

THIS HORSE WAS NOT RAISED TO BE SOMEONE'S DINNER.



Photograph by Michael Eastman eastmanimages.com

5 reasons why horse slaughter is an American disgrace.

Over 60,000 American horses are butchered each year for human consumption overseas. When Americans learn about the way our horses are transported to the three foreign-owned slaughterhouses in this country and then brutally slaughtered, we are horrified. But are we horrified enough to do something about it?

There are powerful individuals and groups in this country who hope we are not. We won't dignify the rationales they put forward for this deplorable practice by printing them here; let them do that on their own nickel. But if you believe that our horses hold a special place in our culture and in our hearts, here are five things we must do now:

1. End the Corruption: Special interest groups are secretly thwarting the will of Congress and the American people.

Legislation doesn't seem to work. In 2004, when a bill to stop the slaughter of horses for human consumption with enough co-sponsors to pass the House without even a hearing (228), Representative Bob Goodlatte held the bill hostage in committee. It couldn't get to the floor where it would have been passed in a bipartisan vote. In 2005, in yet another attempt to honor the will of the people, an amendment was added to an Agricultural Appropriations Bill that was passed by both Houses of Congress making it illegal to use federal funds to inspect the horsemeat, thereby stopping horse slaughter. Now these special interest groups have reached out to Representative Henry Bonilla and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help them subvert the intent of the amendment, even though this amendment was passed by astounding margins, in a truly a bipartisan effort.

2. End the Horror: The entire process, from transport to slaughter, is unspeakably brutal.

Dr. John K. Griggs, a respected equine practitioner in central Kentucky for over four decades and the **only veterinarian** to have ever bought, owned and trained an Eclipse Award winner, has this to say: "From the time a horse is picked up by the killer buyer he is meat on the hoof, and that is the way he is treated. In a journey which can take days, or occasionally weeks, he is jammed into trucks, often where he cannot even stand, and left to fend for himself among a load of other terrified horses. Some of these horses actually have fractures and are in great pain. USDA regulations state that they can go 28 hours without food and water (bad enough) and even this is unenforceable. (It would require a USDA representative on every truck to enforce it.) When the horse reaches the slaughterhouse, death is by captive bolt, and if anyone thinks this always works the first time, we have a film they should see. As a veterinarian I realize the inevitability of euthanasia in certain cases, but to equate the slaughter process with humane euthanasia is the height of hypocrisy."

3. End the Lies: Horses are often brought to slaughter under false pretenses.

Many of the horses brought to auction are sold to "killer buyers", and their owners have no idea that their beloved animal will be sent to a slaughterhouse. Some owners are assured that their horse will end up in a "good home". Some are actually stolen. All deserve a better end, administered by caring hands, in peaceful surroundings.

4. End the Ignorance. The vast majority of Americans are unaware of this horrific practice.

In four independent polls, 66% to 75% of Americans who were unaware of this practice were horrified and disgusted when they learned about it. It continues because most Americans are still unaware and because the proponents of horse slaughter want to keep it that way. In Texas, where two of the three slaughterhouses flourish, 89% of the people in that state didn't know what was going on.

5. End the Irresponsibility: The decision must be in the hands of the American people.

Let your feelings be known. Contact your Senators and Representatives and tell them you support the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (S. 1915 and H.R. 503) banning the slaughter of American horses. Contact www.horse-protection.org or call 859-230-3073 for more information. You can end the slaughter.

