

**Saving America's Horses Initiative**

**DON'T BE DUPED!**

Proponents of slaughter have misguided the public and many policymakers in an effort to support the reopening horse slaughter in the U.S. This has resulted in the propagation of myths and false or misleading and unsubstantiated information that is, in turn, simply repeated through the media as if they are true.

**Facts that Refute the 7 Most Common Myths about Horse Slaughter**

**MYTH 1:**

Slaughtering horses in the U.S. would be more humane than transporting them across federal borders to be slaughtered elsewhere because U.S. humane laws and regulations guarantee the humane treatment of equines through the process of slaughter.

**FACTS:**

- a. Documented evidence of egregious violations and a lack of enforcement by the USDA in U.S. slaughterhouses led to the defunding of USDA inspections in 2007, but in the absence of a federal ban on horse slaughter, America's wild and domestic horses continue to be shipped across federal borders where they are slaughtered just as inhumanely to this very day.
- b. If horse slaughter plants are reopened in the U.S., horses will undoubtedly suffer torturous agony on U.S. soil again. This is evidenced by cruelty violations and lack of enforcement of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act that have been documented in GAO reports.
- c. Violations to humane guidelines are rarely recorded or enforced.
- d. Whistleblower laws fail to adequately protect conscientious agency employees that would otherwise report problems and enforce protective guidelines.
- e. Slaughter plants pressure unskilled workers and agency veterinarians and employees to ignore egregious cruelty violations and to instead keep the slaughter lines going while animals suffer.
- f. U.S. undercover surveillance footage shows horses being whipped, beaten and electrically prodded and repeatedly bludgeoned, resulting in fully conscious horses being dragged, hung, bled out and dismembered alive.
- g. The AMERICAN HORSE SLAUGHTER PREVENTION ACT would provide the necessary protection for America's horses from slaughter.
- h. The HORSE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ACT would effectively ban any use of double deck trailers to transport horses regardless of destination and thereby protect America's horses from this cruel method of transport.

**MYTH 2:**

Horse slaughter is humane euthanasia.

**FACTS:**

- a. The term 'humane slaughter' is an oxymoron coined by proponents of slaughter.
- b. Slaughter is defined as a brutal or violent killing and is NOT *euthanasia* at all.
- c. Euthanasia is the act of inducing *humane* death in an animal. The term euthanasia is derived from the Greek terms meaning "good death". Euthanasia techniques are supposed to ensure that if an animal's life is to be taken, it is done with the highest degree of respect and with an emphasis on making the death as painless and distress free as possible. The method should minimize anxiety experienced by the animal prior to a rapid loss of consciousness and which is followed by cardiac or respiratory arrest and the ultimate loss of brain function.

**MYTH 3:**

The absence of horse slaughter plants in the U.S. has caused an increase in the abuse, neglect and abandonment of horses.

**FACTS:**

- a. Established research indicates that there is no data to support the inflated number of horses reported as abandoned in the U.S. Countless unsubstantiated reports and articles are circulated by proponents which create

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the misconception that abandonment is out of control. Moreover, investigations indicate that these fabricated articles and reports are based on inflated and artificial data.

- b. It's a crime to abandon, neglect or abuse a horse, and history clearly shows that crime rates increase during times of economic downturn. The substantiated data shows there is an increase in horses in need that is tied to the worst economic recession since the Great Depression.
- c. Horse owners that resort to abandonment of their horses are breaking the law. When questioned they say they have done so in effort to save their horses from going to slaughter.
- d. The absence of horse slaughter in the U.S. has not and does not prevent horse owners from taking their horses to auction for the purpose of slaughter. Livestock auctions have continued to operate all over the country where animals, including horses, are bought and sold for slaughter. So, it makes no sense to suggest an increase in horses in need is tied to a lack of slaughter.
- e. Investigations have revealed some of the horses found abandoned were rejected for slaughter and were simply dumped by kill buyers. This would not have happened if slaughter was illegal.

**MYTH 4:**

Horse slaughter is a necessary means to deal with an otherwise unmanageable surplus of "unwanted" horses.

**FACTS:**

- a. The "unmanageable surplus horses" is an artificial crisis created by the proponents to justify slaughter as "a necessary evil".
- b. Horse slaughter is not driven by a surplus of horses; rather it is driven by a foreign market for horse meat which is sold as a delicacy in foreign countries.
- c. On average, less than 1% of the 9 million horses that exist in the U.S. are "surplus or unwanted". This tiny fraction of the horse population can easily be managed and reabsorbed back into the equine community just as it has in the past. The "surplus" of horses created by the industry can simply be kept longer, sold or traded, retrained in new disciplines, donated to retirement and rescue facilities, humanely euthanized or they can provide a public service such as equine therapy.
- d. When the market for horsemeat dropped, and the number of horses sent to slaughter went from over 300,000 in the 1990s to less than 50,000 in 2003, the industry was forced to take responsibility for the surplus of horses. The country was not overrun with "unwanted" horses; rather they were reabsorbed back into the equine community.
- e. Horse owners that are unable to provide continuing care for their horses can have them humanely euthanized for the cost equal to one month's care. Humane euthanasia clinics are oftentimes available to horse owners that cannot afford to have a qualified veterinarian administer the lethal injection.
- f. Due to the economic downturn some equine rescues have been forced to close and many are struggling. Research, however, indicates the actual number of new horse rescue organizations and facilities in the U.S. are on the rise and new flow through organizations are being formed to help support them.
- g. Thousands of horse rescue organizations across the U.S. provide emergency care and shelter to slaughter bound horses, but for every horse that is rescued from slaughter another one takes its place in order to fill the kill-buyer quota. The passage of the protective bills that would ban the slaughter of horses in the U.S. would stop the never ending flow of slaughter bound horses into rescues and end the flow of rescue funds to stop horses from going into the slaughter pipeline. This would in turn enable these rescue organizations to instead put those funds and efforts toward providing assistance to equine owners for the prevention of equine cruelty and provide for horses that need rescue from abuse.
- h. The criminal element and level of corruption that exists within the horse slaughter industry is well established and contributes significantly to the lack of law enforcement that would otherwise protect equines from this predatory trade. Reputable rescue organizations are impacted when killbuyers fraudulently rescue horses for the

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purpose of slaughter. Many large scale seizures of abused and abandoned horses reveal the perpetrator(s) to be involved in horse slaughter.

- i. Slaughter creates a salvage or secondary market that enables and encourages overbreeding and contributes to any excess horses in the market.

#### **MYTH 5:**

Equine meat is healthy and safe for human consumption and is used to feed starving people in third world countries.

#### **FACTS:**

- a. Horsemeat from the U.S. is sold as a delicacy on the foreign market and is not used to feed starving people in third world countries.
- b. U.S. horses, whether used for competition, recreation or work are treated with many substances known to be toxic to humans; substances that can be lethal when ingested by humans, and many of which have been banned from the human food chain in most countries.
- c. Foreign consumers of horsemeat are not made aware of the associated health risks directly related to the substances administered to U.S. horses.
- d. Most of the countries that consume horsemeat also operate their own slaughter plants.

#### **MYTH 6:**

Reopening horse slaughter plants in the U.S. would be good for America's economy.

#### **FACTS:**

- a. Horse slaughter is NOT desirable economic development. As evidenced from the past 30 years of operation in the U.S., these communities have been devastated by slaughter's negative economic and environmental impacts.
- b. Millions of dollars in losses are attributed to horse slaughter by those that have come forward from within the slaughter industry.
- c. The government paid out over five million dollars in tax payer money a year to subsidize three foreign-owned horse slaughter plants in the U.S.
- d. These foreign companies don't pay taxes in the U.S. because they sell at a loss to themselves overseas. Later, when the horsemeat hits the foreign marketplace, they take a huge profit. For example, IRS tax records reveal over \$12 million in gross income in one year, yet only \$5 in federal taxes were paid by the foreign owned horse slaughter plant(s).
- e. Horses have an established total impact on the US Gross Domestic Product of \$112.1 BILLION and if "surplus" horses are not sent to slaughter their reabsorption back into the equine community can instead provide a boost to the economy.

#### **MYTH 7:**

The majority of people within the equine community support the slaughter of horses.

#### **FACTS:**

- a. The majority of equine industry and community members **OPPOSE** horse slaughter.
- b. The few equine stakeholders that support horse slaughter rely on the misinformation propagated by the pro-slaughter lobby.
- c. A severe conflict of interest exists within many reputable institutions whose leaders are pressured by the deep pocket lobby that supports horse slaughter.
- d. Horse slaughter benefits a relatively small number of powerful stakeholders within the U.S. equine industry that stand to profit from the exploitation of irresponsible excess breeding practices.
- e. A federal ban on horse slaughter will put pressure on horse owners and stakeholders to take responsibility for the humane treatment and lifetime care of horses in their charge.

**Support the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act of 2011: SB 1176/ H.R. 2966**

**Also support the Horse Transportation Safety Act of 2011, SB 1281, H.R. 7**

**Learn more at [www.SavingAmericasHorses.org](http://www.SavingAmericasHorses.org)**

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