community safety and health hazards, has actively encouraged Congress to pass federal legislation to outlaw horse slaughter and horses for transport to slaughter. Texas and Illinois state government officials incurred substantial enforcement costs in an effort to try to regulate environmental problems with horse slaughter plants, which included stench that emanated several miles from the facilities, fluid runoff and blood in community water supplies. Paula Bacon stated, “The standard of living dropped during the time horse slaughter facilities operated.” “The industry caused significant and long term hardship to my community...” “I will gladly provide you with detailed reports from my former City Manager, Police Chief, and Public Works Director regarding odor and wastewater effluence violations at the Dallas Crown horse slaughter plant in the City of Kaufman.” In the letter she wrote to her congressional constituents, she affirmed, “We who love these magnificent animals do not only protest their slaughter on “emotional grounds” as the pro-slaughter group would have you believe. I am posting a letter that I wrote to the Legislators considering this move. I know that a horse slaughtering plant is the “death knell” as far as property values in the area surrounding them go.”

Paula Denmon, a realtor who specializes in equine properties from Waxahachie, Texas, wrote a letter to Congress, titled “*To All Legislators Considering the Renewal of Horse Slaughter in the United States,*” which detailed her professional observations concerning property values in relation to horse slaughter plants. She claimed that despite highly desirable and affordable properties, which had multiple desirable amenities typically sought after by horse people compared to other areas, buyers adamantly refused those within Kaufman counties because of the horse slaughter plant. She asserted “This was my introduction to the horrible reputation of the Dallas Crown Horse Slaughter Plant. My clients did not want to buy property in the county. They were worried that they would come home from work to find their horses gone, stolen, and already slaughtered at the nearby plant. And some just loved horses, and did not want anything to do with an area close to where people killed them to be food. “Americans don’t eat horsemeat, why are they here” they would ask?”

Following the closing of the Dallas Crown horse slaughter plant, Paula Denmon witnessed the City of Kaufman, as well as small communities in outer lying areas flourish, as a result. Not only were families moving back into these areas, but there was also a corresponding increase in new businesses becoming established, thus improving the overall economy. She contended, “... the property values of the acreage properties [have] gone up dramatically... “I would caution that the reintroduction of horse slaughter plants would have significant detrimental effects on the communities that exist close to it. They will put real estate values in the “toilet”. The jobs are low-paying and seem to attract people who do not fit into the life of the community.”

The Monetary Link between Horse Slaughter, Congress and Big Agriculture

The United States of America belongs to ‘the people,’ not a select few, but the American people. For the past several years, polls and surveys show that overwhelmingly, Americans oppose horse slaughter. Therefore, the American people should know where, exactly, the incongruence with this issue lies. There is a powerful link between horse slaughter, Congress and ‘big agriculture’ and the glue holding them together is money -- greed, power and the almighty dollar at work within The White House. Although a select few seem to have forgotten, the U.S.A. belongs to its citizens and their legislators are elected by them to act on their behalf,

not to purposely disfigure vital policies and distort spending by writing favorable language into unrelated Bills for the benefit of the powerful agricultural lobby, while blocking and stripping legislation that runs counter to its interests and ignoring the voice of the American people who elected them in the first place.

The power players behind America's federal agricultural committees write billions of dollars in farm policies and agricultural legislation each year. A large part of those policies are tied to the protection of factory farms, the rounding up of our wild horses on public lands, large financial subsidies paid to cattle ranchers and as of the most recent approval of the Agricultural Appropriations Bill H.2112 which allows the USDA to use taxpayer dollars to inspect American horses for slaughter, the resurrection of the U.S. horsemeat industry.

In addition to the three Agricultural Committee members instrumental in creating a situation that forced our President to sign a Bill which included language that would ensure he broke his promise to end horse slaughter, which includes Kohl, Blunt and Kingston, as well as Virginia Representative Bob Goodlatte, Montana Senator Max Baucus, former Senator Larry Craig, former Congressman Charles Stenholm and Congressman Conrad Burns. Conrad Burns introduced a rider to the 2005 federal Appropriations Bill, which resulted in the stripping of federal protection of wild horses and burros, and legitimized the capture and selling of them for slaughter and human consumption. This Bill is known as the Burns Amendment and was signed into law by President Bush on December 6, 2004. Charles Stenholm is a Senior Policy Advisor for Washington's largest horse slaughter lobbying firm, Olsson Frank Weeda.

Representative Sue Wallis of the Wyoming legislature is infamous on both the pro and anti-horse slaughter sides. Sue Wallis claims she's a "horse lover" and "horse advocate," and has the horse's best interests in mind, even though she doesn't own a horse, has never owned a horse, doesn't ride horses...and really has nothing to do with horses at all, yet claims to believe slaughtering them is looking out for their welfare. Whether you're a horseman, have an appreciation for horses or simply enjoy occasionally watching them out in an open field, it's fairly obvious to anyone that something else is going on here. She joins together a horse "advocacy" group, United Horsemen, which represents rancher's interests; The Unwanted Horse Coalition, which defines an "unwanted horse" as one that is "no longer wanted by its current owner because it is old, injured, sick, unmanageable, fails to meet the owner's expectations in terms of performance, color, or breeding or is a horse the owner can no longer afford to maintain" and distributes materials to journalists on the "unwanted horse problem;" major horse breeding organizations, including the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA); and large and influential groups that stand to gain financially from the re-opening of horse slaughter plants, such as the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the Farm Lobby and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).

According to Sue Wallis, "Ranchers used to sell horses that were too old or unfit for work to packers, but now they ship them to butchers in Canada and Mexico, for less than half the price." As has already been substantiated by USDA statistics, horses that go to slaughter aren't old or unfit. If kill buyers purchase these types of horses, they end up being dumped in remote feedlots to starve to death because the slaughterhouses won't accept them. However, "...less than half the price" is getting a bit closer to the real issue. The pro-slaughter lobby wants to slaughter horses in the U.S. because they stand to gain a higher profit margin on them than if they're shipped to Canada or Mexico. Wallis also claimed, "The federal ban devastated an entire sector of animal agriculture for purely sentimental and romantic notions." The Government Accountability office reported that 138,000 horses were transported to Canada or Mexico in 2010 for slaughter, which is virtually the same number killed before horse slaughter was banned in the U.S. Therefore, it's impossible to see how that's equivocal to "devastation of an entire sector of animal agriculture."

The Government Accountability Office Report

In 2010, and on behalf of the Senate Agricultural Appropriations Committee, Senator Max Baucus requested that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct an examination of “(1) *the effect on the U.S. horse market, if any, since domestic slaughter for food ceased in 2007; (2) the impact, if any, of market changes [in] horse welfare and on states, local governments, tribes, and animal welfare organizations; and (3) challenges, if any, to USDA’s oversight of the transport and welfare of U.S. horses exported for slaughter.*” The GAO report, which was paid for by taxpayers, was used as a clever device by the Committee to ensure the slaughter of America’s horses.

The GAO demonstrated early signs of bias toward the pro-slaughter lobbyists. The report’s target publication date for 2010 was missed repeatedly, which prevented the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act Bill from being discussed in committee and sent to the Senate floor for a vote; and Charles Stenholm announced that the GAO’s findings would “prove to be beneficial” to the pro-slaughter movement at the Summit of the Horse Conference in January, 2011, despite the fact that the research was still being conducted, and the report hadn’t been released.

Four months later, on June 11, 2011, the report confirmed just what Mr. Stenholm asserted it would. Or did it? The report failed to analyze data that ran contrary to the pro-slaughter position, however, it also suggested that Congress should either reconsider restrictions on the use of federal funds to inspect horse slaughtering facilities or consider a permanent ban of horse slaughtering. Of course, with Congress having its own agenda, which didn’t include acting on behalf of the American people or the welfare of American horses, our constituents clearly chose the wrong course of action. The GAO study concluded that the slaughter of horses did not stop, but simply shifted to Mexico and Canada. From 2006 through 2010, U.S. horse exports for slaughter increased by 148 percent to Canada and 660 percent to Mexico, the GAO report states. "As a result," according to the report, "nearly the **same number** of U.S. horses was transported to Canada and Mexico for slaughter in 2010 -- nearly 138,000."

The GAO report enabled the pro-slaughter industry to shift the blame to anti-slaughter supporters and those trying to provide solutions; negate the efforts of Congress members who worked tirelessly for the Bills that would have provided safety to our horses by repeatedly blocking them; deceiving the American people and misinforming the media by providing them with a powerful tool, thus allowing them to seriously mislead the public regarding the very real and truthful issues regarding the humane treatment of equines, as well as the health, safety, environmental and economic factors involved at the expense of the horses and for the benefit of the pro-slaughter lobby. Although the report attempted to connect an increase in abuse to the ban of U.S. slaughter in 2007, the authors noted that there was no actual proof other than claims put forward by pro-horse slaughter proponents.

Proposed U.S. Slaughter Plants

As a result of the passage of Agricultural Appropriations Bill H.2112, which effectively lifted the five-year ban on horse slaughter in the U.S. and allows the federal government to fund USDA inspections of horses for slaughter, the pro-slaughter movement is considering opening new plants in Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Georgia and Missouri.

House Bill H.2112 states money is to be set aside to pay an additional 118 inspectors for horse slaughter, makes funds available for allowances and limits on expenses for weighing and inspecting agricultural shipments, explains where the money for these types of expenses will come from, details the minimum and maximum number of jobs that may be required to accomplish the fiscal year goals, the salaries that may be

paid for these types of positions, allowable alteration of buildings for the purpose of slaughter and meat packing, which can be up to 10 percent of the building's worth; and what costs the government will allow to be subsidized. These requirements and restrictions will require state approval, effectively limiting the number of buildings permitted for horse slaughter since they will also be required to pass USDA inspections and requirements. Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act, horses are an amenable species, which means that horse meat cannot be shipped or sold for human consumption without inspection.

The two states that were home to horse slaughter houses before the Congressional ban were closed as a result of state legislation. Therefore, Texas and Illinois have local laws in place which prohibit the slaughter of horses. Assuming these state laws are changed, proposed horse slaughter facilities would be required to pass a significant number of state and federal requirements, including obtaining a federal grant of inspection and conducting a hazard analysis, which was a critical factor with regard to the closing of the Texas and Illinois slaughter plants and the reason behind each state's laws banning horse slaughter.

According to Dave Duquette, President of The United Horsemen, "No state has been picked yet, but investors will provide processor financing. The last three slaughterhouses were owned by foreigners, but this will be American owned." If proposed U.S. horse slaughter plants are allowed to open, the pro-slaughter movement estimates that up to 200,000 horses a year could be slaughtered in the United States, with the majority of their meat being shipped to foreign countries, while some could be served in America to our prisoners and children in school lunches, according to Representative Sue Wallis.

Not only will taxpayer money be used to inspect American horses for slaughter, but the American people will continue to pay through the enormous costs associated with the magnitude of legislative action and litigation which will inevitably accompany it.

Anti-Slaughter Support

Though pro-slaughter supporters have obsessed over the sudden reversal of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' (PETAs) position on horse slaughter and their apparent support of it, their quote was taken slightly out of context. Although PETA is sadly failing to acknowledge all the critical factors with regard to horse slaughter and why it's subsequently wrong on a multitude of levels, regardless of whether the slaughter is done in the U.S. or elsewhere, the organization is not pro-horse slaughter. Agreeably, they seem to be misinformed or not aware of current horse slaughter facts, as evident in the statement from the organization's Campaign Director, Lindsay Rajt, "The organization discovered that once U.S. processing plants closed down, horse owners were not euthanizing horses. Instead, horses were sold and subsequently shipped to Canada or Mexico for slaughter. In light of that and how the journey takes days to ship them ... we see slaughter in the U.S. as the lesser of the two evils." And "We don't want to see any slaughter at all, but if it will save horses a long trip, it will be better."

Although the American Veterinarian Medical Association (AVMA) claims to be pro-slaughter and it collectively represents the veterinarians who pay membership fees in a professional capacity, the Association has forgotten to formally poll the population of veterinarians they represent concerning their beliefs on horse slaughter. It seems as though that's a serious misrepresentation of their collective membership on a moral, ethical, societal and environmental issue of great importance to the American people, and they may want to consider performing a poll before speaking on their behalf on such a critical concern.

The passage of the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act is a paramount priority for the ASPCA and several other animal welfare organizations, equine groups and veterinarians. The [ASPCA](#)® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is vigorously urging Americans to support the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (H.R.2966/S.1176). “Using tax dollars to fund this grisly business is a wildly unpopular decision and has fueled the fire for a complete ban on horse slaughter,” said Nancy Perry, senior vice president of ASPCA Government Relations. “We stand with the large group of bipartisan leaders on Capitol Hill who have already declared that they will be pressing for accountability and recorded votes on this issue. We applaud Representatives Jim Moran (D-Va.), Dan Burton (R-Ind.) and Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and Senators Mary Landrieu (D-La.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) who are eager to bring an end to the cruelties of horse slaughter.” “Considering that the cost of humane euthanasia for a horse is equal to the cost of approximately one month’s care, it is inconceivable to me that a horse owner could not afford to put down a sick, injured or unwanted animal humanely. This fight is long from over. I plan to continue working with my colleagues in Congress and other advocates to end this inhumane and controversial practice once and for all.”

When and Why Did Horse Slaughter Begin? It’s not what you think -- a lesson in deception...

If you believe horse slaughter began in response to the need to “euthanize” or more aptly descriptive, eradicate an “unwanted” number of horses out of necessity and because there was a lack of resources or ability to care for an excessive population of them, thereby saving them from the cruelty of starving to death, think again. A historical illustration of the creation of horse slaughter was illustriously depicted in an excerpt from *Journey of a Journalist* by Dickon Legh and subsequently published by CuChullaine O’Reilly F.R.G.S. via the Long Riders' Guild Academic Foundation.

In 1824, cattlemen began claiming wild horses were a nuisance because they were competing for range grass and water resources, so the government held the first round-ups to kill unbranded horses. In 1849, when gold was being discovered in California and the value of cattle was increasing, thousands of wild horses in Santa Barbara were forced off cliffs and into the sea to drown. Although there were more than 2 million wild Mustangs in the 1800s, by 1910, there were an estimated 200,000. After the First World War, wild horse bands began increasing as farm horses were replaced by tractors and released to join the range’s wild Mustangs. By 1925, wild horse populations grew by approximately one million Mustangs. With cattle increasing in value, wild horses, worth two dollars, were eating as much grass as cattle worth fifty dollars, and which led to the further destruction of herds in areas such as Arkansas, Kansas, South Carolina and Canada.

A ruthless and greed-craving man by the name of Phillip Chappel began the first industrialized horse slaughter plant in Rockford, Illinois in 1925, just after the First World War. Chappel supplied more than 117,000 horses to the U.S. government as military mounts or ‘war horses’ when the war began through his farm near Batavia, New York. By the time the war ended, in excess of 827,000 horses and mules served alongside soldiers, but those that returned home weren’t sent out to pasture, they were sent to the slaughter house. Since there was no market for eating horsemeat in America, approximately 30,000 horses were sold to French abattoirs, 16,000 were sent to Britain and the rest Chappel slaughtered and sold as pickled horsemeat to other European markets.

In 1921, Chappel launched America’s first commercial canned dog food, known as Ken-L-Ration, using horsemeat. It was so successful, he was unable to keep up with market demand, so he began a national strategy using a plentiful local supply of Hackney, Hambletonian, German-Coach, Morgan, Belgian, Clydesdale and Percheron horses and incorporating the famous canine star, Rin Tin Tin to sell the

well-known dog food to an estimated four million American dog owners. Chappel's Ken-L-Ration dog food expanded to seven plants in the U.S. and Europe, and became the world's largest consumer of horsemeat. His success subsequently depleted the Midwest of all available horses. According to Swede Larson, "When Chappel got done around here, it was as dry of horse flesh as a rum bottle on a Navy boat. That's when he turned to Mustang meat." Since wild horse herds had been hunted to near extinction, Chappel decided to shift from harvesting horses for their meat to growing horses for the horsemeat industry by buying wild horses for three dollars a head, and gaining control of 1.6 million acres of wild horse range in Montana and Wyoming. Because his slaughter plant's butcher determined wild horses didn't offer enough usable meat due to their tough, muscular builds, Chappel concluded that he could produce a continual and desirable supply of slaughter horses by releasing purebred Belgian, Shire and Percheron stallions into the wild Mustang herds.

Due to the need to provide an uninterrupted supply of horses on a mass scale and the greed-driven mentality that these horses were considered the living dead, they were treated cruelly and brutally during and after transit by railroad employees. A reporter with the Associated Press at the time regarded them as "valueless horses from the Indian reservations."

Despite the fact that Philip Chappel seemed to have "mastered the mechanics of horse homicide," his slaughter houses began losing a considerable amount of money, resulting in his family forcing him out by 1938. Chappel moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he attempted to reconstruct his equine slaughter house achievements, however, Juan Peron prevented his malevolent ambitions.

As the effects of the Great Depression ensued, slaughterhouses began losing money, leading to the Ken-L-Ration company nearing bankruptcy. In 1942, it was sold to the Quaker Oats Company, which sold "six carloads of U.S. government-inspected horsemeat to eastern cities every week." According to the company's records, the horsemeat market was isolated to families that were lower on the socioeconomic scale. And, the Quaker Oats company "...made money all through the second war that way."

Horses in War and the Military

Horses have played indispensable roles in the nation's history and have become interwoven into the fabric of our grand country by enabling the progress which has allowed us to become the greatest nation on earth. They've gone with us into battle on U.S. soil and overseas, and they carried us to our greatest victories merely because we asked them to. Horses have been a part of vital military operations throughout history, even as late as the war in Afghanistan, showing incredible loyalty, bravery, faithfulness, gallantry and spirit, enabling successful achievements of critical missions and the safety of our soldiers. Warfare in the 21st century still includes horses and mules as an essential element to military missions.

Just one month after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the American Special Forces in Afghanistan had a mission that involved helping the local Northern Alliance forces defeat the Taliban. Because the infrastructure was unconventional and the terrain was exceedingly difficult, horses provided the only means of adapting the Special Forces team to the situation and aiding the Northern Alliance to victory, which included modern technology, as well as methods long since considered obsolete, like pack mules.

An excerpt from Olive-Drab.com explains the mission as follows, "On the 19th of October, 2001, a Special Operations Aviation Regiment helicopter rose from Karshi-Kanabad (K2) Airbase, Uzbekistan, to cross 14,000 foot mountains with ugly weather into Afghanistan. Its mission: to carry soldiers of the Fifth Special Forces Group to an Afghan landing zone where they would join CIA teams already on the ground. The helicopter ride over the mountains was itself a harrowing adventure, but in this case just the prelude to much starker tests to come. As the Americans proved themselves on horseback, in battle, and in the shared

privations of life on the Afghan hardscape, they became cherished partners who earned the affection of their Afghan hosts and fellow warriors. The role of horses was central since there was no other transportation for the tasks at hand. Failure to adapt to horseback would have doomed the effort, so adapt they did...”

In his commencement address at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs on the 31st of May 2006, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld had this to say, “Just before Christmas in 2001, I traveled to Afghanistan and the neighboring countries. I visited with a group of Special Operations forces that were operating in truly remarkable ways. In preparation for performing a mission the month before, they had asked for the usual supplies, but one item stood out. They asked for horse feed. From the moment they landed in Afghanistan, our forces began adapting to the circumstances on the ground, as they had to. And they ended up riding horses that had been conditioned to run through machine gun fire. They used pack-mules to transport equipment across some of the roughest terrain in the world, riding in darkness, and along narrow trails with sheer drops. Some of those forces operating in Afghanistan were combat controllers from the U.S. Air Force. And those Airmen likely thought they would have sooner found themselves riding jet aircraft rather than horses, but they joined the American tradition of daring and ingenuity that has defined Airmen for generations.”

In the Fight against Diphtheria, the Heroes Were Horses

Until the late 19th century, diphtheria was a frightening and horrific killer with no known origin or treatment, which caused heart and kidney damage, as well as paralysis within weeks of infection. The disease, which secreted a lethal toxin, was one of the most common killers of children between the ages of 2 to 14. However, because of 13 heroic horses deemed “antitoxin horses” from The Claremont Riding Academy, on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, the miracle diphtheria antitoxin was produced in 1894, saving millions of Americans.

From 1890 to 1893, the physicians Emil von Behring of Berlin and Émile Roux of Paris, used horses to independently develop and produce an effective diphtheria antitoxin to counteract the disease, which thwarted death in as many as half of all cases, when administered within 24 hours of infection. During the summer of 1894, Dr. Hermann Biggs, the Chief Bacteriologist of the New York City Health Department, made a scientific tour of Europe and Dr. Roux and Berlin’s phenomenal discovery against the diphtheria infection. Soon after, he began work alongside his colleagues to obtain some horses in order to continue in their work’s life-saving efforts against the devastating disease. It was essential to begin at once, because the process of “ripening” a horse to produce the antitoxin required three to six months.

The horses were injected with the diphtheria toxin, subjected to regular blood draws, in which one to four pints were removed and refrigerated, and then the serum was separated from the clotted blood and purified using chemical techniques developed by bacteriologists at the health department. On January 1, 1895, the first doses of the diphtheria antitoxin were available and in regular supply, resulting in a decrease of diphtheria deaths from 2,870 in 1894, to 1,400 by 1900. It continued to decline steadily in the decades that followed.

Dr. Briggs ensured the welfare of the horses that helped in creating the vaccine by explaining that only the healthiest horses were chosen, they were fed and cared for using wholesome foods, they were kept in immaculate stables, and that they were treated much like hospital patients. By 1906, 59 antitoxin horses, most of which were purchased from farmers and some retired from the police force, were transferred to Otisville, in upstate New York, where the City health department maintained a 175-acre animal farm. Later, the horses and their descendents were stabled for nearly two decades at the New York College of Veterinary

Surgeons, on East 57th Street and Third Avenue. Although most of the horses survived the injections with only a fever and loss of appetite, some succumbed to even the smallest doses of diphtheria.

The work these horses performed on behalf of the American people allowed physicians to obtain immediate access to fresh antitoxin, and proved a safe and effective diphtheria vaccine for American children since the 1940s. The New York Health Department mass-produced the antitoxin until well after World War II and sold it to other health departments around the nation. The diphtheria antitoxin was one of the first medical wonders that have come to characterize the American culture, by transforming the killer disease into a long forgotten malady of the past and saving millions of lives, and of which our loyal horses facilitated.

Conclusion

Horses are icons of the American historical heritage of which the United States is built upon. The values, ethics, beliefs and cultural significance of our country are symbolized by the beauty, grace and majestic nature of America's horses, wild and domestic. In 1971, the United States Congress recognized Mustangs as "living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West, which continue to contribute to the diversity of life forms within the Nation and enrich the lives of the American people."

Horses have assumed trusting and faithful roles in the industrialization of our society, and they're part of our cultural legacy. There was a time, well before the automobile, when horses were essential to our nation's prosperity and development. It was upon the backs of these great and noble steeds that our forefathers staked claim to the lands that became our earliest communities, and which enabled our 18th century communities to prosper and flourish. Unfortunately, in a consumer-driven society, horses aren't seen as having significant economic value to commercial interests. The loyal companion that carried Paul Revere, pulled our wagons and plows, and enabled man to forge West is being slaughtered to supply the demand for horse flesh in foreign markets.

Horses have extraordinary athletic ability and bring us national honor as demonstrated by our U.S. Olympic Equestrian Team. Their superior intelligence, emotional capacity, ability to form lifelong bonds and seek out human companionship, in addition to their keenly sentient nature as compared to cattle, make them unequivocally different from cattle and other animals bred for human consumption. Historically, the majority of societies have believed horses to be divine creatures and inherently, objectionable as a food source for religious, cultural, moral and ethical reasons.

Slaughter is not a cure for what ails our horses, and it won't end abuse or neglect. Horse slaughter is not humane euthanasia, but the trigger that sets equine cruelty and a plethora of horse welfare problems into motion. Horse slaughter plants pose a multitude of social, economic, safety and public health risks. Given the mounting evidence against the safety of consuming horsemeat, it would be not only ignorant and irresponsible, but contribute to the intentional disease and illness of the masses, including children.

The reality is that horse slaughter is not driven by a need to compete with an overwhelming population of unwanted horses or to necessitate putting them out of their misery, but by the foreign demand for horse flesh. The American people should not allow such atrocities against such an important part of our history. They deserve better than to be slaughtered for a wealthy diner's dinner plate. Cold, hard cash is what drives the horsemeat trade, and its being ridden by the U.S. Congress, big agriculture and special-interest associations that stand to gain from the multibillion dollar industry at the expense of the horses, in addition to the American taxpayer. Re-opening slaughter plants and the horsemeat market in America could lead to the extreme and dire conditions that existed in the 1920s when horse slaughter began -- a situation in which neither the horses nor Americans can afford.

In his election campaign, President Obama promised the American people that he would work to end the slaughter of U.S. horses. He not only hasn't lived up to that promise, but he signed a Bill on November 18, 2011, which permitted the slaughter ban to be lifted, allowing slaughter to begin on American soil. As the President of the United States, he has the right and ability to issue an Executive Order, which would put a stop to the slaughter of our horses, as well as transporting them for slaughter to another country.

Americans overwhelmingly support an end to horse slaughter for human consumption. Polls from Kentucky, Texas, and Utah show that 82, 72 and 69 percent, respectively, oppose it and estimates continue to remain steady or increase. A recent national poll revealed nearly 70 percent of Americans support a federal ban. [House Bill H.R.2966](#), The American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (AHSPA) and [Senate Bill S.1176](#), would permanently end the inhumane and brutal slaughter of the United State's horses for human consumption overseas, as well as prevent them from being transported to Canada and Mexico for slaughter. A CNN poll, which was conducted at the end of 2011, revealed 45 percent of those surveyed said they wouldn't eat horse meat, no matter the reason or rationale. At the end of 2011, more than 5,000 signed an official "We the People" White House petition in an effort to persuade the President to sign the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act of 2011.

Congress and the President have put every horse in the nation in danger. The overabundance of research, facts, statistics and evidence described in this composition should not be lost on those that lead our country. We elected them to oversee our best interests, and that includes the welfare of the American horse which made our country what it is today. The idea of eating horses in this country goes against the very nature of the American citizen, and the American taxpayer will subsequently pay for an industry for which it vehemently disapproves of on moral and ethical grounds, and must be stopped before it gains momentum. It's time for the President and Congress to act. Write your legislative representatives and call them daily, stating your position on the AHSPA. Call your members of [Congress](#) weekly, asking for an update. Attend your local town hall meetings and meet your representatives face-to-face. Calmly and respectfully voice your position on horse slaughter and let them know that if they don't support the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, they won't have your support or your vote.

For questions regarding the content of this letter please contact the author, Charmaine Jens, Public Relations Representative for [Americans Against Horse Slaughter](#) (AAHS) at CharmaineAAHS@gmail.com. For additional information regarding AAHS, its mission or initiatives, please contact Debra Lopez at 262-989-0604 or Shelley Abrams at 215-932-4800.

Respectfully,

Charmaine Jens

Charmaine Jens
Public Relations Representative
Americans Against Horse Slaughter

Americans Against Horse Slaughter is a non-funded, grassroots national movement comprised of supporters of a federal ban on the slaughter and the transport to slaughter of American horses for human consumption overseas. Americans Against Horse Slaughter has no other agenda, other than to stop the brutal slaughter of American horses.

For more information, visit Americans Against Horse Slaughter (americansagainsthorseslaughter.com) or email: aahsus@gmail.com.

Resources:

<http://www.ahdf.org/>
<http://www.horsefund.org>
<http://www.fleetofangels.org/>
<http://www.homesforhorses.org/faq.php>
<http://www.awionline.org/content/slaughter>
<http://horsebackmagazine.com/hb/archives/12940>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmzsiUoP_58
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfzX4Fx5xuE>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8ZNiRV5-Mw>
http://www.womenfitness.net/fr_animal_rights.htm
http://www.horseprotection.it/docs/fvo_canada.pdf
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<http://www.ahdf.org/archive/archive-slaughter06.htm#fedlegis>
<http://www.animallawcoalition.com/horse-slaughter/article/686>
<http://www.habitatforhorses.org/joincampaigns/proandcon.html>
<http://www.animallawcoalition.com/horse-slaughter/article/1887>
<http://www.animallawcoalition.com/horse-slaughter/article/1873>
<http://www.faniq.com/blog/Race-Horses-Slaughtered-Blog-24940>
<http://www.lex18.com/news/horse-park-offering-20-gelding-service/>
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http://equinewelfarealliance.org/uploads/Abandoned_Horses-FINAL.pdf
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http://www.stopslaughteringhorses.org/14-animals_angels_horse_slaughter.pdf
<http://www.horsefund.org/horse-racing-through-the-slaughter-pipeline-part4.php>
<http://habitatforhorses.wordpress.com/2011/12/06/lessons-in-deceit-horse-slaughter/>
http://espn.go.com/horse-racing/story/_/id/7345180/horse-slaughter-makes-quiet-return
<http://www.awionline.org/content/handful-legislators-condemn-horses-usda-approved-abuse>
<http://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/54374/nyra-adopts-tough-anti-slaughter-policy>
<http://castlegarsource.com/news/mp-introduces-bill-ban-horse-meat-human-consumption-14189>
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/vickeryeckhoff/2011/11/29/racing-industry-silent-about-slaughtered-thoroughbreds/>
<http://www.emporiagazette.com/news/2011/dec/12/renewing-horse-slaughter-revives-controversy/>
<http://habitatforhorses.wordpress.com/2011/12/07/lessons-in-corruption-horse-slaughter-and-money/>
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/vickeryeckhoff/2011/12/06/horse-slaughterhouse-investigation-sounds-food-safety-and-cruelty-alarms/>
<http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/article/809521--probing-the-link-between-slaughterhouses-and-violent-crimeher#.TuGAOT2BPLA>
<http://blogs.usda.gov/2011/12/09/setting-the-record-straight-on-congress%E2%80%99-lifting-of-the-ban-on-horse-slaughter/>
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/vickeryeckhoff/2011/12/21/how-many-congressmen-does-it-take-to-screw-a-horse/>