



Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Washington, D. C.
20250

Ms. Jill Ray

██████████@hotmail.com

JUN 06 2012

Dear Ms. Ray:

Thank you for your e-mail of April 23, 2012, to the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline regarding your request for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to reject any requests for grants inspection for horse slaughter. 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.

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 ante-mortem inspection of horses, one establishment, located in New Mexico, has applied for a grant of inspection exclusively for equine. FSIS is currently 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 time to update its testing and inspection processes and methods before it is fully able to develop a future inspection regimen.

Just as we do for all amenable species, FSIS would screen horses for drug residues not suitable for human consumption and would ensure compliance with all relevant statutes and regulations, including statutes and regulations requiring humane handling.

Thank you again for writing. More information about food safety can be found on the FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

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



Protecting public health by preventing foodborne 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.