

Horse Slaughter Thriving

According to USDA numbers, well over 100,000 of our American Horses per year are exported to Canada and Mexico to be slaughtered for their meat and sold as a delicacy overseas.

Horse slaughter is thriving. Horse slaughter is NOT euthanasia. The journey in a fully crammed truck, may take several days without food or water. Many are horrifically injured and even dead upon arrival at the slaughter plant. The abuse these horses suffer at the hands of both the kill buyers and the slaughter workers is so horrific, that footage or pictures of this intentional cruelty are generally too shocking for the majority of the American public.

What is of major concern and relevance is the insurmountable and very significant difference between slaughtering a cow and slaughtering a horse. It is the want and need for human attention and praise that gives the horse its incredible versatility and it is a major factor in the assessment of the amount of mental and physical suffering involved with horse slaughter.

Besides for the obvious difference between the intelligence of a cow and a horse, the fact that the horse has an acute and high sense of fear attributes to the inevitable cruelty of horse slaughter. Studies show that the horse will move at the exact moment that the bolt is about to hit him in the head, making it near impossible for the worker to render the horse unconscious the first time. The bolt ends up in their eye or cheek and many videos prove that horses have to be hit approximately 5 to 10 times before they go down.

Many of these horses were someone's pet once and many are horses who have fulfilled a service all of their lives (like "retired" dude ranch horses, race horses, performance horses, work horses, kid horses etc.). In addition to those sad circumstances, many more are horses that were bred; just to be discarded because their color or conformation did not turn out as the breeder had hoped.

Many of these are also wild horses who have been rounded up by the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) or by the Forest Service. While there were still over 1,000,000 wild horses only decades ago, there are now approximately only 30,000 left in the wild in America. It is more than puzzling why our government continues to see the need to spend our tax dollars on rounding up more and more every week, just to have to spend more tax dollars on expensive adoption programs, keeping them in holding facilities and feeding them.

When these wild horses are over the age of ten, or they have been tried for adoption 3 times, the BLM can legally sell them to killer buyers. They have been ripped from their families and peaceful lives on public lands, where they have miraculously managed to survive for hundreds of years, just to end up in the foreign owned slaughter plants.

Why does all this still go on when the vast majority (over 70%) of Americans feel this is not an acceptable way to treat an intelligent and kind animal such as the horse? (Documented by thousands and thousands of petition signatures and census statistics and survey after survey.)

The answers are obvious to horse advocates who have been involved in this for a long time, but not so obvious to most, and especially unbelievable to those who think that horse abuse is illegal in this country.

When asking American horsemen about horse slaughter, a response frequently heard is: "Of course I am against horse slaughter, but what are we going to do with all the unwanted horses and all the wild horses in holding?"

Pro-slaughter lobbyists and pro-slaughter legislator's claims are, that the slaughter of horses for human consumption is humane and "necessary" because of a huge overpopulation or unwanted horse problem. This sounds like a reasonable argument, however the reason for this widespread deception of the public, is easily deciphered.

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The truth is that the business of Horse slaughter is NOT a business simply developed to help America solve the unwanted horse problem; it is a FOR-profit, demand-driven business, like any other business. The amount of horses slaughtered per year, is determined by the demand of horse meat abroad and by the contracts that the kill buyers have to fulfill, NOT by the amount of unwanted horses. In fact, there is no evidence whatsoever that the numbers of horses slaughtered are actually unwanted horses at all. They are simply horses unlucky enough to be purchased by killer buyers with contracts to fulfill, instead of by good new owners.

The demand of the horse slaughter plants is for healthy, muscled, young flesh as this is the tenderest and fetches the highest price per pound.

The kill buyers are in search of the young, large, strong and healthy and snatch them up before good homes ever have the opportunity to take a look at them. Consequently this leaves society with the meek, weak and unhealthy; the truly unwanted. The horses that were perfectly adoptable end up in the kill buyer's cattle trucks, and the horse rescue organizations and the horse auction houses, are left with the rest after the kill buyers drive off. It is very difficult for horse rescuers to scramble enough money together to save a good horse, because they have to compete with the kill buyers who get a premium price for the weight of the flesh.

Horse slaughter factories are especially keen on obtaining wild horses to butcher, because they have not received the many medications, drugs and inoculations that domestic horses receive. The meat is therefore free of carcinogens that are harmful to the human body.

In addition to the obvious motives of the slaughter industry, the option of horse slaughter in itself in fact has created, is creating and will continue to create the unwanted horse problem, by enabling over breeding, encouraging the dumping of horses, and by taking the strong, large, adoptable horses out of society and leaving the unwanted.

As a convenient and lucrative means of disposal, horse slaughter allows huge breeding industries to dispose of horses that do not have the perfect conformation or color or strength necessary for their discipline. The larger the quantities they breed, the larger their chances of a winner. The youngster that disappoints simply gets discarded.

The American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) -which is one of the biggest supporters of horse slaughter- celebrated their 7 millionth foal, and reported over 140,000 foals in 2009. This is approximately the same number as the number of U.S. horses slaughtered! Could their motives be related to the fact that they need that same amount of horses to go to slaughter in order to make way for their new stock and keep prices falsely inflated? In any case, they seem to be morbidly afraid of a bill that will stand in their way of making their fortunes.

We have had horse slaughter for over 50 years and anyone can see that it has not solved any supposed "unwanted" horse problem so far. Au contraire, the lucrative option has taught many people to treat horses like nothing more than a product that can be discarded as soon as it has outlived its profitability. If we didn't have horse slaughter, some people might have to adopt a whole new mentality of making a horse last longer to increase profitability instead of replacing him.

A non- horse person might be surprised to learn that the breeding farms receive both huge breeding incentives from their perspective breeding associations as well as huge tax advantages and write-offs from the IRS. This further encourages breeding strategies that are not consistent with demand. These industries continue to promote breeding in large numbers, even while the demand for these horses does not exist! When you throw in the current state of the economy on top of the overpopulation problem and add in the breeding plans for coming years, the future seems rather bleak for American horses.

The Lexington Herald-Leader (newspaper) publishes the Kentucky Horse Breeders Incentives Awards. The fund generated 19.2 Million Dollars (\$19,220,007) (!!) The money comes from taxes from the horse races. If these associations were truly concerned with the welfare of the horse and the horse overpopulation problem as they say they are, would these funds still be distributed to horse breeders?

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The stakes are becoming so high in the breeding industry that the dubious practice of replacing a mare's own foal, with a foal that is more valuable, is also increasing. These mares are called "nurse mares" and the foals are "nurse mare foals". The biological foal gets ripped away from its mother and left to die, while the valuable foal gets ripped away from its mother just to get a different one, while the last mare gets her foal ripped away from her and gets put back to work. In both humans and animals, the separation or death of parents from babies is the number one most devastating and traumatizing event possible. It is estimated that in the thoroughbred industry alone, the numbers of unwanted foals produced in this way, are approximately 20,000 per year. These foals face cruel deaths unless they get lucky and are rescued by organizations such as Eagle Hill Equine Rescue.

It is an outrage for our government to allow breeding incentives, while never having made any moneys available for horse rescues and sanctuaries. It is an outrage for our government to condone the actions of the B.L.M. and the Forest Service. Some say it is a conspiracy against horses and a betrayal of the American Public.

What is needed is a proposition and a bill that proposes something like this: to take these same taxes from the horse races and other horse sports, and perhaps also from breeding fees, and utilize them to establish gelding funds and humane euthanasia funds, as apposed to breeding incentives.

Unfortunately the opposite is happening, even in the new federal stimulus Bill there is money to "help" horse breeders: "The new law contains two important tax incentives that would allow a much bigger write-off for horses and other depreciable property purchased and placed in service", said Jay Hickey, president of the American Horse Council. In addition, bonus depreciation has also been reinstated in the new stimulus bill. This second incentive allows a horse owner to take first-year bonus depreciation equal to 50% of the cost of horses. Basically a horse can be written off within three years, while his life span is about 25 years.

To top off the atrociousness of it all, a dead horse is a tax write of as well; even for kill buyers. This might explain why the skinny horses without much meat, die under mysterious circumstances on their lots many times.

Large breeders and Breed associations have an enormous economic incentive to promote horse slaughter, coincidently (not), together with the cattlemen's industries and associations, they are the most active lobbyists *for* horse slaughter, *for* more breeder tax incentives and *for* new slaughter plants in America.

The Bureau of Land Management has enormeous economic incentives to remove the wild horses from the public lands, they therefore continue to ignore the public outcries and continue to manage our wild horses into extinction.

The most creative part of this well funded scam on Americans is that the very businesses creating the overpopulation problem turn around and use this same problem to convince the public to side with their cause. Campaigns are being launched by elected officials like representative Sue Wallis of Wyoming, senator Steve Pierce of Arizona, and senator Ed Butcher of Montana, convincing goodhearted people that horse slaughter is a necessary evil, so that these businesses may continue to produce unwanted horses and keep selling them pound by pound.

Is it noticeable how many articles have come out recently in publications and in the news, emphasizing the large unwanted horse problem and the increased cases of abandonment, and what to do about it? These reports jump to quick conclusions and are subconsciously suggestive to the fact that we need horse slaughter in America to prevent abandonment and neglect. Even Ken Salazar himself (director of the BLM) wrote a piece in the LA times about how the wild horses are starving and it is for their own good to be taken out of their natural environment.

While we are certainly going through harsh economic times, when you stop to consider the facts more realistically, it becomes clear that horse slaughter is the anti-solution to any "unwanted horse" problem. The truth is that the abandoned horses are not the ones that end up in the slaughter plants in the first place, for the simple fact that their owners chose to abandon them rather than send them to slaughter.

While the ecosystems of our public lands are certainly being deteriorated by grazing, one can hardly take anyone serious when claiming this is caused by the 30.000 horses as apposed to the 9 millions cows on the same land.

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In addition the BLM has not managed to back up their claims by even one picture of a starving wild horse. If this was truly the case don't you think that the "radical animal activists" as Salazar calls them, would be the first ones to cry about this? The "radical animal activists" however have many pictures of wild horses dying in round ups and BLM pens.

When we look at the horse slaughter data we see that 92% of all slaughtered horses are perfectly healthy and in the prime of their lives. We also see that quarter horses make up the largest percentage, with thoroughbreds (race horses) coming in at a close second. Could it be a coincidence that the American Quarter Horse Association (the AQHA) is the strongest supporter of horse slaughter? The National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA) is the exception to the rule and proclaims itself neutral on the issue. However, it is a well known fact that at least one third of all race horses, winners or not, ends up in a slaughter house.

Other large and powerful participants with a motive in the fight to preserve and promote horse slaughter and support the BLM, include the cattleman's associations and of course the other farming and meat industries. Believe it or not, they are planning to sell horse meat for human consumption here in America as a lower cholesterol substitute for beef. Their expressed fear is of a vegan movement and of humane policies concerning all animals. They believe that if we stop slaughtering horses, that we will soon stop slaughtering cows and pigs. According to a persuasive letter from Representative Sue Wallis of Wyoming: "if we allow an end to horse slaughter, vegans will become so powerful that human babies will start dying from being on vegan diets".

No, it is not a mystery why certain industries might be willing to "invest" quit a bit of capital in order to preserve and promote their very lucrative convenience of horse slaughter.

If horse slaughter was no longer an option, another cruel industry, the very powerful pharmaceutical PMU (Pregnant Mare Urine) Industry, (Wyeth-Ayerst) would be extremely inconvenienced as well. They impregnate mares and make them stand on their feet hooked up to a urine harvesting device 24/7. They use the hormones in the urine to make Premarin (as well as other brands), and sell this drug to millions of American women in menopause. The byproducts of this billion dollar industry are unwanted foals and old mares. It would not be feasible for this industry to find a humane solution for their "by products", and in addition no one demands this from them.

Sadly, this is *still* only the tip of the iceberg of what is wrong with those who continue to sell out the American horse, on whose back we built this country.

The USDA, has tried desperately for years, to cover up pages and pages of violations depicting the cruelty of the transport and the procedures in US slaughter plants. Finally a three year long probe (through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)) by animal cruelty investigator Julie Caramante resulted in the release of photos and reports from investigations of the department that clearly depict the cruelty and abuse inherent with the entire horse killing process. The three year cover-up by the USDA has been dubbed by some in the media as "Slaughtergate."

What about the opinion that horses are much better off being slaughtered in America? Certainly we would all like to think that our country has the decency and ability to kill horses humanely? Unfortunately this turns out to be nothing more than an illusion. The sad fact is that horses were tortured in the same ways here, as they are in Canada and Mexico. This is very evident in the undercover video's of the last three U.S. slaughter houses that were closed in 2007. Footage of the plant workers cheering and applauding when a horse struggled extra hard for its life, can turn one's stomach..

The Velda Company, referred to as "The Belgians" are waiting for an opportunity to open another slaughter plant in America. They are now targeting Native American tribes as potential hosts in several states. This is the same Velda that had owned the Cavel plant in DeKalb, Illinois; a plant that had accumulated hundreds and hundreds of USDA violations including; sewer discharge violations, (illegal dumping of blood into the water supply), food safety violations, (too many carcinogens in the meat) and animal cruelty violations (needs no explanation). To this date no one has held them accountable for any of it!

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The environmental effects of horse slaughter plants are disastrous, mainly because of the many carcinogenic drugs in horse meat and the dumping of the tainted blood. Yet unsuspecting consumers in Europe and Japan are eating this cancer causing horse meat that is often labeled by the factories as ORGANIC!

After carefully examining the data and facts, I cannot draw any other conclusion than that the option of horse slaughter is simply an option that needs to be eliminated. Alternative ways for individuals wanting to send their horse to slaughter would be placing an ad in the paper or giving the horse away to a friend, bringing it to a horse sanctuary, or putting it down humanely. The cost of putting a horse down humanely is equivalent to the cost to feed a horse for one month. Therefore this cost is recuperated immediately the next month after the horse is gone.

Is there not one goal that both horse advocates and the breeding industries can agree on? One would think so. We all want values of horses to go up. If we are ever going to see this happen, according to very simple economic principals, the supply of horses needs to decrease. Irresponsible breeding needs to come to a screeching halt immediately in order to stop flooding the horse market and for horses to regain their values. This is hardly a fact that can reasonably be disputed by anyone.

What is apparent is that the slaughter advocates and the BLM are blatantly lacking facts supported by evidence. They throw wild assumptions and accusations out into the media hoping that the American people will fall for it. The lobbyists and legislators fighting so hard to preserve horse slaughter and wild horse round ups, use arguments that, when exposed to any kind of examination, fall apart like a well roasted piece of horse meat.

Change is needed. Certain questions need to be asked. How do we establish funds for hay, gelding and euthanasia? It is equally ridiculous to give tax break monies to puppy mills as it is to give them to horse breeding farms. The ones who really need and deserve help are the horse rescues and sanctuaries.

In this battle between horse lovers and horse users, the most unfortunate fact is that groups of volunteers against Horse Slaughter and volunteers for the wild horses are small and they do what they can, purely out of the goodness of their hearts. They stand to loose or gain nothing personally, except for a victory for horses. Volunteer organizations do not have the manpower, or the funds to get information out to the public, this in stark contrast to the pro-slaughter side, who are professional, powerful and wealthy lobbyists who stand to loose a buck.

We as Americans gain nothing by it. Horse slaughter plants are all foreign owned and profits go abroad. Every argument for preserving the barbaric practice of horse slaughter and every argument for removing the last of America's remaining wild horses, is greed motivated, un-factual and clearly deceptive. Horse slaughter is beyond un-necessary, both for our wild horses and our domestic horses. It is time to stand up for the humane treatment of all horses, and stop compromising our humanity.

These are the very important bills on this subject that are currently sitting in committees awaiting their turn in the House and the Senate:

-The prevention of Equine Cruelty Act; House bill H.R.**503** and Senate bill S.**727**

This bill would make it illegal to export horses for the purpose of slaughter for human consumption

-Restoring Our American Mustang (R.O.A.M.) Act; Senate bill S.**1579**, (H.R.1018 passed in the house!)

This bill would give the last remaining wild horses some of their original 1971 protections back and would also protect them from going to slaughter.

-Horse transportation safety Act; House bill H.R.**305**

This bill would make it illegal to transport horses in double decker cattle trucks with low ceilings and holes in the sides which horse legs get stuck in.

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It should be noted that without the horse, human civilization would not be where it is today. The greatest conquests in history have been won because of the endurance, bravery and loyalty of the horse. The horse spends its entire life in service to ours. The question is: *do we not owe the horse one little grain of gratitude and respect?*

Dear reader, please look up the factual evidence of the needless cruelty of horse slaughter and decide for your self. Please examine the motives of the pro-slaughter side as well as the motives of the anti-horse-slaughter volunteer movement. Then ask yourself if you are willing to stand up for horses, either a lot or just a little, for *your* support could be the drop that tips the bucket.

[Click here to find out what you can do.](#)

(Please link to <http://www.respect4horses.com/getinvolved.html>)

Please remember: All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.

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