Whom Happers. ???



December 5, 1994

Dear Friends of Horses:

In 1993, over 235,000 American horses were sent to slaughter. The humane treatment of horses bound for slaughter is an issue that should concern all those who own horses - whether for business or pleasure. We are glad to see that horse industry groups like the American Horse Council have responded to our massive investigation into the horse slaughter trade by proposing federal legislation to address this problem.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and the American Horse Council (AHC) agree that horses destined for slaughter deserve special consideration. However, after one and a half years of documenting the cruelties inherent in this industry we are convinced that the AHC supported bill (introduced in the final hours of the 1993-94 Congressional session) will not alleviate the suffering of the animals involved. In our opinion, weak legislation will serve to sanction and institutionalize the cruelty associated with transportation rather than eliminate it.

There are crucial differences between The HSUS legislative draft and the AHC bill. The AHC bill allows horses to be transported for twenty-four consecutive hours in modified double deck cattle trucks without food, water or rest. Only after this twenty-four hour period will the animals be allowed to rest and eat. Our draft bill eliminates the use of unsafe double deck trucks, limits the distance horses can travel and requires that horses be fed and watered in the vehicle every six hours. We specify provisions for internal access corridors in vehicles to enable individual horses to be helped or selectively removed in an emergency and we also limit the number of horses able to travel to ensure their safety. In addition, our draft prohibits the leasing or loaning of horses bound for slaughter. This provision will stop the outrageous abuses these horses endure when they are leased to exploitive events such as the Charreadas, a Mexican style horse tripping rodeo.

Still another very important element of The HSUS bill is that it requires horse auctions to conspicuously post a sign notifying owners that horses at the sale may be purchased by killer buyers. Another concern we have with the AHC bill is that it will not stop a pregnant mare, who may even be close to foaling, or a two day old foal from suffering the many hours and hundreds of miles of transport. The AHC's draft lacks essential provisions we consider necessary to protect these horses.

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Lastly, The HSUS believes that a federal law insuring the welfare of horses bound for slaughter must be very specific in its provisions; the AHC favors a more general bill that would grant broad regulatory discretion to the USDA. In our long experience with federal agencies, particularly with the USDA, we have learned that without explicit directives written into the law, bureaucrats have not adopted rules that faithfully represent the legislative goals.

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The goal of the HSUS is to gain passage of the strongest possible law to ease the suffering of the many thousands of American horses sent to slaughter annually. Our humane horse transportation bill is an achievable goal. The HSUS, with more than two million supporters, has developed an impressive record of legislative accomplishments during our 40 year history. Though compromise is always part of the political process, we think it is foolhardy to present a draft bill for consideration if it lacks the minimum provisions essential to protect horses. Experience has taught us that it is better to fight vigorously to get a strong law enacted than to struggle for years to get a weaker law enforced.

Toward that end, we seek to unite national, state and local humane organizations with the many horse industry and pleasure groups that share our concerns. The HSUS is committed to working with the AHC in a good-faith effort to resolve our differences. And, we remain receptive to any ideas that flow from a common desire to do what is best for horses.

Your help is critical to the success of this effort. We need horse owners everywhere to contact their U.S. Representatives and Senators asking that they support strong federal legislation to protect horses transported to slaughter.

Let us, and the American Horse Council, know what you think about this issue. We would also greatly appreciate letters of support printed on your organization's stationery.

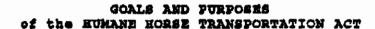
Please help. Many thousands of once cherished horses are counting on you to ease their final hours and relieve their misery. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

David K. Wills

NPK. Wills

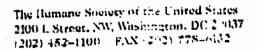
Vice President of Investigations



- . Elimination of double decker/possum-belly vehicles.
- Specification of minimum interior ceiling heights, floor surfaces, dimensions and ramp design.
- . Prohibition against overcrowding during and incident to transport.
- Segregation of horses by sex, size and age.
- . Requirements for specific feeding, watering and resting procedures during transit and at slaughterhouses.
- Prohibition of transport for longer than 18 hours from point of sale to slaughterhouse.
- Establishment of civil and criminal fines for violators.
- Authorization of the Secretary of Agriculture to promulgata and enforce, on a federal, state and local level, regulations which seek to promote compliance with this Act.

Authorization of trained humane and animal workers to investigate offenses, at their own expense, or at the expense of a duly incorporated non-profit corporation.

Sponsors are needed for this bill in the Senate and the House. Please contact the Federal Legislative Affairs Department of The Humane Seciety of the United States at 202-452-1100 for more information.



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