



**Front Range Equine Rescue**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Humane Groups Petition FDA to Block Companion, Working and Show Horses from Being Slaughtered for Human Consumption**

### ***Meat From Horses Not Raised For Food Presents Public Health Hazard***

(March 27, 2012)— Front Range Equine Rescue and The Humane Society of the United States filed a legal petition with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to prevent former companion, working, competition and wild horses from being used as human food. The petition alleges that the drugs given to these horses throughout their lives are banned by FDA and/or potentially dangerous to humans. Using these horses for human consumption creates an unacceptable and illegal public health threat under the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

Current FDA rules do not require sufficient testing or documentation to ensure that former companion and other non-livestock horses slaughtered for human food do not contain or have not been administered prohibited substances. The “killer-buyers” who acquire these horses typically have no concern or knowledge about the horses’ prior history before shipping them off to inhumane deaths in slaughter facilities. Unlike cattle, pigs, poultry, and other livestock, which are raised on the farm, horses are swept up by a predatory industry from a variety of sources— former race horses, carriage horses, family ponies, and others which are routinely given drugs and medications not fit for human consumption.

“The slaughter of American horses for meat is an unnecessary and tragic end for these icons of our nation’s history,” said Hilary Wood, president of FRER. “Horses are treated with many different drugs throughout their lives because horse owners don’t expect they could end up as meat. Horses often have many uses during their lives, from show rings to trail riding to therapy programs. Their lives should not end with an arduous journey to a terrifying death to be turned into an expensive and potentially toxic dinner.”

The petition requests that FDA certify all horses and horse meat from American horses as “unqualified” for human consumption. This 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. 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, many of which are specifically outlawed for animals intended for food.

The FDA does not adequately regulate this flow of potentially toxic meat, despite the human health and animal welfare risks associated with it. The petition documents more than 110 examples of drugs and other substances which are or should be prohibited in food-producing horses, describes the horrible way in which horses die at slaughterhouses, and outlines the environmental devastation caused by horse slaughter plants in local communities.

### **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.

-30-

Media Contacts:

Hilary Wood/FREER, 719-481-1490 [info@fronrangeequinerescue.org](mailto:info@fronrangeequinerescue.org)

Stephanie Twining/HSUS, 301-258-1491 [stwinning@humanesociety.org](mailto:stwinning@humanesociety.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, FREER has assisted thousands of horses through its rescue and educational programs. Many of FREER's rescued horses are obtained directly from livestock auctions and feed lots, which without FREER's intervention would have shipped to slaughter. Dedicated to the horses – On the web at [www.fronrangeequinerescue.org](http://www.fronrangeequinerescue.org)*

*The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization — backed by 11 million Americans, or one of every 28. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty — On the web at [humanesociety.org](http://humanesociety.org).*