



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Washington, D. C.
20250

MAR 23 2012

[REDACTED] .org

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for your e-mail of March 11, 2012, to the Department of Agriculture (USDA) about a Future Farmers of America project your class is preparing on the pros and cons of horse slaughter. The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has been asked to provide you with a response.

FSIS is the public health regulatory agency in the Department of Agriculture 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, 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. Therefore, there is no prohibition to consuming horsemeat in the United States. However, the availability of food products at retail is closely related to consumer demand for the products.

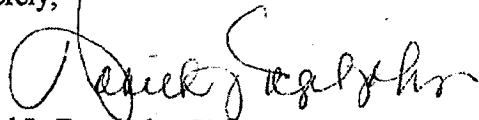
Since the passage of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Appropriations Act, Congress has prohibited the use of funds for inspection of horses for human food. As a result, FSIS has not performed inspections of horses for human food since that time. There has never been a prohibition against eating horse-meat in the United States.

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.

For more information on food safety, please visit the FSIS Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,



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

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