



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Washington, D. C.  
20250

April 20, 2012

Ms. Laura Casswell  
[REDACTED]@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Casswell:

Thank you for your e-mail of April 15, 2012, to Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack, requesting that the Department of Agriculture (USDA) not approve Valley Meat Company's request to operate a horse slaughter facility in Roswell, New Mexico. Your letter has been forwarded to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) for 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 statutory authority covers those facilities that are legally licensed to operate.

FSIS also is responsible for enforcing the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, which requires that all livestock, including cattle, sheep, swine, and goats, horses, mules, and other equines, 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.

Please be advised that selling and eating horse meat is legal in most of the United States, as long as the meat is labeled clearly, and the horses are slaughtered at federally inspected establishments. At this time, FSIS is not aware of any federally inspected establishments approved to slaughter horses.

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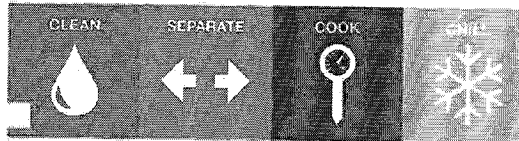
For more information about the humane handling of livestock, please visit FSIS' Web site at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/Humane\\_Methods\\_of\\_Slaughter/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Humane_Methods_of_Slaughter/index.asp).

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



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



Check your Steps at <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/>

**FSIS:OPACE:ECIMS:M. Harvin:720-5554:4-19-2012**

**File Name:** Laura Casswell-Horse slaughter

**Processing Code:** OES30

**ECM Control No:** 7229349

**Information:** Previously approved horse slaughter language 7214617, and new updated information was included in this draft. ("Most of" and "Meat")

Tottery cleared with minor edits on 4/20/12

Rcardwell, ecims deputy director 4/20/12