



May 10, 2013

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250



Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We are writing to thank you for previous inspections of the Valley Meat Company in Roswell, New Mexico. Since the plant has complied with all regulations, and has passed the inspections, we now ask that the United States Department of Agriculture follow through and green-light its operation.



We represent many aspects of agriculture in New Mexico and are in agreement that the unwanted horse issue must be addressed. Horses are being turned out on private, state, federal and tribal land, left to starve to death, die of thirst or become prey. Those that are not being abandoned are being hauled an average of 753 miles to slaughterhouses in Mexico or Canada where there is no guarantee of a regulated, humane end-of-life process. According to a recent U.S. Government Accountability Office report more than 197,000 horses were exported in 2012. As the GAO put it, "Horses are traveling farther to meet the same end in foreign horse-slaughtering facilities where U.S. humane slaughtering protections do not apply." We believe those horses deserve to stay in-country so that USDA inspectors can guarantee a humane process.



Valley Meat Company offers this humane process and owner Rick De Los Santos has fulfilled all requirements necessary to become operational. The only obstacle at this point is opposing political pressure. The federal government is not in the position to deter businesses that do not meet it someone's definition of moral approval.



Not only will Valley Meat Company present a partial solution to the problem of abandoned horses, it will also create jobs in a community that has seen an escalating unemployment rate. It is for these reasons that we respectfully ask you to allow this facility to begin the process of alleviating our unwanted horse population.

Sincerely,

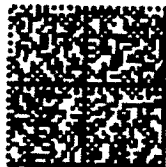
Mike White	President, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau
Rex Wilson	President, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association
Marc Kincaid	President, New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc.
Sharon King	President, New Mexico CowBelles
Bebo Lee	President, New Mexico Federal Lands Council
Rusty Cook	President, New Mexico Horse Council



cc:
Senator Tom Udall
Senator Martin Heinrich
Representative Steve Pearce
Representative Ben Ray Lujan
Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham



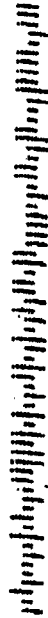
NEW MEXICO FARM & LIVESTOCK BUREAU
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MAIL HAS BEEN SANITIZED