

Support the Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act (H.R. 1942 / S. 1214)

Protect America's horses from the cruelty of slaughter and protect consumers from toxic horsemeat.

The Safeguard American Food Exports Act was introduced in the House by Reps. Frank Guinta (R-NH), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Vern Buchanan (R-FL), and Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM), and in the Senate by Sens. Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), and Susan Collins (R-ME).

What will the SAFE Act do?

The SAFE Act will prohibit the slaughter of horses for human consumption in the U.S. and their export for that purpose. This bill will also protect consumers from exposure to toxic horsemeat.

Does horse slaughter differ from other slaughter?

Horse slaughter is especially inhumane because horses, skittish by nature, are extremely difficult to stun. They often endure repeated blows to the head and sometimes are alive and kicking during dismemberment. USDA inspectors cited rampant cruelty violations at plants previously operating in the U.S.

How does horsemeat differ from other meat?

American horses are not raised for food. Over their lifetimes they are routinely given hundreds of drugs and other substances (legal and illegal) that have not been approved by the FDA for use in animals intended for human consumption. A [recent New York Times article](#) emphasized the hodgepodge of drugs regularly administered to American race horses and the resulting food safety threats: *"Laboratories cannot yet detect the newest performance-enhancing drugs [used in horse racing], while trainers experiment with anything that might give them an edge, including ... cobra venom, Viagra, blood doping agents, stimulants and cancer drugs."*

The shocking [discovery of horsemeat in beef products in the U.K.](#) and the European Union forecasted the threat to American health that could result if horse slaughter proponents were successful in bringing the grisly business back to the U.S.

More recently, the [European Union \(EU\) banned imports of horse meat from Mexico to the EU](#) as of January 15, 2015 after a scathing audit of EU-certified Mexican horse slaughter plants, which kill tens of

thousands of American horses each year. The report stresses that because horses are not raised as food-producing animals in Mexico or the United States, but are instead considered companion animals and partners in work and sport, they are routinely given many medications that are illegal for use in food animals. The audit also found gross deficiencies in horse welfare protections throughout the Mexican horse slaughter system.

How do horse slaughter plants affect communities?

Slaughter plants inflict environmental damage, drain local economies, and diminish property values. The minimal number of low-paying, dangerous jobs that slaughter plants offer cannot compensate for the enormous environmental and financial burdens on surrounding communities.



What do Americans think about horse slaughter?

A 2012 national poll revealed that 80% of Americans favor a ban on horse slaughter and acknowledge our responsibility to protect these intelligent, sensitive animals from slaughter. Horses are our companions and a historically significant part of American culture. We owe them a kinder, more dignified end of life than to be cruelly slaughtered and served up on foreign dinner plates.

Timeline of Horse Slaughter Legislation

- December 18, 2015: Language continuing the horse slaughter inspection ban renewed in the FY 2016 Omnibus signed into law.
- July 17, 2015: Senate Appropriations Committee adopted Udall-Kirk Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections after voice vote.
- July 8, 2015: House Appropriation Committee did not adopt Farr Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections due to 24-24 tie vote.
- December 16, 2014: Language continuing the horse slaughter inspection ban renewed in the FY 2015 Omnibus signed into law.
- May 29, 2014: House Appropriations Committee adopted Moran Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections after roll call vote of 28-22.
- May 22, 2014: Senate Appropriations Committee adopted Landrieu-Graham Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections after roll call vote of 18-12.
- January 17, 2014: Language reinstating the horse slaughter inspection ban was included in the FY 2014 Omnibus signed into law.
- June 20, 2013: Senate Appropriations Committee adopted Landrieu-Graham Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections.
- June 13, 2013: House Appropriations Committee adopted Moran-Young Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections.
- May 2012: The House Appropriations Committee adopted the Moran Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections.
- November 2011: The Agricultural Appropriations bill signed into law omitted inspection defunding language, opening the door the return of slaughter plants to the U.S.
- September 2008: House Judiciary Committee passed a ban on horse slaughter by voice vote.
- September 2007: U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit upheld the State of Illinois' decision to ban the slaughter of horses for human consumption, shutting down the last of the plants located on US soil.
- April 2007: Senate Commerce Committee passed S. 311, a ban on horse slaughter, by a 15-7 vote.
- March 2007: U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit upheld a 1949 Texas state law that outlawed the sale and possession with intent to sell horsemeat for human consumption. The Supreme Court denied a cert petition submitted by the horse slaughter plants.
- September 2006: A permanent ban on horse slaughter passed the House by a 263-146 vote.
- September 2005: Senate passed a funding limitation amendment to ban horse slaughter by a 69-28 margin, following a bipartisan House vote of 269-158 in June 2005. Funding limitations remained in place in the federal budget until 2011.