USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 9, 2026

Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Legislative and Public Affairs

Freedom of Information

5601 Sunnyside Ave, AP-740 Beltsville, MD 20705

Equine Welfare Alliance

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Re: Final Response to FOIA Request No. 2026-APHIS-04407-F

This response is in reply to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated May 2, 2026, and received by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on May 4, 2026. Your request was assigned FOIA tracking number 2026-APHIS-04407-F and states:

I am requesting a list of employees that are currently involved with the CTESA (the Commercial Transportation of Equines to Slaughter program) within the USDA. Please include any information that would show the USDA's employee's name, title, contact information, and how long they have been with the program and what their job position entails. Please also include specifically, who has taken the position as the Compliance Officer (Mr. Astling's former position) within this program and what date they where hired for this position.

Upon receipt, your request was forwarded to the Veterinary Services (VS) program office to conduct a search of their files for responsive records. VS employees began conducting a thorough search on May 26, 2026, but no records were located. Per VS, due to limitations imposed by Congressional appropriations bill language, APHIS is unable to inspect entities for compliance with CTESA and therefore, does not have a compliance officer assigned. When complaints concerning possible CTESA violations are identified, they are routed to the Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) for evaluation and follow-up as needed. Because AVIC names are listed on a public site, there are no responsive records or additional information to provide. For your convenience, here is the link to locate Area Veterinarians in Charge by State.

This is our final response. If you have any additional questions regarding this matter, you may contact Kiva Williams-Wilson, the analyst who processed your request, at (301) 851-4073 or by email, kiva.williams-wilson@usda.gov. You may also contact Ms. Janelle Jordan, our FOIA Public Liaison, at (301) 851-4102 for any further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows:

Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at ogis@nara.gov; telephone at 202-741-5770 or toll free at 1-877-684-6448.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you may submit an administrative appeal. APHIS would prefer that you submit an administrative appeal by email to: FOIA.MRP.Appeals@usda.gov. In the alternative, if you cannot email your appeal, you may submit your appeal in writing to: Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Ag Box 3401, Washington, DC 20250-3401. Your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within 90 days of the date of this response. Please reference case number 2026-APHIS-04407-F and add the phrase "FOIA APPEAL" in the subject line of your email or to the front of the envelope. To assist the Administrator in reviewing your appeal, please provide specific reasons why you believe modification of this determination is warranted.

Sincerely,

Wallace H. Kuralt Digitally signed by Wallace H. Kuralt
Date: 2026.09.09 14:05:46 -04'00'

for:
Tonya G. Woods
Director
Freedom of Information & Privacy Act
Legislative and Public Affairs

Enclosures