

## The Great Disinformation Campaign

*This is a sampling of the anti-horse propaganda and fiction circulated in the disinformation campaign. These are the half truths, invented themes or scare tactics that aim to scare people or play upon their emotions in an attempt to gain support. Many were invented by hired PR firms and propagated in the press. The term "unwanted" horses is a good example. By calling the excess horses, unwanted, they have transferred the blame to the horses instead of the irresponsible breeders and owners that produce the excess horses. More on "unwanted horses" [here](#).*

*Others are made-up as they go along. Change a city, a name and a date and reprint the same theme. Others target agriculture groups to scare them. These "statements" are quite often presented as fact but when challenged, they can't produce any documentation to back their assertions. You can lead an anti-horse person to facts but you can't make them read 'em... It is so much easier to fictionally explain away the miserable failures of the slaughter industry and those involved.*

*The slaughter proponents cannot present a consistent argument to justify horse slaughter. Every year, it's a new scare tactic in the great disinformation campaign.*

### **US horse meat is safe**

For years, the pro-horse advocates have been warning of the dangers of contaminants in our horses. Our horses are routinely given medications that are banned in food animals. One only has to read the labels on the medications that state - not intended for food animals. The anti-horse folks have dismissed this and have been very vocal about how horse slaughter is "highly regulated". Some have gone as far as to say the regulations are even stronger than livestock regulations. Of course, this was just another piece of their disinformation campaign. Although our elected officials have ignored this and have been swayed by the anti-horse Agriculture lobbyists, the EU has recognized that US horses are not safe for human consumption and are doing something. Read about it [here](#) and [here](#)

### **"Activists" don't want wild horses managed**

Wild horse advocates are not saying the wild herds shouldn't be managed. We are asking for a moratorium until independent population counts are taken and current range studies are performed. While saying the horses are over populated may sound reasonable to someone that hasn't done any research, what they don't tell you is that the wild horse population has decreased, not increased. In the early 1900s, over 2 million wild horses graced our lands. The 1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act legislated over 50

million acres to the WH&Bs. Since then, the BLM/DOI, catering to ranchers and special interests, has systematically eliminated 22 million acres and allowed ranchers to cut off water supplies to the horses by moving fences to increase the grazing land for cattle. The land is then declared unsustainable for horses and they're removed. They have zeroed out herds and rounded-up horses, most without one shred of scientific evidence to justify the removals. In the meantime, the cattle population has grown to almost 8 million. They won't answer how the land can sustain 8 million cattle but can't sustain 30,000 horses. When do they start managing the privately owned cattle? Why are we subsidizing private cattle ranchers on public lands with our tax dollars? Every time BLM presents numbers, they are different and none of the numbers add-up. They don't call them the Bureau of Lies and Manipulations for nothing!

They are clearly managing for extinction. It is documented in the BLM FOIA on the wild horse page on this site and documented in the recent George Knapp I-Team report, [Stampede to Oblivion](#).

### **Slaughter proponents say there is a market for horse meat in the US**

This is the latest attempt to justify horse slaughter. Every year, they try a new tactic and this was the 2009 anti-horse tactic. In all the years our horses were being slaughtered, the anti-horse folks never once campaigned or even suggested selling horse meat in the US. Americans don't eat their horses and if they did, you would have heard from them over the past 20+ years. It wasn't until the argument heated up in 2009 and pro horse advocates said there is no market did they mention it. Slaughter proponents are still scrambling to create a market with biased surveys and polls.

Their tactic isn't working. Even Butcher that pushed for a slaughter plant in MT stated in the hearings and continues to state the market is overseas.

### **The Federal Legislation will criminalize horse meat.**

This is more of their misinformation campaign. The legislation is clear in its intent - to criminalize horse slaughter. By saying it will criminalize horse meat, they have a new scare tactic to emotionalize the intent and scare cattle ranchers into believing their invented slippery slope theory - that our intention is to ban livestock slaughter. You must admit, they do get creative!

### **The pro-horse activists caused this mess.**

Irresponsible owners and breeders, not equine welfare advocates caused any excess that may exist. We are not the folks that keep breeding and dumping. The end of slaughter has been on the radar for many years and the anti-horse proponents have done nothing

to prepare. By supporting slaughter, YOU are enabling the irresponsible behavior to continue. Common sense dictates that if there is an excess, production should be curtailed.

**At least slaughter was humane in the US; reopen the plants or Horses are now being shipped out of the country. At least the US slaughter plants were USDA regulated.**

This is one of the favorites and was no doubt going to be their number one argument to use against our legislation in 2009. This started late summer in 2008 and was gaining quite a bit of momentum. Unfortunately, the mounting evidence to the contrary would reflect otherwise. After waiting three years for a USDA FOIA, that investigation, along with the mounds of investigations and reports, reflected more irrefutable evidence that domestic slaughter was no more humane than Mexico or Canada.

*Note: Slaughter proponents in an attempt to do damage control tried to say we misrepresented the FOIA by claiming the FOIA covered a 6 year period, not the 10 months that we stated. Unfortunately, the first page of the FOIA is a letter from the USDA stating the time period is January 1, 2005 to November 17, 2005.*

US horse slaughter plants did not have the same requirements as livestock slaughter. The regulations were meager, at best and as proven in the investigations, those involved in the process were seldom held accountable for their actions whether the abuse and cruelty occurred at the auctions, the feed lots, the transport or at the plant.

**Property Rights. The government and “animal activists” have no right to tell me what to do with or how to dispose of my property.**

Equine welfare advocates are not infringing on owner’s rights. Owning an animal does given an owner total dominion over property nor does it provide rights to abuse the animal and horse slaughter is abuse at its worst. Removing slaughter as a "disposal option" will not set precedence. We already have laws on horse disposal, human disposal, computer disposal, car disposal, etc. What the anti-horse advocates keep forgetting is that ownership means taking responsibility for their horse. They alone, take on the responsibility for humane care – in life and death. The owner will not lose the right to end a horse’s life humanely. There are many options for disposal and along with humane euthanasia, cost the same as one month’s care. It is a small price to pay for giving your horse a humane, dignified death and something every horse owner should be prepared for prior to taking ownership of a horse.

In addition, the owner that has 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.

## **Horses are being turned loose by the thousands because there is a ban on slaughter and there is a tsunami of abandoned and neglected horses since the closure of the domestic slaughter plants.**

The anti-horse argument about the ban started in late summer 2008 and is still going strong. The tsunami started earlier in the year. What is so sweet about both arguments is that they contradict and dismiss their own argument. They prove our point for us! There is no ban on slaughter and the closure of the plants has not impacted the availability of slaughter. Anyone wishing to send his or her horse to slaughter can still do so. They claim that slaughter prevents neglect and abandonment and then write about all the abandoned and neglected horses. Since slaughter is still available, it is obvious that slaughter does not prevent neglect and abandonment or they wouldn't be seeing abandoned and neglected horses. Another clarifying point to this is that cattle are being neglected and starved. Slaughter is not preventing incidents in cattle so why would having a plant on US soil will stop it? It should be noted that the largest case of horse neglect in US history occurred in 2005 when all three plants were operating. It should also be noted that even Canada is seeing a rise in neglect further proving having slaughter does not prevent owners from neglecting their animals. It is also curious that when you ask the anti-horse folks for the locations and police reports of all these loose horses, there is no response.

We have been saying for years that there is no correlation between the availability of slaughter and abuse/neglect and abandonment and they are proving our point with each article they print!

## **Ignoring the 1958 Humane Slaughter Act**

If you read the 1958 HSA, it is evident that horse slaughter is already illegal or in violation of this act because horse slaughter cannot comply with the statute. You can call it a violation or call it illegal – horses are not rendered senseless with one blow. This was never enforced for horse slaughter but is enforced for livestock slaughter. Is this another example of horses not being viewed as livestock?

## **The horses going to slaughter are old and infirm.**

This was one of the first themes and is still used by many even though USDA statistics have proven this wrong. Over 90% of horses going to slaughter are fit, sound and healthy. The average age is 7.

## **Who are we to tell other countries what to eat or who are we to try to change other country's cultures?**

This is just plain absurd. We are not telling anyone what to eat, in any country. We are not trying to change anyone's culture. Other countries are free to eat whatever they choose. We do not condemn them for eating horse meat nor are we telling them they can't eat horse meat. What we are saying is that if they choose to eat horse meat, they can butcher their own horses – not American horses. Our horses are not food animals. We are not supplying dog and cat meat to Asian markets so why should there be an exception to supply our horses to European markets?

## **Re: HR 6598 (also used on HR 503/S727) - urge a NO vote- because the consequences of even fewer options for owners of horses at the end of their useful lives are severe if this measure should slip through and become law.**

Note – not at the end of their lives but end of their **useful** lives. In other words, when they are done using them, they want a dumping ground so they no longer have the responsibility of care. After years of service, we wouldn't want to let them live out their retirement years in peace. It's better to repay them for their years of service by sending them off to be vivisected. Never mind if the horse is lame. It is in the best interest of the horse's welfare to load him on a trailer, send him to unfamiliar surroundings, be herded like livestock, loaded on to another trailer for more abuse, on to a feedlot for more abuse and then to the ultimate act of compassion, slaughter. What is so amazing is that the anti-horse folks portray this as an act of kindness and would like you to believe this is better for the horse than humane euthanasia.

## **It's a slippery slope and this is just the first step to banning all livestock slaughter.**

This is just another scare tactic dreamt up by anti-horse advocates. Ending horse slaughter has nothing to do with livestock. It is strictly to ban the slaughter of a companion, service, work, therapy and sport animal that is not a food source in this country. These are the same functions that dogs perform in our society. The Ag and cattle associations keep bringing livestock into the mix—not us!

The HSUS has gone on record disputing the slippery slope theory.

## **The horses going to slaughter are unwanted.**

Are horses that are stolen and sent to slaughter unwanted? Are horses that are sent directly to the kill pens and never run through the auction unwanted? Are the horses unwanted that had bids by non kill buyers ignored? There are not unwanted horses; there are irresponsible owners and breeders and a predatory business that preys on the

irresponsible. The term *unwanted* was coined by the anti-horse advocates. In reality, the horses are *unlucky*. Unlucky to be owned by irresponsible owners/breeders.

The latest play on words is now trying to rename the wild Mustangs, Feral. The anti-horse folks no longer use wild horses or wild Mustangs. They are now all feral horses. Their tactics worked with "unwanted" so now they are trying to do the same with our Mustangs.

### **Calling horse slaughter harvesting, processing or recycling.**

Calling horse slaughter by other names does not make it more palatable or acceptable. Crops are harvested, material matter is processed and tin cans are recycled. Let's call it what it is, slaughter.



### **The US plants were an option for humane euthanasia.**

Euthanasia is derived from the Greek words, Eu meaning Good and Thanatos meaning death, i.e. Good Death. The captive bolt was designed to stun, not kill, bovines. Horse slaughter cannot be equated with humane euthanasia in any way, shape or form. The guidelines the anti-horse folks keep quoting were developed by veterinarians, for veterinarians and are misused to support their position. Horse's heads are structured

differently with the brain being recessed and combined with their long necks and being flight animals, most require many hits with the bolt to down the horse. Many are never stunned and are vivisected. It has been proven over and over again that the bolt is not acceptable for horses and does not provide death, good or otherwise.

All veterinarian organizations recommend humane euthanasia administered by a veterinarian as the preferred method to end a horse's life.

### **The exports have increased over 100%.**

What a revelation. France and Belgium weren't about to give up their millions so they found yet another way to get around our laws. BTW-why weren't the anti-horse folks complaining about the inhumane treatment in Mexico when thousands of horses were exported to Mexico each year when the domestic plants were open? They didn't speak up then but now it's one of their favorite talking points. Of course, this is now a moot point with the overwhelming evidence that horse slaughter is never humane no matter where it occurs.

This is another example of a contradiction of their argument on the abandoned and neglected horses. They claim an explosion in exports and then say because there is a ban on slaughter, people are abandoning their horses. Which is it? They just can't seem to keep their stories straight!

### **What will happen to all the unwanted horses?**

The owners and breeders will have to take responsibility for what they chose to own or breed; what a concept! If the horses were unwanted and had no value, they would be donated to slaughter. The anti-horse advocates invented this term as one of their tactics. A better term would be used. Like a used pair of shoes that have no value but they want to be paid to dispose of them.

There are many options available and many programs that have been implemented such as prison programs, low cost euthanasia and disposal from local departments of Ag and vet colleges, euthanasia programs at rescues and retirement funds for race horses. One only has to want to avail themselves to available alternatives.

Anti-horse proponents only want one solution - horse slaughter.

You may also want to ask them what happened to all the *unwanted* horses when the slaughter counts dropped from over 400,000 to under 100,000 in a few short years. What

happened to the 300,000 horses that weren't slaughtered every year? This is another one of the questions that the anti-horse folks won't answer.

### **Horse prices have fallen since the closure of the plants.**

This is one of my favorites. Why should foreign countries be setting the prices of American horses? Supply & demand and the economy are the causes. If you flood the market at a time when people are only buying necessities, a little common sense will tell you, the prices will drop. Although a hard concept to grasp, by not producing in excess of the demand, the prices will right themselves. Quality horses are still in demand.

Slaughter promotes irresponsible breeding and ownership. By supporting slaughter you enable the irresponsible to continue flooding the market and blame everyone but those responsible. That has been working well, hasn't it?

### **Industry groups and organizations are against the legislation.**

This is true but one only needs to do a bit of research to discover why. Some organizations stand to lose registration fees if their membership breeds responsibly and others have relationships that lead directly to the slaughter house owners.

### **Disposing of the horses that would have been slaughtered will cause environmental issues if they are not slaughtered.**

This is another one of the anti-horse scare tactics. Over 800,000 horses die of natural causes or are humanely euthanized by responsible owners. There are no environmental issues.

### **Horse slaughter is better than letting a horse starve in a field.**

A horse in a field has a chance at life. Many are rescued or seized by authorities just as they were when the domestic plants were open. Abuse and neglect is nothing new and has no correlation to the availability of slaughter. *A horse in the kill box has no chance at life.*

### **Horses are livestock.**

Horses perform services and functions that are not and cannot be performed by livestock. Livestock are food animals and are afforded tax breaks, such as tax on feed that are not afforded by most states to horses. Horses are not bred or raised as food animals in the US and calling them livestock doesn't make them food animals. They are viewed as service, work, therapy, sport and companion animals and are even classified by the AVMA, a supporter of slaughter, as companion animals. Ask the owner of a KY Derby winner if his horse is livestock.

**If horses are reclassified as companion animals, the USDA will lose the ability to control diseases such as West Nile Virus.**

This is priceless. How is the USDA going to control mosquitoes? The virus is passed from mosquitoes to animals – not from animal to animal.

**Horse meat is needed for pet food.**

Our pet food hasn't contained horse meat since the 1980s.

**We are animal terrorists or animal rights activists.**

We are neither. We are equine welfare advocates. Animals will never have rights other than the right to be treated humanely.