



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Washington, D. C.  
20250

**MAY 04 2012**

Ms. Victoria Seale  
[REDACTED]@mac.com.

Dear Ms. Seale:

Thank you for your e-mail of April 15, 2012, to the Department of Agriculture (USDA) 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 (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.

FSIS also is responsible for enforcing the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA), 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.

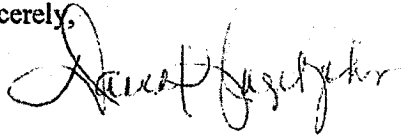
Currently there are no facilities approved for horse slaughter in the United States. Following a decision by Congress in November 2011 to lift the ban on horse slaughter, one establishment, located in New Mexico, has applied for a grant of inspection exclusively for equines and FSIS is reviewing the 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.

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Livestock auctions are under the jurisdiction of Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). Information regarding GIPSA and livestock auctions can be found at <http://www.gipsa.usda.gov/about.html>.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



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

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