

## Horse Slaughter Talking Points

- **The Horse Slaughter Industry:**
  - Approximately **150,000 American horses per year** are commercially slaughtered for human consumption
  - Horse slaughter is a **for-profit industry** fueled by foreign demand for horsemeat, *not* based on domestic horse supply
  - There are **no plants in the U.S. at this time** but American horses are still shipped to slaughter in Canadian or Mexican plants
  - There are new efforts to **reopen** U.S. plants
  
- **Types of horses that go to slaughter:**
  - healthy weight / good condition
  - from all backgrounds...show, race, work, pleasure, even mares and foals.
- Opposition to Horse Slaughter is Enormous. **80%** of American voters opposed to horse slaughter for human consumption (consistent for all demographics: region, race, sex, political affiliation)
  
- **Why Do I Oppose Horse Slaughter? THREE MAIN REASONS:**
  - 1) **Inherently Cruel**
    - **Long-Distance Transport** (crammed together, kicking, trampling, slippery surfaces)
    - **Unavoidably Cruel Slaughter: Horses Not Built for Slaughter**
      - Horses are mentally and physically distinct from livestock
      - Head Shy = repeated blows to head but still not stunned (well documented in investigations)
  
  - 2) **Horsemeat Toxicity & Food Safety**
    - U.S. horse meat is unfit for human consumption because of the uncontrolled administration of hundreds of dangerous drugs and other substances to horses before slaughter.
    - Given drugs, dewormers, fly ointments containing chemicals banned for any level of human consumption (bute – toxic to people)
    - Race horses are given legal and illegal drugs – highly contaminated meat with NO ability to screen
    -
  
  - 3) **Cultural Importance of Horses**
    - Historically, horses have carried us to war, helped settle our country, given their lives for our entertainment and betterment
    - Americans do not raise horses for food and do not eat horsemeat – so we want to protect our horses from this gruesome industry

**Busting the Myths -**

**Q: *But if there's no slaughter, what will we do with all the unwanted, old, sickly, injured horses?***

A: Kill buyers purchase fat, healthy horses.

A: Horse slaughter is driven by overseas demand, not need.

A: Horses are still being slaughtered in similar numbers to the past; abandonment/starvation is an unrelated cruelty most affected by the economy and weather patterns.

A: So long as horse slaughter is allowed, horse rescue resources are misdirected to crisis at auctions rather than focus on the truly needy cases.

**Q: *But couldn't we make it humane if horses were slaughtered here where USDA-regulated?***

A: Former U.S. plants were regulated but cruelty persisted even when under intense scrutiny.

A: Slaughter methods most commonly used abroad (captive bolt) are the same as would be used here.

A: USDA FOIA documentation showed immense suffering in transport in the U.S. – also inherently long distance.

**Q: *Can't horse meat be made safe to eat?***

A: Many drugs/treatments for horses have no “safe” levels for human consumption.

A: No system to track horses' lifetime medical histories – the horse industry would have to submit to extraordinary intervention and regulation.

A: Medically treated for the roles they play in the U.S.: work and pleasure.

**WHAT IS BEING DONE TO STOP THIS IN CONGRESS:**

- **Introduced the Safeguard American Food Exports Act (SAFE Act)**
  - Legislation to prohibit the slaughter of horses, the sale of horse meat for human consumption and the export of horses for that purpose.
  - **The Interim Work: Cut Off Funding for Horse Slaughter**
  - United States Department of Agriculture must, by law, inspect meat sold for human consumption so since 2005, Congress has blocked inspections
    - *No food safety inspections → no sale in interstate commerce → no horse slaughter because no market!*
- **LATEST NEWS: In July, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee voted again to eliminate funding for horse slaughter, again, and so we will work this fall to ensure this is in the final bill.**