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## Horse Meat Plant Closures in USA

# Horse Handling & Care Update



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## The Challenges

# Horse Meat Plant Ban in USA

❑ Serious unintended negative animal welfare consequences

*“Support of Equine Canada and Alberta Equestrian Federation’s position that processing of horses is a reality and provides a humane alternative.”*

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## Consequences in USA

The National Council of State Legislatures urges Congress to oppose legislation that would restrict the market, transport, processing, or export of horses, to recognize the need for humane horse processing facilities in the United States.

“We heard from horse owners, horse rescue and recovery organizations who are over-whelmed and without options, breed registries, professional rodeo cowboys, horse owners and many, many people who are sincerely concerned about the fate of horses and the equine industry.”

“Without question, animal agriculture in the US is under siege by radical animal rights organizations”

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## Consequences in USA



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## Alberta Horse Welfare Report

“Seek first to understand.”

- ✓ Horse meat consumption
- ✓ Laws and guidelines
- ✓ Players in the industry
- ✓ US situation / consequences
- ✓ Risks and recommendations

“Humane treatment of horses throughout their lifetime and at death is a priority,” states the Alberta Equine Welfare Group.


**Owner induced neglect is the core welfare issue facing horses.**

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## Horse Meat Consumption

- ✓ 16% of world population eats horse meat
- ✓ Europe, Asia, South America, Australia, Canada
- ✓ Nutritional source of protein, iron
  - 25% less fat
  - 20% less sodium
  - 2 x more iron






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## Horse Transport

- 250,000-300,000 horses are trucked across US/Can border each year
- 2006 – 25,000 US horses to meat plant – declared. Now 2x
- USDA / Canada driver training
- Ban of pots


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## Transporting Horses

USDA commissioned research:

- Head and leg injuries: 26% pots, 8% straight
- Injuries increased significantly if in transit over 24 hours



Problems in Canada:

- US loads to Canada declared for slaughter are on straight decks and sealed/CFIA inspected. Seal broken at plant.
- US loads to Canada not declared, now forced to off load onto straight decks in US near border, but are not CFIA vet inspected at border...yet end up at meat plants.



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## A Look at the Industry

### Meat Plants

- 7 in Canada, federally licensed,
  - ✓ 2 in AB, one in SK
  - ✓ Quebec = 2, BC = 1, ON=1
- 2006 – CFIA #'s = 50,000+
- 2007 – 100,000 AB + SK, 240/day at each plant
- AB plant = 50,000
  - ✓ 25,000 US
  - ✓ 15,000 MB, SK, BC
  - ✓ 10,000 AB
- 1/3 are purpose bred meat horses
- AB plant offers direct delivery by owner service

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## Issues and Recommendations

**HOW HORSES ARE VIEWED**

- As livestock
- As working & performance stock
- As pets & companion animals

Euthanizing horses for food is acceptable

Euthanizing horses for food is less acceptable

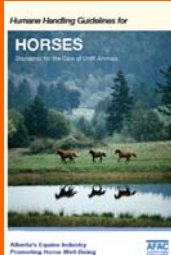
**A horse must receive humane care throughout its lifetime & a humane death.**

Acknowledge different viewpoints.


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## Horse Handling Guidelines



“Do not market or ship horses that are classified as “unfit to undergo transport.” Use this booklet to help decide whether the horse is unfit to be transported.”



Distribution  
AEF – 5000  
ARD – 5000

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## Horse Welfare Alliance of Canada



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**Horse Welfare Alliance**  
Canada

## Action To Date

- ✓ **Formation** – B. desBarres, Chair
- ✓ **Media training**
- ✓ **Issue response**
  - 5 media releases
  - Timely letters to influencers
  - Timely response to incidents and activist actions
- ✓ **National distribution** of guidelines, brochures and articles
- ✓ **Established links** with influential US contacts.




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## Transporting Horses

Feb.2009

Dear Minister Ritz,

*“Horses with long standing severe injuries, in emaciated condition and many illegally transported with shoes are entering Canada **daily**. Many arrive with transport induced injuries including severe leg, head and eye lacerations. They are entering at border locations in from Quebec to British Columbia. **This must stop.**”*

*AFAC chair and AEWG*

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**Horse Welfare Alliance**  
Canada

## Key Messages

- ✓ Humane treatment of horses is a priority.
- ✓ Owners determine the best end of life option for their horses.
- ✓ Horse processing is a humane end of life option.
- ✓ Canadian horse processing plants are federally inspected to ensure humane practices are enforced.



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## What Next?

- ✓ Continued neglect and abandonment (economic situation)
- ✓ Continued efforts by the Alberta Equine Welfare Group and Horse Welfare Alliance of Canada
- ✓ Continued pressure by activists (US politics and now more political pressure in Canada)
- ✓ Need for research (feedlots)
- ✓ Fix what needs fixing.

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## Horse Breeders & Owners

Conference – News Hour Jan. 10/09

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