



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Washington, D. C.
20250

May 8, 2012

Ms. Jennifer Facer Brown
[REDACTED]@yahoo.com

Dear Ms. Brown:

Thank you for your e-mail of April 20, 2012, to the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline, regarding your concerns about Valley Meat Company's request to operate a horse slaughter facility in Roswell, New Mexico. 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 USDA responsible for ensuring that meat, poultry, and processed egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled. FSIS enforces the Federal Meat Inspection Act, 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, only one establishment, Valley Meat Company in New Mexico, has applied for a grant of inspection exclusively for equine and FSIS is reviewing that application. However, given that the Agency last conducted a horse inspection 6 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.

Ms. Jennifer Facer Brown
Page 2

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

Thank you again for writing and for your concern for humane handling.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Engeljohn, Ph.D.
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.

FSIS:OPACE:ECIMS:L.Russell:690-4046:4/26/12

Brown – Horse slaughter in New Mexico

FI30 7236914

Information: Latest approved standard language

TOttery cleared 5/3 with edits and rolled in updated language on 5/6/2012
Rcardwell, ecims deputy director 5/4/2012