

# *New Hope for America's Horses*

*"I can't think of a better place  
I'd rather be right now than right here at  
Equine Advocates. When I came to the first  
American Equine Summit, I didn't know  
quite what to expect. We all had our own little  
piece of the puzzle and ideas of how to end  
horse slaughter. It was monumental for me  
because I learned that each one  
in this room had the answer —  
like if you were a great attorney and  
you needed the body of evidence.  
The body of evidence  
was in this room."*

*Victoria McCullough  
Philanthropist, International Equestrian  
and Owner of Chesapeake Petroleum  
April 27, 2013*

*"Good Fellas" (From left) Spirit, Inno and Kip are three geldings who live in a part of the sanctuary called, "Good Fellas." They are three very gentle and mellow guys. Photo by Wendy Braun.*



They say, “Timing is everything...” but it has, in fact, been twenty years since I rescued my first horse from slaughter - an aged, stubborn, but very lovable Thoroughbred cross named, Gandalf. That was in 1994 long after I had left working in the racing industry with no clue at that time that American bred wild and domestic equines, including Thoroughbreds, were being slaughtered and their meat then exported to Europe and Japan for human consumption.

Through my rescue of Gandalf, I learned that since the 1970’s, 1980’s and 1990’s literally hundreds of thousands of horses annually entered the slaughter pipeline and ended their lives at foreign-owned and operated slaughter plants in the United States (which are now closed), as well as in Canada and Mexico (where an estimated 150,000 – 180,000 slaughter-bound equines from the U.S. are still being sent annually). If not for him, I would not have found out about horse slaughter at that time or the fact that it had been an extremely secretive industry that most Americans were not aware

*John Holland, President of the Equine Welfare Alliance, speaking at the 2014 American Equine Summit. Photo by Doug Mitchell.*



of. That incident completely changed my life, for it was Gandalf, my “co-founder” who was the inspiration for Equine Advocates and our mission to end horse slaughter.

It is now eighteen years later, and since then, we have rescued and helped several thousand equines – most from slaughter and abuse cases. In May of 2004, we established Equine Advocates Rescue & Sanctuary, a 140-horse sanctuary in Chatham, NY which is home to 85 remarkable equines, including horses, ponies, donkeys and mules. The “room” that Victoria McCullough referred to in her quote is the big classroom in our Humane Education Center on the sanctuary grounds. It was there that the first American Equine Summit was held in the spring of 2012, and it was because of that summit that something truly extraordinary for America’s horses was launched.

But first, let’s backtrack for a moment. History in the fight to end horse slaughter in the United States was made for the first time in 1998 when Cathleen Doyle spear-headed the “Save the Horses” campaign in California which resulted in the passage of “Proposition 6,” the first state initiative to ban the slaughter of horses for human consumption. That victory was extremely significant because not only did California have the largest human and equine populations in the nation, but it was also the biggest agri-business state...

And then there was that old saying, “As California goes, so goes the nation.” With more than 60% of the California electorate voting to ban horse slaughter and national and state-wide polls taken across the country at the time showing that the vast majority of Americans were opposed to it, we all thought that a federal ban would pass quickly...but it never did. In fact, the closest we ever got was in 2006 when the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act passed in the House of Representatives, but sadly was blocked in the Senate. We have not come close since.

There were other important victories along the way. Horse slaughter was banned in several states and the defunding of horse meat inspections through the Moran Act temporarily prevented any equine slaughterhouses from opening in the U.S. Even though horses were still being shipped across our borders into Canada and Mexico for slaughter, it was apparent that defunding slaughter was the first major step toward a permanent ban.

In 2011, I attended the first International Equine Conference (IEC) in Alexandria, Virginia which was sponsored by the Equine Welfare Alliance (EWA). The President, John Holland, invited me to speak. It was a very intense three-day conference with some of the top equine experts from across the country making presentations. Many were my personal heroes, including Paula Bacon, the former Mayor of Kaufman, Texas who was responsible for closing Dallas Crown, the Belgian-owned horse slaughterhouse that negatively impacted the economy, the crime rate and the health and safety of Kaufman residents for three decades.

Two of the speakers at the IEC, Congressman Jim Moran of Virginia and Congressman Ed Whitfield of Kentucky each had very troubling news. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) had issued its report on horse slaughter giving reasons why it should return. Both lawmakers were very concerned that the language to defund horse slaughter would be removed from the Appropriations Bill that year and they were right.

In her brilliant FORBES article, “How Many Congressmen Does It Take To Screw A Horse?” journalist Vickery Eckhoff wrote, “Only three. This is the number it took to remove language from an agriculture appropriations spending bill on November 18th (2011), reversing a five-year ban on horsemeat inspections. The culprits? Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI), Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA). Their strategy? The old closed-door-session-on-Capitol-Hill-trick. This was of course executed at the last minute, allowing Kohl, Blunt and Kingston to hold up the appropriations bill until a government shutdown loomed. The tactic worked as planned, forcing President Obama to sign, despite a 2008 campaign promise to ban horse slaughter and the export of horses for slaughter.”

Once again, I had the same despondent feeling I experienced the first time I heard about this repulsive practice. How could this happen? How could Congress and the Obama Administration allow this to come back when it appeared to be on its way out? I think I was just so stunned by this information that I tried to think of what else could be done. What could Equine Advocates do?

I talked to John Holland and asked him if he would agree to speak at a conference that we would hold in the spring of 2012, at Equine Advocates Rescue &



*Paula Bacon, the former Mayor of Kaufman, Texas, who closed Dallas Crown, the horse slaughterhouse that operated in her community for thirty years. Photo by Doug Mitchell.*

Sanctuary. Having him on board was important and a great start. My goal was to invite more experts, but in a more intimate setting where possibly a plan of action or strategy could be developed to try to reverse what was happening. All of us who had been involved for years with the horse slaughter issue knew very well that the vast majority of Americans were strongly opposed to it, but that a few special interest groups were behind bringing it back and were determined to get their way. After all, horse slaughter was the garbage disposal for the horse industry, allowing irresponsible and callous people to get rid of their inconvenient equines quickly and for a profit. These people were not interested in trying to find kind homes for them nor were they willing to pay a licensed veterinarian a small fee to humanely euthanize their horses. No, they just wanted cash. Out of sight, out of mind!





The first American Equine Summit took place on March 31st and April 1st, 2012, with speakers who traveled to Chatham, NY, from as far away as California, Texas, Michigan, Virginia, and Florida, in addition to parts of the northeastern U.S. EWA's John Holland and Dr. Caroline Betts of the University of Southern California both talked about what they perceived as false and misleading information in the GAO Report on horse slaughter. Former Kaufman Texas Mayor Paula Bacon unfurled what looked like a scroll from the floor to the ceiling listing the countless violations committed by Dallas Crown and how her community suffered for decades while that slaughter plant was in business. All of the speakers were sensational and inspirational, including Victoria who was invited to present because she had done something that no one else had ever done – She attended several horse slaughter auctions and bought every horse in each of those auctions. She proceeded to do her own personal study and analysis on what breeds these horses were, how old they were, where they came from and other data, most of which contradicted what horse slaughter proponents gave as the reasons for having it, including the fact that the majority of the horses bound for slaughter were young and healthy as opposed to old and sick or injured which they repeatedly loved to claim.

It was at the conclusion of the Summit that Victoria stood up and said she wanted to make an announcement. She said she thought she had been alone in this fight, but after hearing all of the other speakers and learning the facts from the studies and papers in their presentations,

she felt she had enough data to begin to build a case against horse slaughter. She further declared that she planned to hire a lobbyist and would begin by enlisting the help of her contacts in government including her good friend, Senator Joseph Abruzzo of Palm Beach County, Florida who had worked with her on the passage of the Equine Protection Law of 2010 when he was still a member of Florida's House of Representatives.

Of course we were all stunned, elated and speechless. Clearly, this was not going to happen overnight, but it was the first time that someone with her contacts and access to the Executive Branch of government had ever come forward like this to help America's horses. I had just hoped, but did not imagine that this kind of progress would have resulted from the first Summit. Everyone was excited and looking forward to what the future would bring.

Like I said, timing is everything. By the end of 2012 a food fraud scandal began raging throughout Europe, lasting for more than a year. Horse meat was found in hamburgers, frozen dinners and other products labeled, "100% beef", involving some of the biggest companies in the world. In the United States, criminal activity was

*Left Page, far column: Top: Autumn at Equine Advocates Rescue & Sanctuary. Photo by Nousha Salimi.*

*Middle: Mary Kate, a Miniature Horse, was born at the sanctuary. Her dam, Mini Pearl was pregnant with her at the time of her rescue, along with six other small equines from a now defunct zoological park. Miniature equines are often used as tourist attractions at petting zoos and for other forms of entertainment. Often they receive substandard care and are kept in squalid living conditions. Photo by Nousha Salimi.*

*Bottom: Nelson is a Wild American Mustang who was captured as a foal by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Nevada back in 1999. He came to the sanctuary in 2005. Tragically, there are 50,000 Wild Horses in captivity, more than the estimated 30,000 remaining on the range. The BLM is managing them into extinction to satisfy the demands of "Welfare Ranchers" and other special interests. If immediate action is not taken to rectify this problem, Wild Horses and Burros could be lost forever. Photo by Nousha Salimi.*

*Left Page, right column: Victoria McCullough making her momentous announcement at the 2012 American Equine Summit to end the slaughter of America's horses....and in just over two years, she has made major strides and thinks a permanent ban could happen this year. Photo by Glenn Davenport.*

*Below: Thoroughbred Press Exclusive, shortly after her arrival at Equine Advocates. Photo by Karen Wagner.*





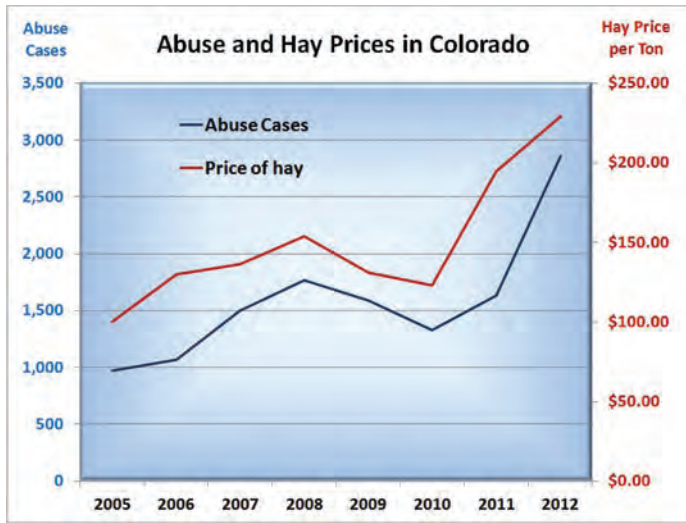
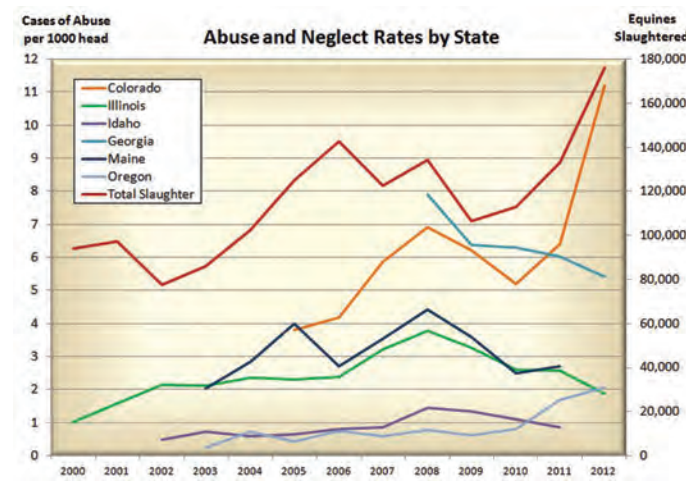
found to be rampant in the horse slaughter industry including increases in horse theft, consumer fraud at the horse auctions, safety violations and dangerous conditions during the transport of horses from the auctions to the slaughterhouses, violations of the nation’s cruelty laws, the falsifying of veterinary records and the fact that horse meat contained toxic chemicals that should never be consumed by people or animals.

In 2009, the Food and Chemical Toxicology Journal had published a study by Dr. Ann Marini and Dr. Nicholas Dodman, called the “Association of phenylbutazone usage with horses bought for slaughter: A public health risk.” It cited the potentially toxic effects on people who eat horses. That important study proved to be a major turning point in how our government, as well as the European Union viewed the slaughter of horses for food. This subject was discussed at a meeting between Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, Senator Abruzzo and Victoria. Phenylbutazone, or “Bute” for short, is a common non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug that is effective for equines, but could be toxic for humans...and that is only one of many drugs, including injectable, oral and topical medications that have the wording on their packaging, “Not intended for horses bred for human consumption.” In America, horses are NOT bred for human consumption.

The year 2013 continued to produce even more damning revelations as EWA’s John Holland and Laura Allen of the Animal Law Coalition released a paper producing evidence that the GAO Report #11-228 on horse slaughter was fraudulent. This was the very report that horse slaughter proponents and certain members of Congress, as well as all the major news agencies were using and quoting as the reason to bring horse slaughter back to the United States and it was why the language from the Moran Amendment to defund horse slaughter was removed in 2011, thus paving the way for the return of horse slaughter to the U.S. The GAO Report blamed falling horse prices and increases in equine neglect on the closing of the horse slaughter plants in 2007, but Holland and Allen proved that the GAO misrepresented that data. “We had accepted that abuse was probably increasing as the result of the bad economy,” said Holland, “so imagine our surprise when we found that it had been decreasing.” Holland and Allen determined that “drought and subsequent increases in hay prices correlated tightly with the abuse

and neglect numbers and outweighed the influence of the recession and other factors.”

A huge breakthrough took place toward the end of 2013 during a meeting in Washington, D.C. between Vice President Joe Biden, Senator Abruzzo and Victoria. The reasons why the slaughter and sale of American equines should end was discussed. There is no protection from liability if anyone gets sick and dies from eating U.S. horse meat. There is no way that horses fall into the category of “food animal” when they are not bred for slaughter and there is no way to trace where they’ve been raised, what food they’ve eaten



and what drugs they have been given. It is immoral to send animals given drugs that are toxic to humans to be slaughtered for food.

On January 17, 2014, President Barack Obama signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act which included

*Right Top: Bobby II Freedom was a former New York City Carriage Horse rescued out of a kill pen at a New Holland, PA slaughter auction in 2010. Bobby pounded the pavement of New York City streets for seven years and then was sold and scrapped for slaughter after he went lame and could no longer turn a profit. The urban carriage horse trade in big over-crowded cities like New York, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Chicago and others is dangerous for residents and tourists as well as cruel and inhumane for the horses. There are no greener pastures for these animals. This is not to be confused*



Above: Jane Velez-Mitchell, veteran TV news journalist, from her keynote address that oened the 2014 American Equine Summit, at Equine Advocates Rescue & Sanctuary. Photo by Doug Mitchell.

“ Never underestimate the capacity of a small but determined group of people to change the world. Are going to change the world for horses? Yes! Are we doing it right now? Yes!...We are all together in this web of compassion. Who knows what will come out of this Summit?”

*Right Bottom: Equine Advocates President & Founder, Susan Wagner with Mariclare, a former Canadian PMU mare rescued in Manitoba, along with 45 other PMU mares, most of whom were in foal at the time of their rescue. PMU stands for pregnant mares’ urine, the main ingredient in the estrogen and hormone-replacement therapy drugs, Premarin and PremPro. Since 1942, millions of mares and foals have suffered and then were slaughtered because of the production of these drugs which come with serious health risks for women, including breast cancer, heart disease, strokes, dementia, clotting and other dangerous conditions, according to findings in the 2002 landmark study, the Women’s Health Initiative. Mares have to be pregnant so that their estrogen-rich urine can be harvested and used to produce these drugs. They have to stand for six months tied in a tiny tie stall for six months while pregnant so that their urine can be collected. The drug maker, Pfizer has been moving PMU production from Canada to to China where an estimated 90,000 pregnant mares are standing*



*with pleasure driving or driving competitions. This is the strictly about banning horse-drawn carriages in cites like New York and others where pain is used to control the horses with severe equipment, where horses are in a completely unnatural environment, where horses are regularly involved in accidents putting passengers and pedestrians at risk and where horses are exposed to loud sounds from emergency vehicles and in bumper-to-bumper traffic both of which which are extremely dangerous and extremely stressful for these sensitive creatures. Mayor Bill DeBlasio said he will take steps to ban the urban carriage trade in New York City. Photo by Karen Wagner/Equine Advocates.*



*on PMU lines. Sadly, the FDA just approved a new PMU drug from Pfizer called Duavee. Many doctors in North America are no longer prescribing PMU drugs and so the market has shifted to women in Third World countries. Many women in those countries are not as aware of the health risks or the extreme cruelty to the mares and their foals, who are considered nothing more than by-products. Photo by Karen Wagner/Equine Advocates.*

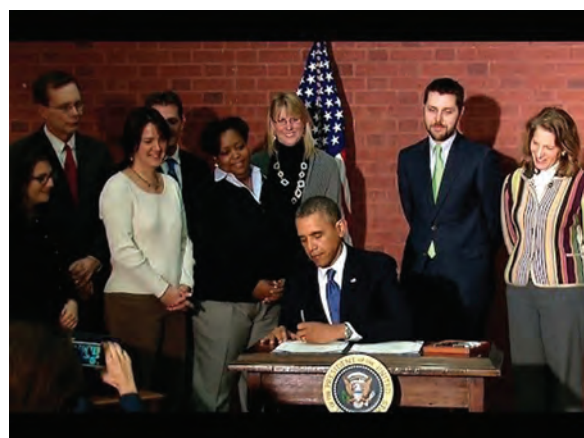




Vice President Joe Biden (right) last year talking to Victoria McCullough and Senator Joseph Abruzzo of Palm Beach County, FL about ending horse slaughter. The Vice President took action by adding language to defund horse slaughter in the United States to the 2014 Omnibus Bill which President Obama signed in January. Equine Advocates honored Victoria McCullough at its Thirteenth Annual Awards Dinner & Charity Auction in Saratoga Springs, NY for her work and dedication to end the slaughter of America's horses.

new language added to the bill by Vice President Biden to defund horse slaughter in the United States. That is just the beginning. Victoria believes that the stage is now set to end horse slaughter entirely and permanently, which would also include prohibiting the transport of equines from the United States across our borders into Canada and Mexico or to any other country for the purpose of slaughter. That will be the focus going forward.

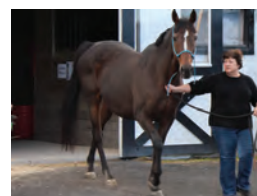
January 17, 2014, President Barack Obama, signs the Consolidated Appropriations Act, including new language added to the bill by Vice President Biden – defunding horse slaughter in the U.S. Video clip from a less-usual “walkabout” signing ceremony. Clip from article.wn.com.



For the first time ever, the proof, studies and science documenting the serious dangers of slaughtering American-bred equines for their meat and all the other extremely negative aspects of the horse slaughter industry had been brought to the attention of the highest levels of the U.S. government. That was due to the work, dedication, and passion of Victoria McCullough and the team she put together. On July 25, 2014, Equine Advocates proudly presented Victoria with the Safe Home Equine Protection Award at its Thirteenth Annual Awards Dinner & Charity Auction in Saratoga Springs, NY, honoring her work and dedication to ban the slaughter of America's horses.



“Donkeys in the Fall” - Rescued Miniature Donkeys, Franklin (left) and Reggie live in a part of the sanctuary affectionately named, “Pony Hill.” Photo by Wendy Braun.



Susan Wagner founded Equine Advocates in 1966, after 14 years working in the racing industry in different capacities. She is very active in the effort to stop the slaughter of American horses. She has written for many publications over the years, including Animal's Agenda, Horsemen's Journal, Saratoga Summer Magazine, and Saratoga Seasons Magazine.



“LIFE IS NOT THE AMOUNT OF BREATHS YOU MAKE,

IT'S THE *moments* THAT TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY.”

~ALEX HITCHENS



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