



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Washington, D. C.
20250

MAR 14 2012

Mr. Dennis Davey



Dear Mr. Davey:

Thank you for your letter of January 6, 2012, to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regarding horse slaughter and the export of horses to Canada for slaughter. We apologize for the delay in responding.

FSIS is the public health regulatory agency in the Department of Agriculture (USDA) responsible for ensuring that meat, poultry, and processed egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled. FSIS enforces the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act, which require Federal inspection and regulation of meat, poultry, and processed egg products prepared for distribution in commerce for use as human food. FSIS also is responsible for enforcing the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA), which requires that all livestock at federally inspected establishments be handled and slaughtered in a humane way.

The FMIA has permitted the slaughter of horses for human food since 1906. Since the passage of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Appropriations Act, Congress has prohibited the use of funds for inspection of horses for human food. As a result, FSIS has not performed inspections of horses for human food since that time. However, on November 18, 2011, Congress passed the FY 2012 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act (H.R. 2112). In this law, there is no language to deny USDA funding for the inspection of horses for human consumption.

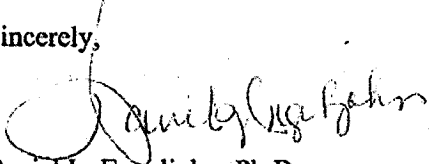
Therefore, horse processing could resume in the United States. Interest in horse slaughter has increased, particularly in the western states where there are reports of increased numbers of horses being abandoned and allowed to starve. At this time, FSIS is carefully considering all aspects of this issue.

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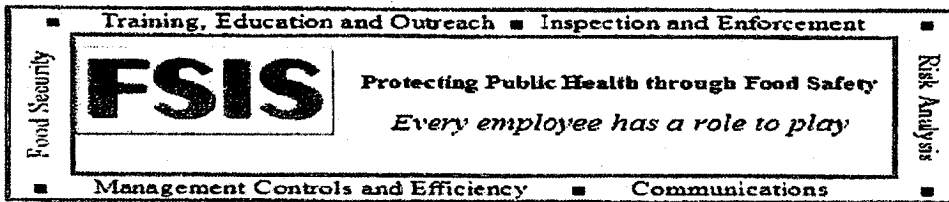
FSIS, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are currently addressing horse transport issues such as you have identified. You probably know that, in January 2012, Canada strengthened its requirements for importing horses from the United States for slaughter. In addition, the American Veterinary Medical Association is addressing concerns about unwanted horses.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Engeljohn, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development





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FSIS does not have jurisdiction over the transport of live horses to Canada for slaughter. However, FSIS, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are currently addressing horse transport issues such as you have identified. You probably know that, in January 2012, Canada strengthened its requirements for importing horses from the United States for slaughter. In addition, the American Veterinary Medical Association is addressing concerns about unwanted horses.

For more information about food safety, please visit FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov.

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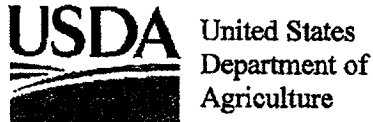
Daniel L. Engeljohn, Ph.D.
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Keep Your Family Safer From Food Poisoning
CLEAN – SEPARATE – COOK – CHILL

CLEAN: Wash Hands And Surfaces Often **SEPARATE: Separate Raw Meats From Other Foods**

COOK: Cook To The Right Temperature **CHILL: Refrigerate Food Promptly**

Check your Steps at FoodSafety.gov



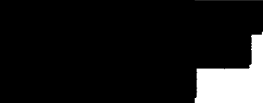
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