

Slaughter Alert Part Three

Under the Guise of Euthanasia

Part 1 of a 3 part series
Feb 15, 2010
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In response a 900 page **FOIA** document produced by the **USDA**¹ providing [irrefutable evidence](#) that horse slaughter is **INHUMANE**, proponents of horse slaughter declare that once the horses arrive at the slaughter plants they are treated humanely, yet nothing can be further from the truth. Proponents assert this nonsensical premise as proof that horse slaughter is purportedly *humane*, based on the fact that horses depicted in said FOIA were injured when they arrived at the US horse slaughter plants² rather than having their injuries sustained during the actual slaughter process.



In a recent report³ by **Animals' Angels USA**, where investigations of horse slaughter focused on conditions and treatment of horses at slaughter plants, auctions, feedlots and during transport investigations, it was found that "the instant a horse is designated a 'kill horse', handling and treatment change radically from that normally given horses.

- Auction employees use wooden sticks, striking horses with full range of motion and force at the Sugarcreek auction, OH
- Auction workers hitting in face and jabbing in eyes at the Sugarcreek Auction, OH.
- Transport driver whipping horses over the head, hips and legs at Mount Hope, OH
- Horses were confined on trailer for over 34 hours, without food, water or rest

According to the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (1978), animals should be stunned into unconsciousness prior to their slaughter to ensure a quick, relatively painless death. The **Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)** is the Agency within **USDA** responsible for ensuring that slaughter plants are in compliance with the Act.⁴

Evidence of barbaric animal cruelty and suffering has been well documented on US soil long before US horse slaughter plants were forced to close down. It cannot be emphasized enough that slaughter is NOT humane euthanasia. "The captive bolt is not a proper instrument for the slaughter of equids, these animals regain consciousness 30 seconds after being struck, they are fully aware they are being vivisected." -**Dr. Lester Friedlander, DVM & former Chief USDA Inspector**

As documented by **Animals' Angels** in their 2008 investigation of the Juarez, Mexico Horse Slaughter Plant, horses are killed with a "puntilla knife."⁵ "Such a barbaric practice does not render the horse unconscious, it simply paralyzes the animal. The horse is still fully conscious at the start of the slaughter process during which the animal is hung by a hind leg, its throat slit and its body butchered."⁶ - **Dr Nicholas Dodman BVMS, MRCVS, and Founding Member Veterinarians for Equine Welfare**

¹ Evidence produced by the USDA dated Oct 8, 2008 in response to a Nov 17, 2005 FOIA request by Julie Caramante

² UOH: The Fundamental Truth of Animal Agriculture

³ Animals' Angels Compilation [Report](#)

⁴ USDA FSIS Fact Sheet

⁵ Animals' Angels Compilation Report Horse Slaughter 2007/2008/2009

⁶ Horse Slaughter – Its Ethical Impact and Subsequent Response of the Veterinary Profession, by Dr Dodman

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The USDA affirms that, “Humane stunning procedures are required by the **Humane Slaughter Act of 1978**, and multiple stuns of an animal are considered **INHUMANE**.”

A 2008 report by the **Canadian Horse Defense Coalition** revealed unacceptable practices regarding the stunning and slaughtering of horses inside the plant. The CHDC report states, “They did not necessarily ensure accurate hitting of the horses with the captive bolt”; further that, “systemic neglect, cruel handling, poor slaughter practices, resulting in immense suffering.”



In 2004 the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found the most frequent violation noted by inspectors in slaughter houses was ineffective stunning, meaning "in many cases ..a conscious animal reached slaughter" in violation of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act⁷. The GAO also noted there had been no effort made to stop the ineffective stunning and the records kept by inspectors were so poor, it was impossible to tell even by 2008 that there had been any improvement.

In 1998 the **USDA** implemented a survey to determine if humane slaughter requirements were being applied and enforced as specified. In reference to the Act, the USDA asserts that FSIS Veterinarians and inspectors stop the production line if they see any violations of the humane slaughter regulations. In each plant, documentation showed the incidents were handled according to FSIS guidelines, yet onsite follow up by FSIS inspectors indicate this is NOT the case.

As reported by the USDA, “A deficiency in humane handling was noted in each of 13 establishments.⁸ These **FSIS** observed deficiencies included: The inappropriate and inhumane movement of downer animals to the stunning area by use of ropes, chains, and forklift.. overcrowding of animals in holding pens resulting in animals not being able to get to the watering troughs ..improper stunning of both normal and downer animals. Additional past incidents of inhumane handling were documented on Processing Deficiency Records in 15 plants.”

The USDA further reports that “Employees used devices such as whips, a length of garden hose, or plastic tubing to drive the animals. Against regulation, employees were observed to drive animals at a pace that was faster than normal walking speed to ensure full chutes and driveways to the stunning area.”

The **USDA FSIS** reports that with regard to captive bolt stunners, plants with lower efficiency rates usually resulted from “inexperienced operators, misplacement of the stunner, or misfiring of the stunner.”

The **USDA** states that, “it is desirable that animals be bled as soon after stunning as possible to utilize post stunning heart action and to obtain complete bleeding. Also, the longer the interval between stunning and bleeding, the more likely that an animal will regain consciousness. It is considered **INHUMANE** to allow an animal to regain consciousness after the stunning procedure, so the bleeding should be done as quickly as possible after stunning. Although a stunning-to-bleed interval is not specified in the regulations, the stunning-to-bleed intervals were monitored and recorded. The intervals ranged from less than 15 seconds (in six plants) to greater than 60 seconds (in 34 plants).”

⁷ GAO-04-247, GAO-08-686T

⁸ [USDAFSISantemort.pdf](#)

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The topic of horse slaughter has been called America's dirty little secret and for good reason. Most people have no idea that this covert industry is not only thriving, but it's being fueled by an aggressive and well funded international movement to reopen horse slaughter plants on US soil.



Despite the overwhelming amount of evidence of barbaric cruelty within the horse slaughter industry, the protective legislation that would provide for a Federal law banning it has been stuck in Congress for nearly a decade.

What seems to be a pattern is that the bill is passed by the House and then lingers without movement once it reaches the Senate. For example, **H.R. 503** was passed in the House on September 7, 2006, but the bill was anonymously blocked from a vote in the Senate, so the bill died at the end of the session and then was reintroduced.

Current pending legislation reflects a clear and present need for law enforcement and on Mar 16, 2009 **HR 503** was referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. **The Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2009**⁹ - Amends the federal criminal code to impose a fine and/or prison term of up to three years for possessing, shipping, transporting, purchasing, selling, delivering, or receiving any horse, horse flesh, or carcass with the intent that it be used for human consumption. The Act reduces the prison term to one year if the offense involves less than five horses or less than 2,000 pounds of horse flesh or carcass and the offender has no prior conviction for this offense.

Despite countless instances of documented cruelty and cases where charges were brought against known offenders, and the government's own documentation of [irrefutable evidence](#) that horse slaughter is INHUMANE; law enforcement agencies continue to look the other way, fines are not enforced and the dirty little secret goes on and on.

Proponents argue if horse slaughter plants were reopened in the US, that horses would be protected from cruelty by the Humane Slaughter Act which is enforced by the USDA FSIS inspectors; however findings indicate that inspectors have become paper pushers and don't have access to the slaughter area on a regular basis. "We are the people who are charged by Congress with enforcing HSA, but most of our inspectors have little to no access to those areas of the plants where animals are being handled and slaughtered," said **Arthur Hughes, President of the National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals**.

H.R. 503 and **S 727** are two pending Bills that could put all this to an end for domestic equines. **H.R 1018** would provide additional protection for wild equines and **H.R 305** would outlaw the use of double decker cattle trailers for transporting horses within the US. Despite the support of many courageous Congressmen and Senators that currently support these Bills, they are being challenged by some of the strongest lobbying powers in recorded history.

⁹ H.R. 503 Full Text [HR503FullText.pdf](#)

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What most American people don't realize is that America's horses are still facing brutal slaughter in Mexico and Canada, and that these slaughter plants are owned by the same foreign interests that once operated in the US.

Many policy makers are being misled, and or bought out by special interests. Many of those who oppose a ban of horse slaughter have been misled to believe that there are allegedly too many so called "unwanted" and "excess" horses and/or that horse slaughter is purportedly *humane*. Gov Tracks US currently shows that there are [180 co sponsors of H.R. 503](#), yet new pro slaughter legislation is being introduced on a regular basis in several states across the Nation at an alarming pace. There are now approximately [65 Senators](#) that oppose the **Prevention to Equine Cruelty Act** or have yet to step up and support it.

Proponents are pushing hard for Americans "to accept and embrace the idea of using horse meat for human consumption". Proponents seem to be targeting the [states that have FSIS inspections](#) in place for food animals. According to the United Organizations of the Horse (UOH), a nation-wide network of pro slaughter activists reports that legislative action is mounting and taking place in approximately 23 states including Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming--and legislative efforts in support of the horse industry are being considered for introduction in a number of other states including Georgia, Kentucky, New Mexico, Nevada, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington." Pro slaughter legislation encourages foreign interest to invest in horse slaughter plants in North Dakota and Montana and there are aggressive lobbying efforts to reverse the court actions in Texas and Illinois to re-open horse slaughter plants

Illinois State Rep. Jim Sacia recently reintroduced a bill to repeal the state's 2007 ban on slaughtering horses for human consumption. Rep. Sacia's bill, [H.B. 4812](#), would also allow horses to be shipped into the state for slaughter for human consumption, with no certificate of veterinary inspection, contrary to current state law governing horses.- **Laura Allen, Animal Law Coalition**. "In what is perhaps even more disturbing, Rep. Sacia has also offered a clause to HB 4812 that calls for a fee of \$25 to be charged to the slaughterhouse for each horse slaughtered. This money would then be placed into a fund for eventual distribution to equine rescues for use in expanding their operations or providing care to rescued horses. The ILEHC finds this clause to be particularly repulsive and we want our members and supporters to know that we would never accept a single penny of the proposed *blood money*." – **Gail Vacca, President Illinois Equine Humane Center**

How to Help:

Americans can contact their US representatives in support of **HR 503, S727, HR 305** and **HR 1018**. Thank your representatives if they currently support these bills ([180 co sponsors of H.R. 503](#)) and to contact the [policy makers](#) that haven't yet stepped up to support this important legislation.

The hearing on IL HB 4812 is scheduled for February 23. Contact representatives to voice your concern regarding the pending IL legislation. Learn more [HERE](#).

Read [part one](#) of this report to get the facts about the UOH's newest campaign effort; a nationwide so-called 'Do Not Slaughter' registry.

Read [part two](#) of this report to see how the humane argument as supported by the AVMA and the AAEP has been used to influence and mislead certain industry leaders and US policy makers.

Learn more:

[Saving America's Horses - A Nation Betrayed](#)
[Veterinarians for Equine Welfare](#)

[Americans Against Horse Slaughter](#)
[Animal Law Coalition](#)

[Animals' Angels](#)
[Kaufman Zoning](#)
[Equine Welfare Alliance](#)