

Overpopulation/Feral Horses/Unwanted Horses – REBUTTAL POINTS

- **Horses being sent to slaughter are not “unwanted” – they are unlucky:** There are many heartbreaking stories about personal horses falling victim to slaughter. The day we introduced the SAFE Act, I was joined by 17 year old Brittany Wallace, who did everything right to find a safe and permanent home for her childhood horse, but because horse slaughter exists, her poor horse was sold to a kill buyer. Fortunately Brittany was reunited with Scribbles by a horse rescue that saved her, but due to the swift and devious nature of this predatory industry, too many such stories do not have such happy endings.
- **Horses being slaughtered can have productive second careers:** USDA found that 92% of horses sent to slaughter are in good condition. Many good owners and rescue operations are unable to compete with slaughter buyers at auctions. Over 1,300 programs nationwide accept donated horses. With additional alternatives such as selling and leasing horses, less than 1/1000th of the total horse population may require humane euthanasia.
- **Horse slaughter is demand driven, not a part of the horse industry:** It is also telling that between 1990 and 2002, the number of horses slaughtered annually at U.S. facilities declined from 345,900 to 42,312, yet no increase in abuse, neglect or abandonment was observed. The number of horse slaughterhouses operating in the U.S. also declined during that period, but was not accompanied by a rise in abandonment or mistreatment. When California banned horse slaughter in 1998, the state saw no corresponding rise in abandonment/cruelty, but did see a 34% drop in horse theft.
- **Horses are wanted, but being bought up for high end meat market overseas:** Every week, killer buyers attend auctions and outbid legitimate horse owners to fill their contracts with the foreign-owned plants. The vast majority will be sold to a new owner and others will be kept longer.
- **Reproduction is manageable:** Horses are one of the most manageable species we deal with – we are able to completely control their numbers and we are also able to rehome them or euthanize them, if other humane options are not possible. Successful forms of birth control are currently being used by the federal government and could be employed on public and Tribal lands with great success.