

# Thousands of U.S. horses slaughtered in Mexico for food

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By Brad Woodard / 11 News - KHOU TV

Steve Long is a noted author as well as editor of Texas Horse Talk magazine. You can say he knows horses.



“They are the essence of beauty, everything about them, the way they move, the way they talk to each other, their personalities, they’re just magnificent,” he said.

He says that horses are not only deeply woven into the fabric of Texas History, but they are also great icons of the American West.

Still, despite that honor, records show that nearly 50,000 U.S. horses have been [transported to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico](#) for slaughter and ultimately [destined for the dinner tables](#) in Europe and Japan.

“It’s an obscenity. It’s a horror. It’s something that makes me want to throw up,” said Long.



11 News photo

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Believe it or not, Long isn’t talking about the slaughtering practices in Mexico, although he finds them disturbing.

Long is talking about the horse slaughter industry, that until recently, thrived here in Texas and the United States.

“This is the biggest animal rights scandal since the Michael Vick case. This is slaughtergate,” said Long.

In fact, records show that there are two Belgian owned horse slaughtering facilities in the state. He says one of the facilities, Dallas Crowe, is in Kaufman, Texas and that the other facility, Beltex, is located in Fort Worth.

In 2006, 11 News reported that employees at both facilities used captive bolt guns and air guns on the horses instead of knives. That technique involves driving a steel bolt into a the brain of a horse.

Both [Texas facilities were forced to close last year](#). Officials say that the closure came after a federal appeals court upheld a 1949 state law banning horse slaughter for human consumption.

Despite that action the slaughter horse business continues.

Julie Caramante is an animal cruelty investigator for the organization called Animal’s Angels and she often works undercover.

She said that it took her three years to obtain photos that document violations of the transportation of horses taken to Beltex between January and November of 2005.

“I saw horses that were dead in trailers, with their legs ripped off, with their faces smashed in, eyeballs dangling, and these horses, some of them were still alive. They were just standing there,” said Caramante.

Many of the injuries reportedly occurred when the horses were transported on double-decker trailers designed to haul cattle.

The U.S. banned that type of action last year, but there’s a loophole, said Caramante. She says that the double-deckers can still be used to haul horses thousands of miles to feedlots, like the one in Morton, Texas. It’s owned by the Belgian company, Beltex.

“They feed them and get them fattened up. The ones that live go to El Paso and then off to the plant in Mexico,” said Caramante.

While it’s currently illegal to slaughter horses for human consumption in Texas, 11 News has found that at least two states are considering measures that would make it legal.

Those who support horse slaughter say they’d like to see it resume here in the U.S. because of laws that protect horses from cruelty. They say it is a well regulated industry that provided humane euthanasia.

“Such things are laughable. And it would be funny if it wasn’t so tragic. U.S. humane laws have done nothing for the horse,” said Long.

[E-mail 11 News reporter Brad Woodard \(bwoodard@khou.com\)](mailto:bwoodard@khou.com)

## Links to Hyperlinks within the article

[transported to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico](#)

([http://www.khou.com/pets/stories/khou071121\\_ac\\_horseslaughter.25dba014.html](http://www.khou.com/pets/stories/khou071121_ac_horseslaughter.25dba014.html))

[destined for the dinner tables](#)

([http://www.khou.com/topstories/stories/khou060831\\_cd\\_horses10.551a315c.html](http://www.khou.com/topstories/stories/khou060831_cd_horses10.551a315c.html))

[Texas facilities were forced to close last year](#)

([http://www.khou.com/news/state/stories/khou080217\\_tnt\\_horseslaughter.11e6180.html](http://www.khou.com/news/state/stories/khou080217_tnt_horseslaughter.11e6180.html))