

Lisa Griffith
[REDACTED]

April 29, 2012

Dr. Elisabeth Hagen
Under Secretary of Food Safety
1400 Independence Ave. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Dr. Hagen,

I read your December, 2011, comments on the Day of the Horse with interest but was perplexed by some elements of your statement. In particular, when there had been several White House petitions with over 25,000 signatures *against* the slaughter and export to slaughter of American horses, when most Americans want the practice banned, why would this Administration be so tone-deaf as to release a statement about the treatment of to-be-slaughtered horses?

Your comments in no way dealt with the Food Safety issues surrounding horse meat. Since horses in the USA are not raised for slaughter, they can be given many medications throughout their lives which are banned by the FDA for use in food animals. It seems that if Food Safety had anything to say about the slaughter of American horses, no matter where the meat ends up, that would be the issue to address.

Nor did you address the inhumane treatment horses receive right here in the USA once they enter the slaughter pipeline, nor did you acknowledge the thousands of American horses rejected by the Mexican vets as unsuitable for slaughter, nor did you address places like C-4 in Presidio, Texas who, by all accounts, dragged starving horses that had been rejected at the border out into a wash and left them there to die and are still dumping dozens of dead horses at a landfill every month. *And though you state that the USDA would extend protections to horses at collecting points like Presidio, the recent Animals Angels' investigation showing dead horses and abusive conditions indicate those protections are little to none.*

And who is paying attention to Coggins and forms required by the EU to accompany any horse going to an EU approved slaughter house? Please look at the Horseback magazine article included because it seems that incomplete and possibly falsified forms are routinely submitted.

I am enclosing (1) a white paper on Food Safety risks of American horse meat; (2) a "please stop calling me" article from Horseback magazine investigating the Texas agency personnel who have some authority over export horses; (3) a new Animals Angels' report on the collecting station at Presidio, Texas that shows horses arriving in and being kept in dire conditions; and (4) the conditions at the Chavez feedlot in New Mexico (which are not much different from the C4 lot in Presidio, Texas) to help you understand that with horses being sent to slaughter, *no one is minding the store in terms of humane treatment or food safety.*

The HSUS and Front Range rescue have petitioned the USDA to officially recognize that horse meat could be a significant public health risk. I hope the USDA sees the logic of this position and acts accordingly.

Sincerely,



Lisa Griffith
encl.

AR0003813

Ensuring the Humane Treatment of Horses

UPDATE: December 13, 2011

By Dr. Elisabeth Hagen

Thank you for writing to relay your concerns regarding horse slaughtering. We appreciate your involvement in the We the People project and value your input on issues facing our country.

The humane treatment of horses reflects the values of our Nation.

Recently Congress lifted a ban prohibiting federal funding for the inspection of horses, which had prevented the slaughter of horses for human consumption for the past five years. While Congress has technically lifted the ban, USDA does not expect horse slaughter to resume in the near term as a number of Federal, state and local requirements and prohibitions remain in place. Furthermore, there have been no requests that the Department initiate the authorization process for any horse slaughter operation in the United States at this time.

While some horses continue to be exported to other countries for slaughter, USDA makes it a priority to ensure that these horses are transported and treated humanely. For example, USDA recently extended protection to horses delivered to collection points prior to export, reflecting the Administration's commitment to protecting animal welfare.

Thank you again for your input on this important issue.

Dr. Elisabeth Hagen serves as Under Secretary for Food Safety at the USDA



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

An HSUS Report: Food Safety Risks Associated With U.S. Horse Slaughter

April 2012

Abstract

Meat originating from U.S. horses may contain residues from substances banned by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the European Union for use in animals intended for consumption. Phenylbutazone, for example, is commonly administered to U.S. horses and has been associated with life-threatening reactions in humans. Requiring a thorough drug history for each U.S. horse intended for human consumption may help circumvent human health risks.

Introduction

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of United States, an estimated 9.5 million horses reside in the United States.¹ The American Veterinary Medical Association defines the horse as a "companion animal," along with dogs and cats.² Horses are utilized for service, recreation, and competition in the United States.³ Despite their multi-faceted views of the horse, the U.S. population largely considers the consumption of horsemeat taboo.⁴ In the state of California, for instance, eating horsemeat is restricted under the state's Criminal Code⁵ and horse slaughter is illegal in Florida⁶ and Illinois.⁷ Given the attitude towards equids and the lack of demand for horsemeat in the United States, they are defined as non-food producing animals by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).⁸

Despite the U.S. population's disinterest in horsemeat, it remains a part of the diet of some consumers in other countries, such as France, Japan, and Italy.⁹ In 2007, a combination of state laws prohibiting horse slaughter and a simultaneous de-funding of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspections by Congress¹⁰ lead to the closure of the few, mainly foreign-owned, horse slaughter plants that operated within the United States.^{11,12,13} In November 2011, this defunding of USDA horse slaughter inspections was omitted from a spending bill signed into law. While new funds are not being provided for the USDA's resumption of horsemeat inspections, the ban on domestic horse slaughter has been lifted.¹⁴

The 2007 provisions did not end the slaughter of U.S. horses for human consumption. Rather, the closing of U.S. slaughterhouses almost doubled the production of horse meat in Canada in 2007, with approximately 40% of the horses being slaughtered imported from the U.S.¹⁵ In 2012, the European Commission released their findings of a 2011 audit which noted that 85% of the horses slaughtered in a Canadian processing plant originated from the United States.¹⁶ The United States also exports its horses to plants in Mexico for local and foreign consumption.¹⁷

Since U.S. horses are primarily used for companionship and competition rather than consumption, drugs may be administered without taking food safety implications into account. This is especially pertinent in regards to the administration of the substance phenylbutazone (PBZ). The presence of PBZ—as well as many other FDA-banned substances—in U.S. horses destined for slaughter results in the high likelihood of contaminated horsemeat, which poses a potentially serious risk to the health of human consumers.^{18,19}

Phenylbutazone

In 1949 the potent nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) PBZ became available as a treatment in the United States for people suffering from both rheumatoid arthritis and gout. However, within three years of its availability, PBZ was linked to serious adverse reactions, including aplastic anemia, bone marrow depression, renal failure, and even death. After examining several case studies of PBZ use, the FDA banned PBZ for human use in the United States.²⁰ According to the FDA:

"Phenylbutazone is known for its ulcerogenic, nephrotoxic, and hemotoxic effects in horses, dogs, rats, and humans. It is known to induce blood dyscrasias, including aplastic anemia, leucopenia, agranulocytosis, thrombocytopenia, and deaths. The reported adverse reactions were associated with the human clinical use of 200 to 800 milligrams phenylbutazone per day.... [I]t is unclear what level of exposure would be required to trigger such reactions in sensitive people. Moreover, phenylbutazone is a carcinogen, as determined by the National Toxicology Program (NTP) based on positive results in genotoxicity tests and some evidence of carcinogenicity seen in the rat and mouse in carcinogenicity bioassays NTP conducted."²¹

For animals, the only FDA-approved phenylbutazone use is as an oral or injectable dose in dogs and horses.^{22,23} As it stands, PBZ use in humans and food-producing animals alike remains unapproved.²⁴

Phenylbutazone in Thoroughbreds Bound for Slaughter: A Case Study

There can only be one winner at the end of each horse race, and many of the horses that do not place, show signs of injury, or are past their prime are sent to auction, and ultimately end up in slaughterhouses in Canada or Mexico.²⁵ The European Union (EU) has found that horse meat originating from Mexican slaughterhouses contain harmful residues of several EU prohibited substances such as clenbuterol (bronchodilator), zilpaterol (used as a steroid substitute), and furanics (anabolic steroid).^{26,27} Due largely to over-breeding, the thoroughbred racing industry is one of the principal contributors to the estimated 133,241 U.S. horses slaughtered in 2011.^{28,29}

Because of the intense training and racing endured by these horses, many develop musculoskeletal injuries that trainers and owners treat with NSAIDs, of which PBZ is the common due to its legality in the racing industry. A study done by the Daily Racing Form found 99% of racehorses in California and 92% of horses at Suffolk Downs in Massachusetts are given PBZ on a regular basis.³⁰ Certain racetracks allow only PBZ administration on race day, but all usage must be recorded on the horse's track record.³¹ This documentation requirement makes racing thoroughbreds convenient candidates for a case study of PBZ usage in U.S. horses bought for slaughter.

Nicholas Dodman of Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, Nicolas Blondeau of the Institut de Pharmacologie Moléculaire et Cellulaire, and Ann Marini of Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences conducted a study to investigate whether thoroughbred race horses were given PBZ prior to being bought for human consumption, and to see how widely the FDA ban on PBZ usage in horses that end up on consumers' plates is ignored. The study identified 50 thoroughbreds rescued from slaughter and 18 thoroughbreds that were sent to slaughter. Each horse's Jockey Club lip tattoo allowed the researchers to find the registered name of all 68 horses, and each horse's drug record was obtained from their race track records.³²

Upon review of the records, one of the horses sent to slaughter was not documented as receiving PBZ but the drug was identified in his blood test results, and another thoroughbred was administered PBZ by a veterinarian in the same month he was sent to slaughter. The remaining 16 of the 18 horses slaughtered and all 16 of the rescued horses were recorded as receiving PBZ within 24 hours of a race. Data collected by the researchers determined that the time interval between horses' last known dose of PBZ and the date

they were bought for slaughter varied from a week to four years. However, it is important to note that the FDA, the EU, the United Kingdom, and Canada do not allow any use of PBZ in horses intended for human consumption regardless of withdrawal time.³³

Another important aspect in understanding the risk of PBZ contamination in horsemeat is the circulation of PBZ in the bloodstream. Horses possess 1.76 times the amount of blood per pound of body weight compared to cattle. With this much blood, it is possible that high-volume slaughterhouses—one Canadian slaughterhouse processed 100 horses a day—do not allow sufficient time for the horse's blood to be completely drained from the muscle, increasing the risk of meat contamination.³⁴

The findings of Dodman, et al., indicate a serious discontinuity between food safety regulations and practice. Horses with a history of PBZ use are making their way to slaughter plants despite the United States' and other countries' ban of the use of the drug in food producing animals.

The European Union's Evaluation of Imported Horse Meat

In 2010, The European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) evaluated food safety standards of imported equine meat from third countries (non-members of the European Union).³⁵ The FVO have found that many third countries—such as Mexico, Canada, and the United States—do not keep veterinary pharmaceutical treatment records for horses; and there are no systems in place to differentiate equines intended for human consumption from all other equines. The evaluations also reported that third countries tolerate the administration of substances that are prohibited or unauthorized in food-producing animals in the EU.^{36,37} The United States has no official controls in place to verify the authenticity or reliability of the medical records and equine documents now required for horses destined for slaughter, only records of physical identification are required.³⁸ These discoveries prompted the European Commission to facilitate corrective measures to their own regulations regarding imported horsemeat, and to require third countries to implement action plans addressing compliance with the EU's requirements regarding equine meat.³⁹

Since 2000, the EU's regulations state that horse meat cannot contain residues of veterinary medicinal products exceeding previously set limits or residue from substances banned for use in food producing animals in the EU. These restrictions include phenylbutazone. If substances prohibited for use in food-producing animals are administered to equids, those animals must be excluded from the food chain.⁴⁰ Finally, imported horsemeat can only be authorized if equines are included in European Commission-approved residue control plans in third country slaughterhouses.⁴¹

Both Canada and Mexico have submitted action plans in order to comply with the EU's import requirements for equine meat, and both plans have been approved by the FVO.⁴²

In Mexico, horses imported for slaughter are to be microchipped and border controls have been strengthened. A sworn statement on veterinary medical treatments is requested for all slaughter horses, no matter what their country of origin. United States providers of imported horses (holding facilities) have been targeted in samplings of the Mexican National Residue Monitoring Programme (NRMP). According to the NRMP nineteen samples of horsemeat in 2008, nine in 2009, and six in 2010 tested positive for residues of banned substances. All of the horses who tested positive were covered by a declaration stating that no treatments were given to the horses, and all of these horses came from U.S. providers.⁴³

In Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has implemented the Equine Information Document (EID). The EID contains a physical description of the animal, record of the animal's medical treatment for the previous six months, and requires the signature of the animal's owner at the time of ownership transfer to verify that all information is accurate. Horses bought for intended slaughter must have their EIDs also signed by the transient agent responsible for the care of the equine from time of purchase for slaughter until arrival at the meat processing establishment. Each CFIA inspected facility

engaged in equine slaughter must present an EID for all domestic and imported equines presented for slaughter. If the EID indicates a horse has been given a substance not permitted for use in equine slaughtered for food, such as phenylbutazone, the horse will not be eligible for slaughter.⁴⁴ However, the 2011 FVO audit noted “for those horses imported from the United States of America for direct slaughter, the equine identification documents received were not reliable....” The audit further noted that 85% of the horses slaughtered in this Canadian processing plant originated from the U.S. and all of these horses were imported for direct slaughter.⁴⁵ Considering cases such as the one above, as long as there is no identification system in place, U.S. horses will not meet the European Commission’s new food safety regulations, which will become effective in July 2013.

The European Commission mandated a transitional period of three years in which third countries have to provide guarantees regarding medical and drug history for horses during their last six months before slaughter. After the three-year transition period—which ends in 2013—guarantees must be provided for the lifetime of the horses.⁴⁶ This policy would complement the EU’s “horse passport” legislation, which requires records to be kept of certain medicinal products.⁴⁷ This required lifetime guarantee that a horse be cleared of all EU prohibited substances for use in food-producing animals could eliminate virtually all U.S. horses from the food chain. The substances banned for use in food-producing animals routinely administered by U.S. horse owners render most American horses ineligible for foreign slaughter.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The slaughter of U.S. horses poses a potentially serious health risk to human consumers, yet thousands are still slaughtered and sold to consumers. New measures put in place in the European Union to address the human health risk associated with horse slaughter are vital steps to insure U.S. horses, who are regularly given phenylbutazone along with other EU-banned substances, are kept out of the slaughter pipeline.

Prevention needs to start within U.S. borders. The United States should look to the European Union’s horse passport and Canada’s Equine Identification Document (EID) benchmarks. Requiring accurate medical records and identification documents, regardless of the horse’s intended use, would draw clear lines regarding each individual horse’s eligibility for human consumption. Until such a system is in place, meat from American horses may pose a public health threat.

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The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization—backed by 10 million Americans, or one of every 30. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education, and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty. On the Web at humanesociety.org.



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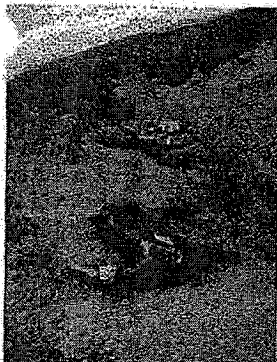
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Presidio Federal Vet Wants No More Calls Complaining About Horses

January 28, 2012

By Steven Long

Photo Courtesy Ray Field



HOUSTON, (Horseback) — A federal veterinarian charged with overseeing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service animal inspections in Presidio, Texas told *Horseback Online* Thursday he was tired of getting calls from citizens irate about the abuse of horses brought to the C-4 slaughter holding pens.

"I've had these middle aged women calling me and complaining about what's going on here and I'm tired of it," he said.

"I don't have anything to do with those horses."

Dr. William Brown said that he has never held a Coggins certificate from horses at the facility in his hands.

Moreover, he says he was under orders to ignore the place.

Late last year *Horseback* learned from Texas Animal Health Commission inspector Richard Wagner the same Coggins documents were being used again and again for different horses going to slaughter and held at the pens. The TAHC official said nothing at his level was being done because his agency's budget had been cut by the Texas Legislature and simply didn't have the manpower to take action.

However, TAHC routinely inspects stables around the state for strict inspections of Coggins documents.

The Coggins certificate is a federal document, and it is a federal offense to falsify the form. Violations could result in a fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment of 5 years or both.

"My boss in Austin told me not to go anywhere near those horses," a clearly irate Brown said.

The pens are a way station where horses are held awaiting transport across the border to a Mexican slaughter facility.

"They can call my boss in Austin if they want to complain," he said.

Asked by *Horseback* who his boss is, Brown readily gave the name of Dr.

Jim Amend of APHIS.

"They can just get him on the phone if they want to complain," he said. Almost certainly, hate horse lovers will do just that.

It getting Amend on the phone is not so easy. *Horseback* called not only Amend, but also his superior. Neither have made our calls more than 24 hours after the initial contact.

Brown says he doesn't do inspections on the slaughter bound horses because the feds aren't funding him to do the inspections.

"They removed the funds to pay me," he said. "They are paying a private veterinarian."

Brown said the private vet provides him with a certificate that he routinely signs, preferring to personally inspect incoming horses and cattle from Mexico, rather than outgoing horses destined for slaughter across the border. Late last year, more than 60 horses were seized from the C-4 pens in various stages of starvation, dehydration, and illness. Several died, and a dumping ground of horse carcasses was discovered in a flash flood prone creek that runs behind the pens and empties into the Rio Grande River.

Despite the risk of spreading infectious disease, the pen owner of the C-4 pens was chided by the state agency and given a slap on the wrist by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Horse owners are required to have Coggins certificates indicating the animal has passed a test showing it is free of equine infectious anemia, (EIA).

Brown told *Horseback*, "I know of a guy who works for the state who told me they were surprised when he actually wanted to go out and look at those horses, they don't want you to look at those horses," he said.

Tags: APHIS, Presidio horses, slaughter, TAHC

87 Responses to "Presidio Federal Vet Wants No More Calls Complaining About Horses"



1. Vicki on January 28, 2012 at 5:06 am

Presidio: A shining example for everything wrong with horse slaughter.



Cathy Ago 51 on January 28, 2012 at 4:56 pm

ummm Mr. Brown -- so where are all the men who should care about the treatment of animals? Don't you have to take some sort of oath to be a vet? Isn't it sad that it always seems to be women who have to clean up the messes made by men?



Beth Schang on January 30, 2012 at 7:31 am

ummm -- so true... It IS sad that it does seem always to be that women have to clean up the messes made by men... I KNOW there are good men out there, but there are soo many who get choked by the process of the law and unable to stand up, take responsibility and ACT like a real man... when you are in need, I hope you, Mr. Brown, don't get turned away with "it's not my problem"...



Ann Wilson on January 29, 2012 at 7:16 am

This seems to be abuse. Not a coggins issue. The humane society needs to get in on this. One However going to Mexico is not a good outcome and should be banned as well. This is our Planet. In 2012. Disgusting.



Janet Jackson on January 30, 2012 at 2:49 pm

Well, this middle-aged woman is pissed on so many levels... the very nerve of this man. One thing is quite clear... this man can not and will not think for himself... playing the blame game... he should lose his job.

Ok, so we middle-aged women will call his boss, but be aware, as long as you hold the title of Federal Vet, you will be answerable to us middle-aged women. Someone needs to tell your Mother on you.... I am sure she would not support your behavior... after all she was or is a middle-aged woman too....

Now on to the real issue... I am sick to my heart at the treatment these horses are exposed to. I do not consider myself a bleeding heart, but I do have a strong sense of right and wrong and this is so very wrong. When God made first man, besides not to eat of the forbidden fruit, which he did of his own free will, he was told to name all the animals and tend the garden... I am quite sure this was not the tending He was expecting. There will be a day of reckoning for all the bad behavior. Each man and woman, even the middle-aged ones, will answer to all that they did in their life on earth. When you mistreat the least of God's creatures it is as though you have done it to God. That is a scary position to be in....

2.



Morgan Griffith on January 28, 2012 at 5:26 am

What does prostitution, gambling and horse slaughter have in common? Brings the drogs of society running and guaranteed to keep law enforcements head deeply buried in the sand.
Dr. Brown tired of getting calls from middle aged ladies (how condescending is that? how about concerned taxpayers?) How about you stepped up to the plate when this first occurred and spoke out knowing what conditions must be? But no that paycheck fit so neatly into his wallet it just didn't matter how much blood the had to wash off it before cashing it.



Elaine Nash on January 28, 2012 at 6:10 am

Well said, Morgan.



Pamela Dale on January 28, 2012 at 2:25 pm

yes very well said Morgan! If your in a position to do a job then DO YOUR JOB! Middle aged women? please, children, adults anyone and most everyone is concerned!
Get off your high horse and do what your suppose to or get the heck out and let someone who can do it! You must not be concerned about much else but the money lining your pockets. This is the kind of thing that makes the horse industry what it is now... non caring, highfalutin idiots with no morals or concerns other then themselves just resting on a seat of importance and twiddling their thumbs doing nothing more then lip service.



Shelley on January 28, 2012 at 3:41 pm

Yes, well said.

I would say this is a man who hates his job. I think his boss should do him the favor of firing him--don't you all agree?

It would be a kindness. No more having to deal with "irate middle aged women".



Paula Dennon on January 29, 2012 at 5:51 am

Totally agree. I believe that we should leave a thousand messages on the bosses phone.. and add anyone else in those bureaucratic organizations that you can find.. Fire the JERK. he should be happy as he was certainly concerned the "they weren't paying him anymore." I don't think he was doing more...just collecting more.



Suzanne Moore on January 29, 2012 at 1:07 am

Exactly, Morgan. And Sue Wallis and her cronies brag about how tightly regulated American slaughter plants and transport were and will be again. Yeah, they WILL be regulated just like they were before. That's the problem!



Beth Schang on January 30, 2012 at 7:35 am

I wonder -- where are the pro-slaughter folks in this? Seems they should also be raising a ruckus, as they, too, at least claim to be against the starvation of horses !!



Denise on January 30, 2012 at 5:25 pm

Superb point, Beth...I was thinking the same thing. Where are the kiffen and supporters of human consumption horse slaughter of US equines? Where are the decent, law abiding, integrity laden meat producers of cattle, poultry, beef, swine and lamb in this country that do the right thing every day? Where is their outrage at this behavior?

I will post at the end of this thread to remind the skippers.



Beth Schang on January 30, 2012 at 7:33 am

Hitting the nail on the head, Morgan, as Elaine Nash comment - well said !!

3.



Jo-Claire on January 28, 2012 at 6:09 am

C-4 Cattle Company in Presidio TX is the embodiment of everything disgusting and evil with the horse slaughter industry. I like the way Brown says a bunch of middle age women... did he poll each person who called him for their age? Perhaps is he spent the same effort on inspecting the horses and their paperwork as he does attempting to discern the age of the person on the other end of the phone these problems might be corrected.

fact-teller on January 30, 2012 at 4:27 pm

Most of the horses received at the pens in Presidio have been on the truck for 2 to 4 days without food or water. Since we outlawed slaughter in the US this has become a big problem. Many people are unable to care for their horses so they sell them to horse buyers that send them to Mexico for slaughter. Many for these buyers are just in it for the money. When the horses arrive in Presidio that have fresh water and are fed. The condition of the horses when they get off the truck ranges from bad to good. I am sure many of these horses were in very poor condition when they were bought. I for one don't know how the buyer takes care of them before they are shipped nor do I know how long they are in his pens. Does the buyer provide the horses with food and water? How long do they stay in his pens before they have a truck load? It seems to me we need to be looking at the total chain of possession of these animal not just at the ending point. Just saying.

admin on January 30, 2012 at 5:11 pm

Editor's note: Equine slaughter for export has only been outlawed in Texas, Illinois, and California. The United States Supreme Court has upheld those laws. However a slaughterhouse could open tomorrow in the other states such facilities could secure federal inspectors. What shut down the industry was the federal ban on inspectors in such facilities. That ban was removed late last year by Congress in an 11th hour move by House/Senate conferees on a spending bill. The House had left the ban in place, but the Senate had not. Three members removed the ban. There are now efforts in Congress to secure funding for inspections. There is also an effort to allow the slaughter industry to pay for inspectors. The Supreme Court has already struck that down, yet some continue to perpetuate the myth that it can happen.

The Editor

upbeatred1 on January 28, 2012 at 6:14 am

WTF is the matter with Dr. Brown and the state of Texas? This is not a game. That man should be removed from his job. I am sure there are plenty of middle aged women who are also MDs and who could (and would) do a far better job of it - than him. He is an insult. Throw him in the Rio Grande.

Bobbie Jo on January 30, 2012 at 2:53 pm

AMEN!!!!!! I watch the news everyday & am tired of hearing about sports coverage, governmental issues, things about other countries... Why does this not get national attention across this country of OURS! Why do these animals that are the final piece of our country's history not get the much deserved attention for all to see & fight for. A human such as McBrown should be dealt with by the public just like these horses & their humane care should be as well. He is an insult.....

Louie Crockett on January 28, 2012 at 6:38 am

Sounds as though it was "middle aged men" that gave him the shaft and left him hanging.

Mar wargo on January 28, 2012 at 6:58 am

I agree, Louie. So some more middle aged women add their voices to the others. Vet Brown, you need to take a walk. This place should be shut down if we cannot get the inspection or the Coggins violations charged and fined.

Susan on January 28, 2012 at 7:10 am

Middle aged women? Really? That's a huge voting demographic, which controls a lot of wealth and political power in this country.

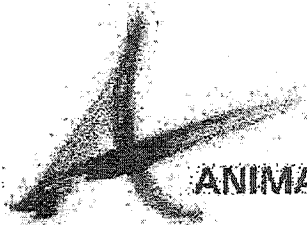
These desk jockeys need to get out into the field and do their jobs. It might even give them a chance to dust the powdered sugar off their laps.

Sheila on January 28, 2012 at 2:01 pm

Excellent point, which he should remember next go round! He is trying to discredit all of us. What about the younger ones fighting this slaughter? And all of them men who fight! Middle aged women? Tells you where his mind is. He

3

we are there with the animals



ANIMALS' ANGELS

Investigation at the Slaughter Horse Export Pens in Presidio, TX April 30, 2012

Animals' Angels
PO Box 1056
Westminster,
MD 21158

Concerns remain

The following abridged investigative report may be the best way of describing what we found in Presidio, TX and what took us there. It is important to remember that the situation at the export pens in Presidio is what is found everywhere along the horse slaughter pipeline.

In Shippensburg, PA or Presidio, TX; Butler, KY or Fairhaven, MI; Shelby, MT or Los Lunas, NM; Shipshewana, IN or Sugarcreek, OH— the evidence is stark and clear: Horse slaughter and transport on U.S. soil or not, means suffering and cruelty for horses long before they stand in the slaughter kill box.

Important Background to Investigation



Photos provided to Animals' Angels and documentation obtained by Public Information Request show horses dying in C4 export pens and carcasses dumped in a dry creek bed. Taken in August of 2011, with approximately 350 horses on the property, photos depict several

horses down, struggling and dying. Many were extremely emaciated and/or had open, untreated wounds.

Signed eye witness statements report horses without food & water, and "non-ambulatory horses dying where they lay in puddles of mud and urine."

(All Photographs provided by anonymous sources, taken between 8/12/11-8/18/11)

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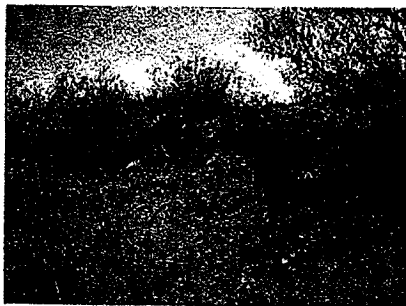
After receiving cruelty complaints & pictures on 8/15/11, the Presidio County Sheriff's Office stated that they would launch an investigation. On 8/19/11, the Sheriff's Office removed several horses from the C4 pens. At the same time, the Texas Department of

Environmental Quality (TCEQ) launched an investigation in regards to the illegal carcass dumping.



Animals' Angels Investigation:

Animals' Angels requested a status update from the Presidio County Sheriff's Office as well as TCEQ in February and also submitted Public Information Act requests regarding horse shipments and any prior investigations of the C4 pens.



The TCEQ request revealed that they investigated dead horses being dumped on private property by C4 on October 2010, June 2011, August 2011, finding a total of 56 or more horse carcasses, most along Cibolo Creek.

At least 6 were microchipped, one horse

was branded with a blue "D", indicating that it had been delivered to the pens by Dorian Ayache and then was rejected by the Mexican authorities. Paperwork obtained also showed that the following kill buyers were delivering horses to the C4 pens: Dorian Ayache (TN), Bill Richardson (TX), Joe Rios (TX), Trent Saulters (TX), Dennis Kunz (UT), Ryon Simon (MN), Double JJ Horse Company (OK) and Triple Crown Ranch (OK).

In the August 2011 report TCEQ states, "The cause of death of these horses remains unknown and should be further investigated by the appropriate agency having jurisdiction in this matter." This would indicate that the sheriff's office was enjoined to investigate.

However, TCEQ has informed AA that further information is not available to the public but is under "Management Review."

The Presidio County Sheriff's Office response included no documents of a cruelty investigation against C4. Apparently, there are also no records of any complaints ever being submitted. However, Deputy Sheriff Nunez acknowledged in an earlier email (8/15/11) to complainant the receipt of the complaint & the pictures and confirmed that 2 cruelty investigations were ongoing.

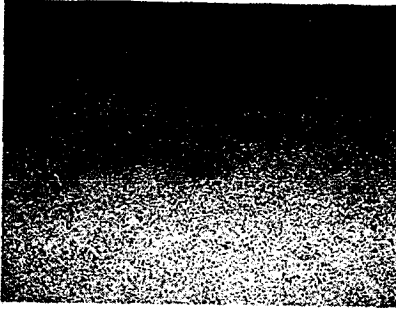
About us

Animals' Angels works to improve conditions for farm animals. We closely cooperate with law enforcement and government agencies to fight animal cruelty. Our investigators are out in the field nationwide, visiting auctions, feedlots and slaughter plants.

Contact:

Animals' Angels Inc.
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www.animalsangels.org
info@animalsangels.org

The Sheriff's Department did provide some documents of an investigation related to C4's illegal dumping. It included landfill records, showing that in June, July and August of 2011 C4 dumped approximately 50 dead horses/month at the landfill.



The photographic evidence *Dead horse and trenches visible* submitted to the Presidio Sheriff's Department suggests cruel and inhumane treatment on C4 property where horses were in the "custody and control" (as described in state law) of C4. What happened?

Investigation on the ground: Presidio 3/ 6-7/2012

Investigators immediately observe a truck unloading horses from Three Angels Farms (Dorian and Edwin Ayache) whose February wreck in TN (crashing within an hour of leaving origin), killed 3 and injured several of the 38 horses.
<http://www.wkrn.com/story/16531100/overturnd-cattle-truck-closes-both-directions-of-i-40>.

A Dennis Chinn truck (Pratt, KS) sits empty nearby.

Both Ayache and Chinn trucking companies have many violations, the most recent include 31 violations for Vehicle Maintenance, 4 Unsafe Driving, 9 Fatigued Driving, Driver Fitness and Crash with Injury.



Three Angels Farms Trailer
also seen.

A second Three Angels Farm truck is observed with holes, loose boards, broken overhead piping that put horses at risk of severe injuries.

Wangler Grain truck, Mount Pleasant, TX and Robert Jackson truck and trailer, Marietta, OK are

No vantage point allows AA investigators to see inside the pens. After renting a helicopter, investigators observe 2 dead horses in a pen with other live horses.

Water is available to all horses, but little to no hay can be seen in the pens and there is no shelter from the desert sun.

Investigators note temperature is already 93 degrees. TX Animal Health & Safety code 821.021 defines cruelly treated as "unreasonably deprived of necessary food, care, or shelter."



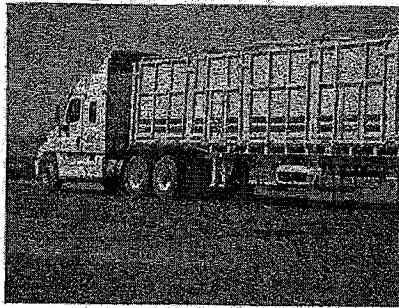
Dead Horse in C4 Pens



Investigators believe the flyover caused C4 to remove the dead horses shortly afterwards. The horses observed on the C4 trailer as it waited outside the landfill appear to have been dead for some time, the bay mare observed from the air, is bloated, her

legs stiff and extended. Scavengers have eaten her anus. The dead chestnut is terribly, extremely boney with hip, rib bones clearly defined, her anus also eaten. Investigators also checked horses for bullet holes that would indicate euthanasia, but none were visible.

Leaving the pens, investigators go to the border crossing and see two new Mexican transport trailers without semis parked in the unshaded broker lot, one already loaded. The trailer fully loaded with horses sits there for 4+ hours in the hot afternoon sun and is still there when investigators leave.



Investigators note that on these new trailers the sides can be closed completely, which makes it impossible to check en route if a horse has gone down or if there are other problems. Closed, the metal trailer would be intensely hot. Unfortunately and predictably, trailers loaded with horses documented at the border waiting to cross were completely closed.

Conclusion:

While some improvements were noted (no illegal dumping of dead horses was observed), horses are still dying at the C4 pens in Presidio. It appears carcasses are left in the pens with other horses and are not immediately removed. The pens have no shelter from the desert sun. Questions remain regarding adequate food.

Transport trailers & procedures observed in Presidio are unacceptable. Animals' Angels has discussed with USDA officials the dangerous disrepair of the Ayache trailer, the detached loaded trailers waiting for hours, and the closed up Mexican trailers. They have promised to take a look further into each.

Concerns also remain regarding no confirmed sheriff's investigation and TCEQ's review that is unavailable to the public for an unknown period of time. It now appears that the slow deaths of multiple horses in 2011 were never investigated and that no charges were filed against C4 for cruelty to animals. It appears the real bottom line here is that horses suffered and continue to suffer in Presidio.

Horse slaughter is no excuse. A normal horse owner, who just left his or her ailing horse to suffer and die, would be charged with animal cruelty. It should be no different for these horses.

[Click to read the full investigative report...](#)

Investigation Updates

Monday, March 26, 2012 9:15 AM

From: "Sonja Meadows" <sonja@animalsangels.org>

To: [REDACTED]@swbell.net

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

We are there with the animals



ANIMALS' ANGELS

The Dennis Chavez Slaughter Horse Feedlot in New Mexico

March 26, 2012

Animals' Angels
PO Box 1056
Westminster,
MD 21158

A note from Sonja

Six years of cruelty investigations have made it absolutely clear. Horse slaughter means a free pass, in effect, kill buyer amnesty for abuse, neglect and animal cruelty. But never has one single location screamed horse slaughter's cruelty more than at our March 10 investigation. Horse after horse after horse - yet completely typical of what goes on unabated in the slaughter pipeline. No feeling person could help but be heartbroken, and very angry.



But this investigation showed that obviously there are unfeeling, remorseless people with no empathy for these animals in their suffering. I do not wonder that 'ag' gag' laws are being promoted in state after state. Though it is difficult to imagine how much worse it could be, without pictures and documentation to tell

the damning tale, animals would undoubtedly suffer even more at the hands of such people.

But it also needs your help--to say we care, it matters, and pressure

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authorities to make this matter to them. The suffering of these horses was not useless if we make a difference for better treatment for others to come, and punish those responsible. Please support our call for action at the bottom of the article. Your voices have made a difference before; please make a difference now.

The Feedlot

Investigators knew the history of kill buyer Dennis Chavez beforehand:

- major kill buyer, shipped 10,000 horses to slaughter last year
- repeatedly cited for violations to equine to slaughter regulations
- frequent complaints received by AA about Chavez's operation, all referencing significant abuse, neglect and animals suffering with no vet care or obviously necessary euthanasia

But it was not enough to prepare investigators for what they found. AA investigators arrived at Chavez's Southwest Auction & Feedlot on March 10th for the auction's quarterly horse sale. 'Summit of the Horse' flyers were plastered everywhere.



After a walk-thru of the auction house pens, investigators noted a vast empty pen area, and behind this additional pens. Back here they find approximately 700 horses. Almost all are extremely thin with body scores well below 2. Many have serious injuries.

"I've never seen horses like that," said one of the investigators. "Suffering was bad, busted up faces, even body scores of 1 or less, and the injuries and wounds. There was so much."

In one of the first of the back pens, all are geldings and stallions that appeared to be recently gelded. Ungelded horses are rejected at the border because Mexican slaughter plants do not accept stallions. Dried blood covers the back legs, penises are extremely swollen and the horses stand motionless with heads down. One horse's penis is grotesquely swollen, strangulated looking, as if something has been wound tightly around it several times.

crucial to continue our work and to finance our upcoming investigations! Animals' Angels counts on you, please send your donation today.

Thank you so much.

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About us

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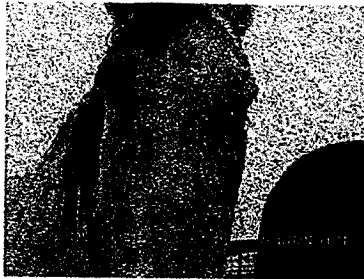
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In the next pen an emaciated mare barely able to stand, sniffs a recently aborted dead foal, remaining near it the entire time investigators are present. There are several thin to emaciated thoroughbreds, one with a body score 1 and teeth so overgrown they protrude out of his mouth and

probably prevent him from eating. "He was just so thin and weak standing in the corner alone, you knew he was about to go down," said the investigator.

In the next pen a beautiful palomino stood quietly with blood dripping from her eye. But then there was the emaciated grey horse nearby with both eyes destroyed. He stayed close to a chestnut 'seeing' companion. Marked with a large 'X,' he wore a slaughter tag. Investigators



believed he was rejected at the export pens. Since last year's EU Report mentioning horses rejected at the border, AA has found that nothing is done for these distressed horses, that no one takes any responsibility or tracks them. Yet horses arriving in conditions that qualify as animal cruelty or in violation of Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter Regulations should be reported by pen operators to APHIS and local authorities. As AA said last year, "To run a cover up for offenders is intolerable."

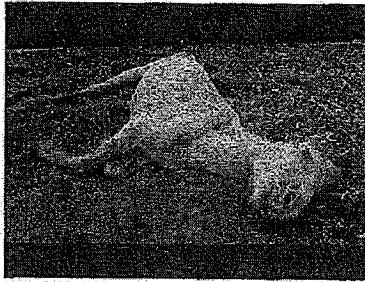
Whatever the cause of his scarred and blinded condition, this horse has been dealt with harshly, yet even then he licked the investigator's hand.



In the last pen, 4 horses were down. The grey mare had a body score less than 1 and a large bleeding wound. It appeared the injury was from bone on ground impact as she kept trying to get up and falling. She had made trenches from repeated attempts to rise, lying flat for a

while and then trying again. Her will to live and her complete betrayal were terrible to see.

Next to her was a horribly thin palomino mare with her back legs tangled in hay baling twine, barely moving her front legs. On the other side of the pen was a light bay/buckskin mare that did not move at all. When investigators approached her ears moved. She looked at them with the whites of her eyes showing, afraid. Her body score may have been 1.



The last of the 4 dying horses was a light grey mare, emaciated, her tongue was hanging out and she was biting it. She appeared to be in great distress and physical pain, her legs moving.

Investigators observed from a distance to see if auction staff, the vet, or the livestock inspector would come. After a long hour, nothing.

AA investigators then spoke with Mrs. Chavez in the auction office, who to her credit called the auction vet. Though investigators had been told Dr. Brasmer was present at the auction, no one was ever able to reach him.



Eventually livestock manager BJ Winchester came in and reluctantly began to walk very slowly to the back pens with the investigators. He was quick to defend Chavez, calling the horses 'rescues,' that Chavez was trying to 'nurture them back to health,' and that he was giving them, 'a chance to live.' He confirmed that the horses are Chavez's property.

Winchester became angry when investigators continued to insist that the suffering and dying horses should be euthanized. 'Nothing will be done right away,' he said. He asked if they were 'animal rights' and asserted he would not interrupt the auction. When they finally got to the last pen, the grey mare that was in so much distress had died. Vultures had already landed near her. Winchester had no reaction.

The impasse was broken when an auction worker arrived saying he could put the horses down right away. The



'inspector' no longer had a say and the horses were euthanized.

The rest of the horses in all kinds of terrible conditions will get no help, not from Winchester or the vet that no one can find.

Livestock Inspector with grey mare - now dead

In New Mexico the livestock inspector is supposed to inspect and enforce cruelty laws. In itself this seems an unworkable and inadequate premise, made even clearer by BJ Winchester. It is difficult to imagine what it would take for him to file cruelty charges. The NM Livestock Board is appointed by the governor, 9 people representing livestock industry interests. These 9 also hire the inspectors who are charged with enforcing laws for livestock.

AA has sent all evidence by certified mail and has not received any response yet.

Watch the video... (Warning: Images are graphic and might be disturbing to some viewers)

Read the full length report...

Please help us to seek justice for these horses and hold Dennis Chavez & BJ Winchester accountable!

Please contact the NM Livestock Board:

Gary Mora, Supervisor to BJ Winchester
550-927-2509

Myles Culbertson, Executive Director
505-841-6161
Myles.Culbertson@state.nm.us

Bobby Pierce, Deputy Director
505-841-6167
RobertD.Pierce@state.nm.us

Tell them to fully investigate this incident and BJ Winchester's actions. Ask them to initiate cruelty charges against Dennis Chavez.

2

200



MAY 07 2012

DR. ELIZABETH HAGEN
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