



Horse Slaughter Will Halt

October 26, 2005

Washington-D.C.— October 26, 2005-- The brutal horse slaughter industry in the U.S. was dealt an appropriate and overdue blow on Wednesday, October 26 th when the U.S. House and Senate Agricultural Appropriations Committee retained the amendment that will temporarily halt the slaughter of America 's horses. The amendment will take effect in February 2006, and for 8 months stop the use of taxpayer dollars to fund USDA inspections of horses or horse meat at slaughter plants in the U.S. — effectively shutting the plants down. Although intended to be in force for one year, opponents of the amendment delayed its implementation for 120 days by threatening to remove the amendment.

The American Horse Defense Fund (AHDF) is grateful to Senators Mary Landrieu (D-LA), John Ensign (R-NV), Robert Byrd (D-WV) and Congressmen John Sweeney (D-NY), Ed Whitfield (R-KY) and all supporters who spoke for America 's horses. Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK), Rep. Bill Young (R-FL), Rep. David Drier (R-CA) and Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA) also played a role in the amendment's survival. These congressional leaders strongly defended both the amendment and the will of the vast majority of American citizens who oppose horse slaughter, appalled that healthy, young horses and ponies are butchered in the U.S. just to end up as delicacies in foreign countries. Although the amendment had overwhelming support in congress, passing both the House 269-158 and Senate 69-28, it could have been stripped out of the agricultural appropriations bill by opponents on the committee. Those efforts were spearheaded by the subcommittee's chairman, Representative Henry Bonilla (R-TX), whose state is home to two of the three horse slaughterhouses still remaining in the U.S.

Trina Bellak, AHDF founder and president commented, “It is shameful that we had to fight tooth and nail to keep such an overwhelmingly popular provision in this bill, but the will of the American public and many in congress prevailed. A 120 day delay to the amendment's enactment is a nasty curve ball thrown by Representative Henry Bonilla and other conferees who didn't have the backbone to vote on the record by name. Despite the efforts by the opposition, the brutal, inhumane killing will end February 1st. The American Horse Defense Fund is going to make that the Day of the Horse. This is a hard won victory for horses which will demonstrate that there is no justifiable reason for horse slaughter in our nation.”

Another milestone for horses was the October 24th introduction of the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, S. 1915, by Senators John Ensign, (R-NV), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Robert Byrd (D-WV), Arlen Specter (R-PA), Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Trent Lott (R-MS), Jim DeMint (R-SC), Carl Levin(S-MI) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT). This bill and its companion in the House (H.R. 503) would bring about a permanent ban on horse slaughter in the U.S. Both bills have significant support from both ends of the political spectrum. “Many people admire and love horses for their majestic beauty and loyal service. They are also a symbol of freedom and are a significant part of our country's history. America 's horses deserve better than a brutal end at the slaughterhouse” stated Ms. Bellak. “Horses serve us in many ways from representing us in the Olympics to protecting our city streets. There is no other animal whose role or nature one can compare to the horse” Ms. Bellak added.

According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, the U.S. currently processes and exports 10,000 tons of horse meat a year from 50,000 domestic horses killed at three foreign-owned slaughterhouses in Texas and Illinois . Thousands of additional American horses are shipped to foreign slaughterhouses. The industry preys on riding horses, former race horses, wild horses, and foals born to PMU mares, horses that are kept pregnant so their urine can be used to make the hormone replacement drug Premarin®. The vast majority of the horses sent to slaughter in the U.S. are considered to be in “good” condition according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Guidelines for Handling and Transporting Equines to Slaughter . There is nothing humane about horse slaughter. Horses are treated brutally prior to and during slaughter and because of their highly developed senses, they suffer greatly.

Many alternatives do exist to horse slaughter. The American Horse Defense Fund recently published Alternatives to Auction and Slaughter: A Guide for Equine Owners, a first of its kind resource promoting the many viable and humane alternatives that exist to slaughter. The book offers a concise state by state listing of alternatives to slaughter and the hundreds of concerned groups that work to inform horse owners of these options and put them in touch with the help they need.