



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

MAY 11 2012

Ms. Sue Wallis
Chief Executive Officer
Unified Equine, LLC
Post Office Box 71
Recluse, Wyoming 82725

Dear Ms. Wallis:

Thank you for your letter of March 19, 2012, and for the opportunity to address the issues you have raised regarding conducting horse-processing operations in Missouri. I apologize for the delayed response.

I understand you have been in contact with the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) district office in Lawrence, Kansas, concerning your firm's plans to initiate a horse-processing operation, although you have not requested a grant of inspection. As you know, Federal inspection is predicated on the issuance of a grant.

You are probably aware that, since the passage of the fiscal year 2006 Appropriations Act, when Congress prohibited the use of funds for FSIS inspection of horses for human food, there have been significant changes in how FSIS carries out its inspection processes, in the methodologies and protocols for residue testing, and in the regulations and standards of other countries for importing processed horsemeat. Reinstating horse slaughter and horse processing in inspection and regulatory environments that have changed significantly during the past 6 years requires that FSIS review its processes and programs and works with the public with other agencies that deal with a range of issues from animal drug use to environmental health and with U.S. export partners.

As we work through the issues that we face, we will develop a better picture of when and under what circumstances a grant of inspection can be issued.

Thank you again for writing and for your concern for food safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



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Washington, D.C. 20250

MAY - 7 2012

Ms. Sue Wallis
Chair
International Equine Business Association
818 Connecticut Avenue, NW., Suite 950
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Ms. Wallis:

Thank you for the letter of March 19, 2012, from you and your colleagues regarding the International Equine Business Association (IEBA) and its work. I apologize for the delayed response.

I appreciate IEBA's attention to issues of food safety and humane handling and slaughter that are associated with horse slaughter and horse processing.

The Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has begun reviewing the various changes that have occurred since the passage of the fiscal year 2006 Appropriations Act, when Congress prohibited the use of funds for FSIS inspection of horses for human food. The effects of these changes are significant and include FSIS inspection processes, residue testing methodologies and protocols, and regulations and standards of other countries for importing processed horsemeat.

As FSIS reviews its processes and programs, engages with interested partners and the public at large, and consults with other agencies that deal with a range of issues from animal drug use to environmental health, it will also consult with our export partners to determine how to move forward appropriately and how to respond to the procedures and processes implemented by other countries. We must ensure that the statutory mandates under which USDA functions are fully met before reinstating Federal inspection of horse slaughter and horse processing.

Thank you again for writing. A similar letter has been sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Vilsack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

MAY - 7 2012

Mr. Bill des Barres
International Equine Business Association
818 Connecticut Avenue, NW., Suite 950
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. des Barres:

Thank you for the letter of March 19, 2012, from you and your colleagues regarding the International Equine Business Association (IEBA) and its work. I apologize for the delayed response.

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MAY - 7 2012

Mr. Olivier Kemseke
International Equine Business Association
818 Connecticut Avenue, NW., Suite 950
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Kemseke:

Thank you for the letter of March 19, 2012, from you and your colleagues regarding the International Equine Business Association (IEBA) and its work. I apologize for the delayed response.

I appreciate IEBA's attention to issues of food safety and humane handling and slaughter that are associated with horse slaughter and horse processing.

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