



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food Safety  
and Inspection  
Service

Washington, D.C.  
20250

MAY 30 2012

Mr. Larry Hammer

[REDACTED]@charter.net

Dear Mr. Hammer:

Thank you for your e-mail of May 4, 2012, to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) asking for the official definition of livestock. I am pleased to provide you with a response.

FSIS is the public health regulatory agency in 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.

The answer to your question depends on the context. Livestock is defined in Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations 301.2(1)(2) to include cattle, sheep, swine, goat, horse, mule, or other equine. This regulation can be accessed at <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=a50c520c70ce9ac43021305435483f9c&rgn=div8&view=text&node=9:2.0.2.1.2.0.22.2&idno=9>.

FSIS is required to conduct inspections of all livestock, including horses, intended for slaughter and use as human food, to prevent adulterated, unwholesome, and mislabeled products from entering commerce.

Currently there are no facilities approved for horse slaughter in the United States. In November 2011, Congress lifted the ban on horse slaughter. However, given that the Agency last conducted a horse inspection 6 years ago, the Agency will require time to update its testing and inspection processes and methods before it is fully able to develop a future inspection regimen.

The Food and Drug Administration considers horses to be "non-food producing animals." Dogs, cats, and small pets are sometimes defined as companion animals, but this is not a legal term applied to horses.

Mr. Larry Hammer

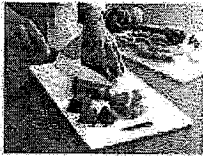
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Thank you again for your inquiry. For information on food safety, please visit the FSIS Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

Sincerely,



Rachel A. Edelstein  
Acting Assistant Administrator  
Office of Policy and Program Development



Protecting public health by preventing food borne illnesses is FSIS' top priority.

Help protect your family. Check Your Steps at  
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/>  
and get ready to Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.

Food safety is important to everyone.