



Front Range Equine Rescue

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Front Range Equine Rescue Petitions BLM to Stop America's Wild Horses From Being Slaughtered For Sale and Consumption

Wild Horses Protected By Congress Should Not Be Killed for Food

(December 17, 2012). Front Range Equine Rescue (FRER) filed a legal petition with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today to stop the sale of wild horses gathered from the range to individuals who then sell them to slaughter facilities. The Petition demonstrates that the spirit of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, and the stated policy of the BLM, prohibit the sale of these equine representatives of American history to purchasers who see them as profit centers for the international slaughter market. Allowing these icons of the frontier to end up as someone else's dinner is an unacceptable denigration of the valuable place these animals hold in both past and contemporary American culture.

Current federal oversight of horses going to slaughter, whether by the BLM or any other federal agency, is inadequate with respect to identification of the origin of the horses. It is estimated that hundreds, if not thousands, of captured wild horses are sent to slaughter through "killer-buyers" who buy them solely for that purpose. The buyers typically have no concern or knowledge about the horses' welfare, or about their prior history, before shipping them off to inhumane deaths in slaughter facilities. BLM could, but does not yet, provide proper oversight to prevent wild horse slaughter, and FRER's Petition presents reasonable solutions to that problem.

"Being slaughtered for meat is a tragic and cruel end for horses; the horror and shame is amplified when the victims are the wild horses who are national treasures of American history," said Hilary Wood, president of FRER. "Congress declared in 1971 that wild horses should be protected from commercial exploitation. Unless the BLM acts, this nightmare will continue for wild horses, who are especially sensitive because they have never been handled by humans. Furthermore, neither domestic nor wild horses are raised as food animals. This means, for wild horses, that they are given unsafe drugs after their capture, rendering their meat potentially dangerous to consumers.

The petition requests that BLM certify all horses and horse meat from American horses as "Condemned" and thus unfit for human consumption. This action is especially timely, because in November 2011, Congress chose not to renew a ban on funding federal inspectors at horse slaughter plants in the United States, even though a similar provision had been part of the agriculture department's spending bill 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, undoubtedly with an eye on the tens of thousands of wild horses in government holding facilities, and the thousands remaining still wild on public lands.

Earlier this year FRER filed petitions, with The Humane Society of the United States, proving that drugs given to horses used for human consumption are banned and dangerous, and requesting that all horse meat be considered condemned unless producers could prove the meat was free of all prohibited substances. Besides the rejection of the spirit of the Wild Horse Act, the use of wild horses for food raises the same problems identified in those petitions.

Facts:

- More than 100,000 American horses are exported for slaughter each year.
- The slaughter pipeline is well documented as horribly cruel, with many of the horses suffering immensely during transport and the horrific attempts to render them unconscious.
- In 1971, Congress proclaimed that wild horses should be protected and preserved forever.
- Under the current rules and regulations, there is no safeguard in place that adequately protects wild horses from sale to slaughter.
- Americans are unaware that these national symbols are being sold down the slaughter pipeline, despite overwhelming support for their protection.

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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