



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Washington, D. C.
20250

May 9, 2012

██████████@yahoo.com

Dear Ms. Allen:

Thank you for your e-mail of April 25, 2012, to the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection regarding your concerns about horse slaughter. The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has been asked to provide you with a response, and I appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns.

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, which requires that all livestock at federally inspected establishments be handled and slaughtered in a humane way. Humane methods of handling and slaughtering livestock prevent needless suffering of animals and result in safer and better working conditions for employees in slaughter establishments.

Currently there are no facilities approved for horse slaughter in the United States. Following a decision by Congress in November 2011 to lift the ban on horse slaughter, one establishment, located in New Mexico, has applied for a grant of inspection exclusively for equine and FSIS is reviewing the application. However, given that the Agency last conducted a horse inspection six years ago, FSIS has determined that despite the congressional decision to lift the ban, the Agency will require a significant amount of time to update its testing and inspection processes and methods before it is fully able to develop a future inspection regimen.

Protecting public health is FSIS' top priority. To this end, the United States has a residue control program to protect consumers from residues of drugs, chemicals, and pesticides in meat, poultry, and egg products, involving three Federal agencies: the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and FSIS.

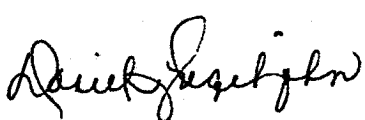
FDA is responsible for the approval of animal drugs and feed additives. That Agency establishes limits, known as tolerances, for the amount of an animal drug residue or other chemicals that may be present in a meat or poultry product. You may wish to contact FDA regarding your concerns by visiting their web site at <http://www.fda.gov>, or by writing them. For your convenience, I have provided their address below:

Food and Drug Administration,
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Consumer Affairs
HFE-88, 5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

EPA establishes tolerances for the amount of pesticide residues that may remain in a food destined for human consumption, and FSIS enforces the level of drugs, chemicals, or pesticides through its inspections and residue testing program.

Thank you again for writing. I encourage you to visit the FSIS Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov> for more information on food safety and humane handling.

Sincerely,



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

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