



Front Range Equine Rescue

Front Range Equine Rescue Discovers Would-Be Horse Slaughter Plant Has Been Violating Federal Clean Water Act for Years

*Horse Protection Group Will Sue New Mexico Horse Slaughterhouse
For Failure to Protect New Mexico Water Supply*

(April 30, 2013)— Front Range Equine Rescue (“FRER”) notified Valley Meat Company of Roswell, New Mexico (“Valley Meat”) and the federal Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) of its intent to sue Valley Meat for violating the federal Clean Water Act. Valley Meat formerly slaughtered cattle but now seeks to slaughter horses for human consumption. By conducting slaughter operations without proper approval or obtaining a conditional exclusion, Valley Meat has violated and will continue to violate the Clean Water Act.

The letter sent by FRER explains that the Clean Water Act requires Valley Meat to obtain a permit or apply for an exception before conducting further slaughter operations, in order to protect surface waters from discharges that have been exposed to Valley Meat’s slaughterhouse activities. Based on its investigation, FRER believes that Valley Meat, despite operating a slaughterhouse for years, and attempting to start up again, has failed to comply with the requirements of the Clean Water Act. Valley Meat has applied to the USDA for permission to slaughter former companion horses, race horses, and others, and sell the meat for human consumption.

Water pollution from facilities such as Valley Meat can pollute nearby surface waters and makes them unsafe for activities such as drinking, fishing, and swimming. Valley Meat is a threat to the environment and to the surface water in the vicinity of its slaughterhouse because of the high volume of waste and other byproducts horse slaughter produces, from manure, offal, and blood to hair, bones, fat, and dangerous wastewater. Slaughterhouses generate large amounts of pollutants, which can impact the environment and degrade surface water when discharges enter groundwater, streams, and rivers, and when storm water from those facilities reaches nearby waterways.

Hilary Wood, President of Front Range Equine Rescue, states: “Horse slaughter facilities are notorious for wreaking environmental havoc, producing an unbearable stench and numerous pollutants that are a threat to surface water, food safety, and quality of life of the local community. Because horses are not raised for human consumption, their owners treat them with numerous substances that are not meant to be consumed by humans. When horses are slaughtered, those substances may be present in discharges from facilities such as Valley Meat, posing a threat to drinking water.”

In November 2011, Congress authorized the inspection of horses for slaughter in America, something that had been prohibited since 2006. Earlier this year, the Obama administration decided to process an application for inspecting horse slaughter at Valley Meat. FRER will sue Valley Meat to force it to comply with the Clean Water Act and ensure that it will not jeopardize the water quality in Roswell, New Mexico and surrounding areas.

FRER is represented by lawyers at Schiff Hardin LLP.

Facts:

- Horse slaughter facilities diminish quality of life and threaten the health of people and animals in surrounding communities.
- Horse slaughter produces pollutants that threaten the purity of surface waters used for drinking, swimming, and fishing.
- During their lives, horses who end up at slaughter have been 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.
- Even persons who purposefully avoid horse meat may unintentionally be exposed to the drugs that are frequently administered to horses through their possible entry into the surface waters.
- Throughout his career in the slaughter industry, Valley Meat's owner has consistently violated food safety, animal welfare, and environmental laws.

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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.fronrangeequinerescue.org.