

from: vicki tobin

Sent: Wednesday, December 31, 2008 8:49 PM

To: ljdurfee@gmail.com

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Subject: Abstract: Anti-Horse Slaughter Legislation: Bad for Horses, Bad for Society

Ms. Durfee, I read the abstract of your paper, Anti-Horse Slaughter Legislation: Bad for Horses, Bad for Society (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1321526). If you wouldn't mind indulging me 10 minutes of your time, I would like to discuss your conclusions. As with any white paper, article, college thesis or opinion that will be published, the author must look at the whole, analyze information and data and then, based on the results of the analysis, form an educated conclusion or opinion. It does not appear that you have done that.

As an example, you state *The elimination of domestic equine slaughter does not benefit equine welfare and has negative economic effects on the horse industry*. What is your basis for this statement? Slaughter in general does not benefit equine welfare. It is the ultimate abuse. Is this based on the pro slaughter argument that the US plants were more humane than Mexico and Canada? If so, if you haven't done so already, I would suggest you view the 906 page USDA FOIA on the Beltex plant in Texas - also referred to as SlaughterGate. This is irrefutable evidence that horse slaughter is not humane anywhere it occurs. You can read the report here: <http://www.vickitobin.com/id18.html>. Is the economic impact the \$42M that was mentioned in the recent NCSL resolution? If so, according to the American Horse Council, the industry income is \$150 Billion. Would you not agree that \$42M on that base is no more than a rounding factor? Or are you referring to the economic impact on owners and breeders that would be forced to take responsibility for their horses?

Where in your analysis do you address the cause for the surplus of horses? You are recommending a solution (slaughter) without addressing the root cause (over breeding and irresponsibility). Did you apply the simple supply and demand theory? If there is a surplus, isn't the answer to cut back on production? In the case of horses, wouldn't that mean to curtail breeding? Slaughter is not a cure but a symptom of the cause. Slaughter will not fix the cause; it will perpetuate the cause. I am always amazed at the pro slaughter articles. They blame everyone and everything but the cause. As an example, every year, the number one breed of horse going to slaughter is the Quarter Horse. Every year, the AQHA registers in excess of 140,000 foals that have been brought into the horse population. Do you not think that this is a huge contributor? Where do you address owner responsibility? Why is it that the pro slaughter groups only advocate a solution for irresponsible owners and breeders of less than 1% of the horse population? Did you research the other 99% to find out what they are doing and why they don't need slaughter? Not only does slaughter not correct problems, it hides them. Owners can abuse their horse, dump him at an auction and never be held accountable for their actions. Slaughter promotes and rewards over breeding. How will slaughter correct the breed and dump cycle? How will the availability of slaughter change over breeding behaviors or make owners take responsibility for their horses?

You are assuming that neglect, abandonment and abuse will increase without slaughter. The solution is to slaughter the horses just in case? History has proven otherwise on increases in abuse and neglect. In my state, Illinois, the abuse and neglect statistics actually reflect a decrease in reports during the two year period Cavel was shut down. If you have been keeping up with the latest round of pro slaughter articles, you will note the theme is abandoned horses resulting from the closure of the domestic plants. Let's look at that. It is a fact that more horses were slaughtered this year than when the domestic slaughter plants were open (see USDA statistics). Therefore, the only conclusion is that the closure of the slaughter plants has had no negative impact on slaughter. If there was a negative impact, you would have seen a reduction in the slaughter numbers. Since slaughter is still

available through the same auctions and kill buyers, how can there be abandoned horses if slaughter prevents this? The conclusion is there is no correlation between abandonment and the availability of slaughter. This also explains why the reports of abuse and abandonment were so high when the domestic plants were open.

The strain on rescues would be no more than it is now. Did you take into account that rescues spend much more money rescuing horses from slaughter than they would with owners giving them their horses? The cost of ransom to the kill buyers and vet bills from the abuse they encounter in the hands of kill buyers and feedlots would be eliminated. I'm sure you will agree that if the owners were not paid to send their horses to slaughter and the dumping outlet didn't exist, the amount of horses destined for slaughter would decrease.

You, like many pro slaughter advocates, are using the disposal argument. Why is it so difficult to put aside \$300 to provide a humane death (and disposal) when ownership is taken? The cost of euthanasia and disposal is no more than the cost of one month's care. If they can afford to own a horse when it is healthy and being used, they can certainly afford one more month's cost to provide a humane death. That is the most shallow, irresponsible excuse for horse slaughter and speaks volumes of the owner's ethics. They claim the horses are no longer useful, have no value and are not wanted. If that is the case, why do they expect to be paid to dispose of the horse? Dog and cat owners are not paid to dispose of their animals. They are in the same category as horses. Companion, work, service and sport. Horses, dogs and cats are not food animals in this country. They are not an acceptable American food source so why do we allow horses to be slaughtered like livestock? We surely wouldn't stand for this for dogs and cats to supply the Asian markets.

Another pro slaughter mantra is that we use emotional arguments. Quite the contrary. It is the pro slaughter advocates that play upon people's emotions. *The tsunami of abandoned horses*. Is that not a tactic used to play upon emotions to scare the reader? *Slaughter was much more humane in the US than Mexico*. Again, using an argument that doesn't hold water to play upon emotions to evoke sympathy to convince the reader that plants are needed in the US. We do not and have not said that horses are pretty and should not be slaughtered. Yes, the horse helped settle America. What is emotional about that statement? Is it not a fact? A fact cannot be emotional. It is a statement. A fact can evoke different emotions in people but a fact, in itself, is not emotional. What is emotional about stating the differences between livestock and horses? Horses are used for many purposes in our society such as law enforcement, therapy, sport, pleasure, work and the list goes on and on. None of those functions are as a food animal. The differences are important. They clearly demonstrate the role horses perform that livestock do not and cannot perform.

Then there is the property rights argument. I'm sure you are well aware that the 5th amendment addresses this. The rights of the owner that has had his horse stolen and sent to slaughter, out trumps the owner wishing to send his horse to slaughter. The owner of the stolen horse has suffered irreparable harm.

Since you are involved in the law profession, I would suggest you read the 1958 Humane Slaughter Act. You can find a copy here: http://www.manesandtailsorganization.org/captive_bolt.htm. You will note, by virtue of this act, horse slaughter is already illegal in America. I would think someone in the law profession would question why the USDA never upheld this statute.

May I ask why you are concerned about economic damage to the foreign owners in Belgium and France? Surely you are aware that the plants were foreign owned. The product and profits went overseas. What you should be concerned with is the impact to the US of the three plants not paying federal tax. As an American, you should be furious that a multi-million dollar industry didn't pay tax. As far as jobs lost, there were a total of 200 employees between the 3 plants. Of those employees,

85% were illegal. The hit to US jobs was a total of 30. You also mention there is an impact to the environment. This is not true. The owners of 800,000 horses humanely euthanize and dispose of their horses without issue. Why would an additional less than 1% cause an environmental issue? Again, you appear to be repeating false information contained in pro slaughter articles.

Lastly, please do not think that calling slaughter, processing, makes it more palatable. Horses are not harvested, recycled or processed. They are slaughtered. Please use the correct terminology.

My apologies if the abstract was taken out of context and does not reflect your full analysis of the facts. I can only respond to what has been printed and as such, it is sorely lacking a whole picture and what resources and facts were used to determine your opinion. In addition to the AVMA, AAEP and AQHA which I'm sure are resources of yours, did you also interview the VEW and other anti slaughter organizations, professionals and legislators or did you obtain your information only from the pro slaughter side? If these are personal opinions of yours and not a paper based on research, the abstract should disclose that it is based on personal opinion.

To be fair and provide disclosure, you should know that I have blind copied 150 of my colleagues. We will all be looking forward to your response.

Thank you for your time.

Vicki Tobin

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No breed is more prominently represented in the slaughter trucks rolling toward Canada and Mexico than the quarter horse. ~ John Holland