



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Washington, D. C.
20250

JUL 27 2012

Ms. Nichole Lowe
[REDACTED]@hsmo.org

Dear Ms. Lowe:

Thank you for your e-mail of July 24, 2012, to Dr. Rachel Cezar, of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, regarding horse slaughter in the United States. Your letter has been forwarded to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) for a response.

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, 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.

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, two establishments, one located in New Mexico and one in Missouri, have applied for a grant of inspection exclusively for equine slaughter. FSIS is currently reviewing those applications.

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.

You may wish to contact your elected officials regarding the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act. It is the role of Federal agencies to implement enacted laws, not to sponsor legislation. You can find contact information for your Senators and Representatives at <http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>. If you are unsure of your congressional district, you can find it by using your home zip code at <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>.

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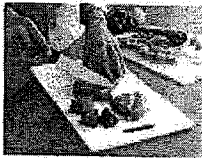
For information on food safety, please visit the FSIS Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

Thank you again for writing.

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.