

For Immediate Release:



Humane Treatment of Horses is a Top Priority.

Calgary, AB, March 3, 2008:

Humane treatment of horses throughout their lifetime and at death is a priority, states the Alberta Equine Welfare Group. This industry group has made it very clear that it does not tolerate any neglect or undue suffering. "As horse owners and handlers, we have a moral and legal responsibility to care and provide for our animals in a humane manner, at all times, says Bill desBarres, member of the Alberta Equine Welfare Group and chair of Equine Canada's Equine Welfare Committee, chair of the Alberta Equestrian Federation's Breeds and Industry Committee and AFAC board member.

"In October 2007, we notified federal and provincial authorities of our grave concerns that Canada's humane transport regulations regarding the transporting of US horses into Canada were not being adhered to with respect to horses going to the new Saskatchewan horse meat plant. We noted that horses were being transported in double-decker (pot) trailers, often without sufficient head room, in unfit to transport condition and poorly segregated. We urged action by CFIA," continued Mr. desBarres.

In February 2008, the Alberta Equine Welfare Group released a report entitled **Horse Welfare in Alberta**. It clearly states the problems of US horses coming into Canada since the ban on horse meat plants in the US. Prior to the US ban, all horses imported into Canada for slaughter purposes were destined to Alberta and Quebec meat plants and met the humane transport rules. The rules mandate that horses must be on single deck trailers and must be inspected by USDA veterinarians and again at the border by CFIA inspectors. Upon release of their report, the Alberta Equine Welfare Group made another plea to ensure humane transport rules are adhered to.

"In Canada, we have laws in place to protect livestock wellbeing and ensure no animals suffer. It is inexcusable that Canada's high standards of humane care are being ignored, despite our efforts to bring this to the attention of the Saskatchewan meat plant management, the Ministers responsible for agriculture federally and in Saskatchewan and CFIA," says Mr. desBarres. "Now, animal activist groups have issued the results of their investigation that shows and report on inhumane conduct at the plant in Saskatchewan that we do not tolerate."

Further to issuing concerns, the horse industries in Alberta and Saskatchewan supported the proposed CFIA ban on transporting horses in double decker trailers under any circumstance. And, the industry wants CFIA to change its regulation on time in transit to a maximum of 24 hours as is stated in Canada's Code of Practice for the care the handling of horses

The **Alberta Equine Welfare Group** is comprised of representatives from Alberta Equestrian Federation, the Horse Industry Association of Alberta, Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, Alberta SPCA, the RCMP, University of Alberta, meat processors, feedlot owners, horse buyers and Alberta Agriculture and Food. Most are members of Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC).

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For more information, contact:

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