



FACTS provided by the horse people of the United States to Congress refuting anti-agriculture, anti-horse slaughter activist rhetoric:

Horse slaughter is inherently inhumane...

The processing of horses for meat can only occur in USDA inspected facilities which are governed by the [U.S. Humane Methods of Slaughter Act](#) requiring instantaneous insensibility from a single shot. Government inspectors are required to be present and to inspect the animals prior to, and during the kill process. Horse slaughter is exactly the same, and is held to the same high standard as for every other species of meat animal. There is no record of violations or citations issued for the mistreatment of any horses in U.S. horse processing facilities prior to 2007. Much touted mistreatment combined with graphically manipulated and out of context images show either injured horses that were hurt in transport or prior to arrival at the plant—(those injuries resulting from transport violations were prosecuted appropriately)—or they depict alleged events in other countries where U.S. authorities have no jurisdiction over the process.

Horses are not livestock, they are pets and companion animals...

While some people may consider their horses to be pets, the vast majority of people who actually make their living with horses, and who breed, train, and use horses in their everyday life consider them to be livestock. Both federal law and the state law of practically every state specifically designate horses as a livestock species. Horses do not live in homes, or sleep with their owners as generally accepted pet animals like dogs and cats do...and on the other side of this picture many typically regarded livestock animals like pigs and chickens are kept as pets by many Americans.

Horses are sensitive flight animals that smell death and are traumatized at slaughter facilities...

Horses, like other animals commonly used for meat such as elk and bison may respond differently than traditional livestock such as cattle or hogs, but modern facilities are designed and managed for these characteristics. There is no screaming, no abuse, no being “butchered alive” this is all the worst sort of fallacious propaganda. Horses are killed quickly and cleanly after calmly walking into the chute at a facility designed for the unique characteristics of horses, by professionals trained to use equipment designed especially for the purpose, and under the scrutiny of government inspectors charged with both humane handling and food quality. It is a far better fate than any of the alternatives.

Americans don't eat horse meat and we shouldn't be supplying those who do...

Many Americans do appreciate nutritious and delicious horse meat, and more would do so if it were available at meat counters. It is 50% higher in protein, 40% lower in fat, high in iron, and has up to 18 times the Omega-3 fatty acids of beef. China is the largest consumer, followed closely by Mexico, then other countries in Europe, Asia, Middle East, Russia, and the Americas. There are more meals served every day worldwide than there are McDonald's hamburgers. Horse meat kept the troops from starving in World War II, and fed most of the people at home because it was readily available, government inspected, and not rationed like every other form of meat. Today criminals in Florida and elsewhere are butchering stolen horses and selling the meat at black market prices out of coolers on the street. Obviously, the U.S. is full of people from ethnic traditions around the world, three-quarters of those cultures appreciate horse meat and consider it a high quality food source. [Choosing to eat horse meat, or not, is a cultural choice best left to individuals, and not heavy handed government intervention or](#)

[radical animal rights groups.](#)

Only foreigners and foreign owned companies benefit from horse slaughter...

It is true that today the primary market for horse meat is in Europe and Asia, and that the companies operating in the U.S. prior to 2007 were foreign owned, as are many companies in practically every other industry in the nation. They operated on U.S. soil, governed by U.S. laws and regulations, employed U.S. citizens, paid U.S. taxes, and purchased the horses they processed from U.S. citizens by paying fair values for otherwise unusable, unwanted, and unneeded livestock. The U.S. exports more than [10 Billion dollars worth of livestock and meat every year](#) providing tremendous value to U.S. farmers and ranchers of every other form of livestock, except horses. The inability for any return, and the roadblocks to domestic or export market access for otherwise unwanted, unneeded, unusable, and excess horses is a severe economic hardship unrightfully imposed on the horse industry alone.

Removing the appropriations rider will require the appropriation of over \$5 Million dollars to support the required USDA inspection of horse meat and should not be considered when Congress is looking for all possible cuts...

USDA horse meat inspection can easily be provided on a fee for service basis exactly like is currently done for elk, bison, ostrich, and other forms of exotic meat processing today. This would require ZERO appropriation of tax dollars, would create more than 1,000 jobs practically overnight in hard hit state and tribal economies, and allow the entire horse industry to begin to recover as the overall economic condition of the country begins to improve. On a side note, the U.S. taxpayer foots the bill for the entire cost of inspecting traditional meats like beef, pork, and lamb—over \$10 Billion dollars worth of which is exported to other countries and is not even consumed by U.S. citizens.

Horses are not raised as food animals, and most have been administered toxic drugs deadly to humans...

As for every form of meat there are rigorously enforced rules and regulations preventing the contamination of horse meat for human consumption. Activists are particularly trying to make the case that phenylbutazone (“bute”), an NSAID commonly used in horses and dogs, but banned in humans, makes treated horses permanently unsuitable as food animals. However, bute is one of the drugs that is most quickly eliminated from a horse's system with 90% of the dose being eliminated in the first 24 hours, and another 90% of the remainder being eliminated each and every day thereafter. In spite of this fact, and the fact that [there has NEVER BEEN a documented case of a single serious health effect from residues of ANY SUBSTANCE in meat or poultry in the last 20 years](#), there has been increased public concern and regulatory restriction particularly on horse meat. It is now required that all horses processed in Canada must be held for a minimum of 180 days prior to processing. Processing companies routinely test meat with laboratory tests accurate down to parts per trillion. If a government inspector pulls a sample of meat that has a higher than acceptable level of any substance, the entire lot of meat in the plant at the time is condemned at substantial economic loss to the processor. In [European Union Audits](#) of both Canadian and [Mexican horse processing plants](#) there has not been any finding concerning unacceptable levels of any prohibited substance in horse meat.

On a side note, more than 18,000 kids starve to death every day around the world. The 38,000 and counting excess unadoptable wild horses that the U.S. taxpayer is supporting on privately owned property because they cannot be left to overpopulate and denude the BLM rangelands would be much better used to provide much needed protein to starving people. In one fell swoop you could cut three-quarters of the Wild Horse and Burro Program funds that are now being spent to manage horses that are off of federal lands AND greatly enhance U.S. sponsored hunger relief efforts...a win/win all around! Those who object to others eating horse meat have never been hungry.

There are no excess horses in America, and what there are would be eliminated if horse owners would quit “over-breeding”...

The GAO report on [HORSE WELFARE: Action Needed to Address Unintended Consequences of Domestic Slaughter Cessation](#) clearly documents the increase of excess horses since the closure of the plants. Activist claims that reports of huge increases in abandoned and neglected horses are “anecdotal” and “not based in fact” are belied not only by the GAO (which interviewed state veterinarians among others—state officials reporting official statistics for their state are hardly “anecdotal), but by [the huge increase in media reports all over the country](#), [the problems that the Tribes are facing as a result of no market and their herds increasing by 20% per year](#), the fact that [the few available horse rescues are full and overwhelmed](#) at exactly the same time as every horse sale in the country is flooded with low value, unmarketable horses. The prominent American breed registries (American Quarter Horse, American Paint Horse, Arabian, Thoroughbreds) for quality horses are universally reporting decreases in excess of 70% in the number of horses being bred per year.

It is worth noting that the U.S. government with it's out of control wild horse and burro management is without question, by many thousands of percent, the biggest offender in terms of irresponsible “over-breeding.”

Closing the slaughter plants did not increase abandoned horses – it is all because of the economy...

The strongest proof against this fallacy is a comparison between the effect on the equine economy during the severe economic downturn in the 1980s and this one. In the 1980s the number of horses that were sold and processed more than doubled to over 300,000 head because horses are, for the most part, luxury items that are the first things to go in tough economic times. The price of horses at that time were, however, quite high especially in comparison to the current extremely depressed prices. There were no increases in horse abandonment or neglect because all horses had value. When the recession was over the horse industry recovered in record time.

Horse slaughter is a predatory business where killer buyers outbid people who only want to save horses...

Horse auctions and horse buyers are in the business of finding the highest value for every horse. In a normal market situation that means that a horse that is wanted for any other purpose will be worth more than one that is only suitable as a meat animal. Anyone with the resources and desire to do so can bid on and acquire horses at whatever the market price is on that particular day. The reality is that most rescues will not bid on old, lame or otherwise undesirable horses that they will be unable to adopt out and turn a profit on.

Horse owners often don't understand that a horse they sell at auction might be slaughtered...

While it is commonly understood that horses sold at horse sales and auction barns are sold without restriction, the seller always has the right of “no sale” if their animal does not bring the amount they want or if they do not wish to sell to the individual who is the highest bidder. Killer buyers are not hidden and the seller can always ask the auctioneer who the buyer is. Sellers unfamiliar with common agricultural practices are responsible for doing their own investigation, and if they are uncomfortable with selling under the terms of the horse sale, should choose a private treaty or some other method of selling their horse.

Horses are often stolen and sent to slaughter...

Every state in the Nation has livestock laws around the transfer of legal ownership of livestock, and procedures such as brand inspection before horses can be legally sold to any buyer including a

processing plant. Sale barns, brand inspectors, and livestock law enforcement around livestock auctions are acutely aware of the possibility of stolen livestock, and use all possible means to prevent the inadvertent sale of stolen livestock. In addition, the horse industry has developed a fail safe method that is available to any horse owner concerned about this possibility. A [Do Not Slaughter Registry](#) has been established and the horse processing companies operating in North America have agreed to scan every horse before their buyers purchase them in the U.S. This scan will immediately identify any horse that has been stolen, or one that has been entered into the registry.

Slaughter horses are inhumanely cramped onto trucks and are routinely tortured and beaten...

Horses bound for slaughter are the only species of livestock that are regulated during transport by the federal government. [USDA-APHIS Slaughter Horse Transport](#) is the agency charged with the responsibility of enforcing these laws and regulations which include a ban on transportation in double-deck trucks, separate compartments for stallions and aggressive horses, prohibition against transporting horses that cannot put weight on all four legs, or who are blind, etc. Neither horses nor any other form of meat animal are routinely “tortured and beaten” because animals that are slaughtered while in excessive pain or unduly stressed result in very poor quality, often unusable meat—what is known in the trade as “dark cutters.” For economic and meat quality reasons, as well as the obvious moral and ethical reasons, horses being transported to slaughter are taken very good care of, fed well, watered often, and handled as quietly and calmly as possible. Good livestock hauling practices includes making sure that there are enough horses in each compartment so that they are able to lean on and support each other as the truck sways and rocks going down the road, but not so many that a horse who might slip and fall could not get back up. Trucks are required to have non-slip footing to help prevent this from happening.

Please note that one of the primary findings of the GAO report on HORSE WELFARE was that the Slaughter Horse Transport agency charged with enforcement is hampered in their duties by appropriations riders that prevent the inspection of live horses.

Horse slaughter is a barbaric practice that is unneeded, and there are better solutions...

However, the only solutions that are offered are anything but...and only compound and exacerbate the problems already so devastating to horses and horse people. Should the only solution to an excess, unusable, unwanted horse be either the establishment of a full-blown animal welfare entitlement program that requires the U.S. taxpayer to foot the bill to care for every horse until they live out their 30+ years of natural life, or to have the taxpayers pay for a very expensive, veterinary administered lethal drug overdose? Should Congress and the American people have to figure out how to pay for it at up the chemical euthanasia and disposing cost of to \$600 per horse, and then dispose of the environmentally toxic large animal carcasses averaging more than 1,000 lbs. each, and then figure on doing that for more than 300,000 carcasses per year which is less than the number of horses that were sold for good and valuable meat during the economic downturn of the 1980s. On top of that Congress should be prepared for an economic bailout of all of the equine businesses that are denied a legitimate market for unusable livestock by government restrictions.

Captive bolts are not suitable for horses, a horses skull is different and requires multiple attempts to properly kill a horse...

Both the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), who are the veterinarians who best know horses, have determined that a penetrating captive bolt, which is a penetrating object into the brain that causes instantaneous insensibility is humane. A carefully placed bullet under safe and controlled conditions as is found in a processing facility is the other acceptable and humane method, and is, in fact the method used in most

horse processing plants. While a horse's skull is shaped differently than a cow's skull, the brain is actually higher in the skull, and protected by less bone, thus a horse is more reliably killed with a single shot from either a captive bolt or a gunshot than is a cow or a bison.