



March 20, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

John Holland
540.268.5693
john@equinewelfarealliance.org

US Horsemeat Banned in EU

Chicago (EWA) – Since Congress lifted the ban on USDA inspections of horse meat, several small shuttered cattle slaughter plants have clamored for the USDA to provide horse meat inspections. Ricardo De Los Santos of Valley Meats, a New Mexico plant, went as far as to sue the USDA for not providing the service. The attorney for Valley Meats has announced it will be opening in three weeks.

Unfortunately for those wishing to bring horse slaughter back to the US, they will have to do so without the ability to sell to the EU, the main market for US horse meat. The Equine Welfare Alliance has received confirmation from EU authorities that “by virtue of Commission decision [2011/163/EU](#) the US is not authorized to export horsemeat to the EU.”

The decision was made in 2011, when the USDA neglected to comply with new regulations requiring submittal of a drug residue control program. Approval of such an application requires extensive review as well as audits and can take up to several years to complete.

The EU authority (SANCO) went on to say “Our Directorate General, up to now, does not record a recent residue monitoring plan on horse meat submitted by USDA.” In other words, the process has yet to begin.

The scandal over horse meat being substituted for beef in a myriad of products, as well as the finding of the banned drug phenylbutazone in some of those products has further dimmed the prospects for a lifting of the ban.

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, in an interview with Reuters, said sequestration could cause sporadic food shortages if inspectors aren’t available to examine meat, poultry and egg products. Obviously providing inspectors for horse meat would further exacerbate the need to protect US consumers. Vilsack shocked many today when he was quoted as saying he hoped that Congress could come up with an alternative to horse slaughter.

EWA's John Holland explains the bleak prospects for private horse slaughter plants in the US, saying "these plants will have no access to the markets even if the EU ban is lifted because the distribution is controlled by a few multi-nationals, and those expecting to contract with these companies should heed the story of Natural Valley Farms (SK Canada) which lost millions trying to do so."

The Equine Welfare Alliance (EWA) is a dues-free 501c4, umbrella organization with over 275 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.