

Animal Welfare Groups to New Mexico Regulators: Horsemeat a Risk to Human Health

Front Range Equine Rescue and The Humane Society of the United States Petition State Board to Declare Horsemeat Unfit for Human Consumption

(April 2, 2013)— Front Range Equine Rescue and The Humane Society of the United States filed a legal petition with the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board requesting that it adopt a rule that renders any horse “unqualified” for use as food for human consumption. The petition states that horses are different than traditional food animals because Americans do not intend their horses to become food, and horses are treated routinely with drugs not meant for food, ranging from vaccinations to anti-inflammatories to steroids.

These substances to which virtually all American horses have been exposed create the potential for great danger to humans if they are eaten, including cancer, life-threatening autoimmune diseases, and other illnesses of significant proportion. The petition alleges that the only way to protect the food supply and the consuming public is for the Board to declare horse meat to be unqualified, unless the slaughterhouse (or its agent) receiving or buying the horse can unequivocally demonstrate that the horses have not ever received substances prohibited for use in food animals.

Hilary Wood, President of Front Range Equine Rescue, states: “American horses were never intended to be eaten and horse owners give them a variety of medications and products making them unfit for consumption. Horse slaughter does nothing to eliminate the abandonment or abuse of horses; in fact, it allows for increased cruelty as no horse can be humanely slaughtered.”

The requested action is especially timely because in November 2011, Congress authorized the inspection of horses for slaughter in America, something that had been prohibited since 2006. Last month, the Obama administration decided to process an application for inspecting horse slaughter at Valley Meat Company LLC in Roswell, N.M.

Businesses looking to start up American horse slaughterhouses have been actively promoting horse meat, even though the animals were never intended to be food. These businesses and their misguided investors are proceeding despite their awareness that virtually every U.S. horse who ends up at slaughter has been exposed to a plethora of dangerous drugs.

Facts:

- More than 100,000 American horses are sent to slaughter each year, mainly for consumption in Europe and Asia.
- The slaughter pipeline is horribly cruel, with many of the horses suffering immensely during transport and the misguided and often repeated attempts to render them unconscious. USDA documented the abuse and misery horses suffered at slaughterhouses in the U.S.
- Virtually all the horses used for meat spend most of their lives as work, competition or sport horses, companion animals, or wild horses.
- During their lives, horses who end up at slaughter are given a constant regimen of drugs and

other substances which are either illegal for food animals, or are potentially dangerous to people who eat them.

- Under the current rules and regulations, there is no safeguard in place that can protect against the consumption of unsafe toxins in horse meat.
- Consumers do not know of the inherent dangers because there is no control over the drug residues.

Media Contact:

Hilary Wood/FRER, 719-481-1490 info@frontrangeequinerescue.org

Front Range Equine Rescue is a 501c3 non-profit working to end the abuse and neglect of horses through rescue and education. Since 1997, FRER has assisted thousands of horses through its rescue and educational programs. Many of FRER's rescued horses are obtained directly from livestock auctions and feed lots, which without FRER's intervention would have shipped to slaughter. Dedicated to the horses – On the web at www.frontrangeequinerescue.org.