



## **MISSOURI ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL LEGISLATION E-NEWS – February 4, 2014**

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### **HORSES SPARED FROM SLAUGHTER BY CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET**

Congress has halted the opening of horse slaughter plants in the United States, including the plant that was set to open here in Northwest Missouri (Gallatin). The recent congressional budget passed into law last week stripped funding for the federal inspection of horse slaughter plants. Under federal law, meat cannot be shipped out of state without federal inspections. The subsequent lack of funding for USDA inspections, in effect, ends the possibility of horse slaughter in the US this year.

As a follow-up to Congress defunding inspections of horse slaughter plants, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources subsequently denied a permit for the opening of a horse slaughter plant in Missouri.

This is certainly welcome news as the slaughtering of horses is fraught with cruelties including inhumane transport, which can last for many hours in overcrowded trucks, without food, water, or rest. Due to their temperament, horses are not suited to be closely confined in large groups in ways cows and hogs often endure when they are transported for slaughter. In such crowded situations, horses will often fight resulting in injuries from being kicked, bitten, or even trampled.

Upon arrival at slaughter plants, the systems are geared toward general farm animals and don't take into account the skittish nature of horses. Horses are much more excitable than other livestock and are more likely to panic in tight quarters commonly experienced at slaughter facilities. Horses become very agitated when prodded as they are moved down alleyways to the "kill box" and many incur injuries from slipping and sliding resulting in dangerous falls. Horses are more difficult to shoot or place a penetrating bolt into their forehead as they are more high strung and move their heads much more than docile hogs or cattle moving down the line. As a consequence, the horse is often not made unconscious and is subsequently rolled out of the kill box alive, shackled by a rear leg, and hoisted up in the air upside down where its throat is slit and the horse is bled to death.

While we are fortunate that Congress has spared horses from slaughter by defunding inspections, this newly approved budget only extends through this year when the fight will commence once again in Congress over horse slaughter.

It is apparent that the ultimate solution to this issue is the complete prohibition of horse slaughter in the United States *and* the prohibition of the export of horses to slaughterhouses in Mexico and Canada. The Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act, currently pending in Congress, would do both.

Please take a moment to write, email, or call Senator Claire McCaskill and ask her to vote to support the SAFE Act and vote to deny future funding for inspections of horse slaughter plants so that horse slaughter will not return to Missouri.

The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
Hart Senate Office Building, Suite 506  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-6154

You can contact her at [www.mccaskill.senate.gov](http://www.mccaskill.senate.gov) and leave your comments under "Tell Claire Your Concerns."

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