

Recent Study Findings – 15% Of Horse Transports To Slaughter Exceed 36 Hour Limitation



Dorian Ayache, Three Angels Farm owner and operator, received a shut-down order in 2012 from the DOT stating the motor carrier posed an imminent hazard to public safety. Three Angels Farm had two accidents over an eight month period involving poorly maintained vehicles and fatigued drivers, which not only endangered the public, but also resulted in the death of multiple horses. Ayache was cited for those accidents.

Because it is a business viewed by many as disreputable, horse transport to slaughter is sometimes accomplished using sub-standard vehicles traveling under cover of darkness, driven by persons who have already incurred transport violations. Current regulations allow horses to be transported for up to 36 hours without food, water or rest. Unlike some other species, horses do not travel well in the company of other unfamiliar horses and often kick, bite, or trample each other, leading to serious injury or even death enroute.

There have been many reported cases of animal welfare violations in Canadian horse slaughterhouses including failure to provide food and water, illegal unloading of animals, late stage pregnant mares shipped, and sick or injured animals denied veterinary care.

Not surprisingly, veterinary experts around the world and leading animal protection groups have denounced horse slaughter as inhumane.

For many, the study below, published in the Canadian Veterinary Journal, merely validates what we have confirmed via Access-To-Information requests and Order Papers submitted to the government.

From the abstract of the study: **“Patterns and durations of journeys by horses transported from the USA to Canada for slaughter”**

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This truck caught fire with horses aboard, and the driver stopped but neither he nor first responders were able to extinguish the flames. No reason was given for keeping the horses trapped in the trailer as it burned. The truck was pulled over in New York on March 13, 2013 and ordered out of service until repairs and maintenance could be performed. Nine violations were noted in 2011, one of which was a discharged or unsecured fire extinguisher. The horses were reportedly destined for the Viande Richelieu Meat, Inc. slaughterhouse in Massueville, Quebec.

“Concern has been expressed over the welfare of horses transported from the USA for slaughter in Canada. United States Department of Agriculture owner/shipper certificates for the year 2009 were analyzed to provide quantitative information on the patterns and durations of these journeys. In 2009, horses from 16 states in the northern USA were transported to 6 equine slaughter plants in Canada. Thirty-two percent of loads were from auction centers, 33% from feedlots, and 35% from horse collection centers.”

The median duration of the journey was 19 h. The actual time in transit for the horses was observed as follows:

- 36% < 6 h
- 11% for 6 to 18 h
- 13% for 18 to 24 h
- 25% for 24 to 36 h
- 9% for 36 to 48 h
- ...and apparently 6% > 48 h

“Some journeys exceeded those specified in regulations and, based on other research, would put these horses at risk of negative welfare outcomes, such as dehydration, injury, and fatigue.”

So, despite the median journey being 19 hours, a full 15% of the journeys exceeded the 36 hour limitation – 36 -48 hours without rest, food or water.