

AN OPEN LETTER CONCERNING AMERICAN HORSE SLAUGHTER

As equestrians, dedicated horse owners, and ASPCA Equine Welfare Ambassadors, we were dismayed to learn that a court ruling earlier this month meant that horses are, once again, a breath away from cruel commercial slaughter for human consumption in the U.S. A federal judge dismissed a case brought by animal advocates to stall horse slaughter plants from opening in the U.S., and although an appeals court has since issued an emergency injunction, that may only be in place for a short time. The very day that the ruling allowing horse slaughter came down, several of us spoke before 500 riders, trainers, and their families at the National Horse Show in Kentucky about being a voice for horse welfare. Today, we join together to speak out again—now is the time for each and every one of us to use our voices to send a strong, clear message:

Horse slaughter must be banned once and for all. Now.

We have seen the horrifying video and photo documentation from past horse slaughter plants that were on American soil and government-regulated—horse slaughter is utterly, unmistakably inhumane. The end of an animal's life should be dignified and free of suffering, but we know that commercial plants are incapable of providing a respectful, pain-free death. That's because commercial slaughter is not about providing a kind death. It's only about destroying as many horses as quickly as possible and making a fast profit. It is completely different from the peaceful, humane euthanasia that these noble animals who have given us so much deserve when their quality of life is no longer supportable. Humane advocates, top equine professionals and compassionate veterinarians know the difference, and they support ending the grisly horse slaughter business.

As consumers, we also urge the end of horse slaughter for human consumption in order to eliminate the danger of contaminating the American food supply. It's no secret that this year's horse meat scandal in Europe, where horse meat was comingled with mislabeled beef and pork products, sent global shockwaves. We know allowing horses to be slaughtered and butchered in the U.S. puts us at the same risk. With virtually all American horses receiving routine veterinary drugs and treatments that are banned for use in animals raised for food due to toxicity concerns, the public's health hangs in the balance.

80 percent of Americans oppose horse slaughter for human consumption. Slaughter is not and never was an acceptable choice for our horses. For the roughly 130,000 horses that suffer at the hands of slaughter annually—a fraction of the 9 million horses in America—we have the power to take back the reins and lead at-risk horses to safety. Let's refuse to allow commercial slaughter to be a convenient way out, and instead demand responsible ownership and promote rescue and adoption, just like we do for dogs and cats. Let's give horses the humane treatment we owe them.

We are calling on you—and everyone— to take action. **Contact your Members of Congress and urge them to support the Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act** to ban the slaughter of American horses and the foreign export of horses for the purpose of slaughter. Please call and email your U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators by going to www.aspca.org/horseslaughter. With each of us speaking out, our collective voices will ring loud and clear: we will do whatever it takes to save horses from slaughter—and Congress should too.

Sincerely,

Hayley Barnhill



Stacia Madden



Georgina Bloomberg



Jill Rappaport



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