

Animal Law Coalition Press Release

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Study shows ban on horse slaughter would not result in numbers of unwanted horses

Kanab, Utah (June 17, 2008) | A study recently completed by researchers working with Animal Law Coalition, examined trends in horse slaughter in the U.S., Mexico, Canada and other countries. The study relied on data available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other government and private sources from 1989-2008. The results revealed the number of horses slaughtered was determined by a demand for horse meat primarily in Europe. Horse meat is an expensive delicacy in many European countries as well as parts of Asia.

These findings contradict horse slaughter industry claims that horse slaughter controls the numbers of unwanted horses. Proponents of horse slaughter have insisted that if horse slaughter is banned, there will be large numbers of abandoned, unwanted horses. In fact, the study concluded, *“Slaughter... is useless as a tool for controlling the unwanted horse population and instead simply creates a ... market that competes with potential buyers of ... horses and encourages a continuous supply.”*

John Holland, senior analyst for AAHS (Americans Against Horse Slaughter) explained further, *“The trends are irrefutable. We found that equine abuse levels are clearly linked to economic conditions but that slaughter trends were antithetical to them for most of the study period. We now see that what drives horse slaughter is the market for horse meat in Europe and Asia. American horses are killed for their meat and not because they are unwanted or abandoned. The demand for horsemeat creates a market where horse slaughter “kill buyers” compete with other people who want to buy horses. This encourages owners to supply that market through over-breeding horses, for example.”* The study’s findings confirmed an earlier Italian study of horse meat consumption from 1995-2001.

Holland went on to say, *“If slaughter of American horses for human food is made illegal, there would be less incentive to over-breed horses. Those demanding horse meat would simply look to other countries for horses. The study also shows that the market has quickly adjusted to large decreases in slaughter in the past, indicating that there would be no significant or sustained increase in unwanted or abandoned horses.”*

This is the same study referred to in an earlier press release by Animal Law Coalition that showed no increase in incidents of horse abuse and neglect following closure of horse slaughterhouses in the U.S. in 2007. Proponents of horse slaughter had also long claimed that an end to horse slaughter would mean an increase in incidents of equine abuse and neglect.

The complete study is now available on line at <http://www.animallawcoalition.com/horse-slaughter/article/541>

About Animal Law Coalition

Animal Law Coalition works to stop animal cruelty and suffering through legislation, administrative agency action, and litigation. ALC offers legal analysis of the difficult and controversial issues relating to animals. Join ALC and together we can take action for animals nationally and in your state and community.