

# HOFPAC

*Horse Slaughter, a Call to Action!*



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# HORSE SLAUGHTER AN AMERICAN DISGRACE



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## How Safe Is Horse Meat?

**Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE), Hoof & Mouth, Aminoglycoside Antibiotics, Anabolics Steroids, Streptococcus Equi, and Trichinosis**

Gaps in U.S. food safety regulations and their enforcement and the dearth of information about how bovine spongiform encephalopathy BSE or "mad cow" disease spreads have raised questions over whether European and Asian horsemeat eaters are insulated from the disease that has caused the deaths of 94 people across Europe.

U.S. regulators stand firm on their assurances that "Americans are safe" citing the safeguard of livestock feed restrictions. These feed restrictions however only include traditional "food and fiber" animals (animals that are raised for the production of an edible product intended for consumption for humans including cattle (beef and dairy), swine, sheep, poultry, fish, and amphibian species.) NOT HORSES. Why? Horses are considered recreational and sporting animals, commonly pets in the United States and accordingly are neither raised for food nor are they eaten in American culture. And as recreational and companion animals, horses are not under the same scrutiny by the USDA.

The irony of course is that European and Asian meat eaters have naively cut back on their consumption of cattle, swine and sheep turning instead to eating horse presumably as a safer alternative? A further irony is that in their desperation, Europeans are buying up Canadian horsemeat largely comprised of American horses exported to Canada for slaughter.

Related diseases in other species have contracted diseases in the same family as BSE known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies or TSE's which are not fully understood and carry some of the same neurological symptoms. According to the California Animal Health & Food Safety Lab, there is no program, and they do not test, for TSE during routine equine necropsies.

It is a little known fact that "horse feeds and supplements still contain animal product" which is a concern regarding the spread of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. It was the continued sale of feed made from animal products particularly bone meal of contaminated animals that was responsible for BSE's rapid spread across Europe. Some of America's largest feed companies still use animal products and bone meal in feeds for animals other than cows!

American milled horse feed and supplements currently contain bone meal, activated animal sterol, extracted glandular meal, dried meat solubles, and liver concentrate among other animal product.

Horses which are slaughtered by use of a compressed air pneumatic captive bolt gun have a four-inch bolt shot into their skull resulting not in death but irreversible damage to the brain at which time they are bled. Recent research has shown that pneumatic stunners can force brain and spinal tissue into the heart and other parts of the body. Due to concerns about BSE, pneumatic stunners should not be used due to concerns that people could get new variant creutzfeldt Jakob disease (mad cow).

Contributing to the confusion and fear is the host of similar diseases affecting other animals. Experts can't fully explain how the other species developed the cell abnormality to begin with. BSE has been identified to date in cattle, deer, elk, sheep and mink among others.

Further:

Earlier this year, the European Union called for a ban on imports of horsemeat citing concerns over the safety of US meat and their inability to guarantee the purity of the meat exported. The EU agriculture inspection team which recently visited the US plants stated, "the USDA inspected plants are incapable of separating treated and untreated meat, and goes on to say it has become obvious that US food inspection services had falsely certified the export of meat (horse) to the EU. Inspectors also say there has been no residue testing for years and recommended withdrawal intervals before slaughter have been ignored."

There has also been a lack of disclosure to the European and Asian horsemeat eaters regarding commonly used horse medicines and products all boldly labeled "NOT TO BE USED ON HORSES INTENDED FOR USE AS FOOD." Therein lies the USDA's liability disclaimer. Horses are not intended for food.

Recreational and pleasure horses in the U.S. today are routinely given medications such as penicillin, bute (phenylbutazone), ace promazine

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**Brown Beauty Bill**

(promazine hydrochloride), banamine (flunixin meglumine), wormers (anthelmintic ivermectin), vanasol (a topical suave), betadine scrub, Kopertox (hoof care), IVMAT (fly repellent) to list just a few. This has never been a concern to Americans because again the animal is never used for human consumption.

The Bill

Legal Analysis

This is coupled with the widely acknowledged however illegal use of anabolic steroids in American racing and performance horses.

Save Our Horses

Lawful use of prescription drugs is regulated differently for Food Animals than it is for horses and other companion animals that are not perceived and legally recognized as food animals. These regulatory differences are in place for the purpose of protection of public health.

ALERT

The current epidemic of antibiotic resistance for microbial diseases in humans, which is considered to be a worldwide and significant public health threat, has been determined to be to two origins:

**Cavel International**

(1) Overuse of prescription antibiotics in human medicine by physicians and by over the counter irresponsible use of antibiotic agents by consumers;

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(2) Consumption of meat and other animal products (eggs, fish, dairy, etc.) from animals that have antibiotic residues in the consumed tissue or products.

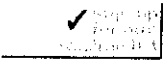
**BSE/TSE/Hoof & Mouth**

If American horses are used for human consumption, we would have to require equine veterinarians to follow the same regulatory guidelines for prescription drug use, in order to ensure protection of the public. This would eliminate the use of many uniquely beneficial drugs such as aminoglycoside antibiotics, which REMAIN IN TISSUES FOR AS LONG AS 18 MONTHS following appropriate therapy. Recently, a veterinarian from New England received a warning from the FDA when it was discovered that the carcass from a slaughtered animal had residues of this antibiotic. Since this is a widely prescribed antibiotic in horses, there would be a significant risk that horses treated could end up at slaughter.

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Most drugs used with horses are used in "extra-label" fashion \*1. If equine veterinarians had to follow the same standards for using these extra-labeled drugs in horses, as food animal veterinarians do, many horses would go untreated and the standard of practice to the horse owning public would greatly diminish and the equine population would be put at risk.



When food animals are treated by veterinarians, the treatment always has as its goal, the protection of the public since this is fundamentally the purpose of the food animal's existence. When equine veterinarians treat horses, we must have the individual, herd (stable or other community of horses), and client's interest as our fundamental basis for appropriate treatment. Unfortunately, these priorities are often in conflict.

HOOPAC logo courtesy of Equine Advocates.

Another little known fact is that horses housed in many feedlots and shipped to slaughter plants have been exposed to streptococcus equi (strangles/distemper), a strep bacteria which infects upper respiratory, lymph nodes and abdomen. Strangles is one of the reasons there are no quarantine periods before the slaughter of horses. Aside from obvious economics, this highly infectious disease has an incubation period of three days to several weeks before the horse becomes deathly ill running high fever and developing infected, oozing lymph nodes.

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And the double decked "possum belly" trucks used to haul horses to slaughter in the United States routinely transport hogs or sheep one way and horses on the return trip, or crossed species at the same time often in trucks which have not been cleaned raising the question of trichinosis.

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\*excerpts "Mad Cow" Risk Unlikely but Possible, Experts Say, Melinda Fulmer, Times Staff Writer.

\*excerpts BBC News, "A New Trans-Atlantic Bone of Contention: Europe Mistrusts All US Meat", Environment Correspondent Alex Kirby

\*excerpts Temple Grandin, Asst Professor of Animal Sciences, Colorado State University, authority animal handling and facility design.

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\*"Horses however are not looked at as agricultural products by USDA; they are viewed as companion animals, Veterinary Ed Ford, former Kentucky State Senator.

"Agricultural Statistics Service do not keep horse statistics because they are not related to the food and fiber system to merit resource use"

"USDA and NASS do not support horse research because the industry does not have a production base of support"

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(\*1) Survey of licensed practicing ambulatory veterinarians in exclusive equine practice of current drug inventory and treatment records. 2001