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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Testing Finds More Contaminated Horse Meat

Chicago (EWA) – Following a ban funding for USDA inspections, and state legislation in Texas and Illinois, the last three horse slaughter plants in the US were closed in 2007. The result was that the horses were shipped to Canada and Mexico for slaughter. Last year the prohibition on funding was lifted, but now the very market for the meat from US horses is in question.

As the debate rages about the reintroduction of horse slaughter to the US, documents continue to leak out that indicate a major change in the testing of meat from US horses both in the European Union (EU) where the meat is largely consumed, and in Canada where many of the horses are slaughtered. For years, the EU has been tightening traceability of horse meat it produced domestically while apparently turning a blind eye to drug residues in imported meat.

Equine advocates have long claimed that since US horses were not raised as food animals, and since they were commonly medicated with prohibited substances, their meat could not be safe.

A research paper published in Elsevier's *Food and Chemical Toxicology* in 2010 titled *Association of phenylbutazone usage in horses bought for slaughter; A public health risk*, traced 18 slaughtered thoroughbred race horses using racing records and found all had been given the banned carcinogen phenylbutazone. The paper went on to point out that the testing of fat samples, as had been done by the USDA for years, was unlikely to ever detect the drug, and it suggested that the kidney was the appropriate tissue to test.

In December of 2010, the EU released reports on US horses slaughtered in Canada and Mexico revealing banned substances were found as well as falsified paperwork stating the horses were drug free.

The first indication that more effective testing was being done came from a report of contaminated chilled horse meat imported from the UK. This was followed on July 27th by a [report](#) of frozen horse meat from Canada that contained phenylbutazone in three samples and clenbuterol in a fourth.

Most recently, a July 9th [warning letter](#) from the FDA department of Inspections, Compliance, Enforcement and Criminal Investigations, to a “kill buyer” named Ronald Andio shows the FDA has now become involved. The letter describes an FDA investigation of Andio’s operation after a thoroughbred gelding that he sent to Canada for slaughter in August of 2011 was found to contain phenylbutazone residues.

The Andio letter also confirmed that Andio had indicated a clean drug history for the horse on its EID (Equine Information Document) without even asking the owner he bought it from. The EWA had warned the EU authorities that these documents would be ineffective and had even supplied photocopies of blank documents signed by sellers at the New Holland auction.

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EU Report Links

Canada: http://www.equinewelfarealliance.org/uploads/EU_FVO_Inspection_Report_Canada_2010.pdf

Mexico:

<http://www.animalsangels.org/images/stories/pdf/fvo%20inspection%20at%20mexican%20plants%20December%202010.pdf>

UK Link: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/rasff-window/portal/index.cfm?event=notificationDetail&NOTIF_REFERENCE=2012.1078

Warning Letter Link:

<http://www.fda.gov/ICECI/EnforcementActions/WarningLetters/2012/ucm313462.htm>

The Equine Welfare Alliance is a dues-free 501c4, umbrella organization with over 250 member organizations and over 1,000 individual members worldwide in 18 countries. The organization focuses its efforts on the welfare of all equines and the preservation of wild equids.

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