

What Happened???



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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**GOALS AND PURPOSES
of the HUMANE HORSE TRANSPORTATION ACT**

- . 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 promulgate 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 Society of the United States at 202-452-1100 for more information.