

# Under the Guise of Euthanasia

Part 2 of a 3 part series  
Feb 1, 2010  
By Katia Louise

Despite the overwhelming opposition to horse slaughter in America, many of those who oppose it have been misled to believe that there are too many horses and/or that horse slaughter is humane.

Most Americans are surprised when they find out that the AVMA<sup>1</sup> and the AAEP<sup>2</sup> are two leading proponents of horse slaughter. *“The AAEP, along with the AVMA and other members of the Horse Welfare Coalition, oppose the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act.”* - **Scott E. Palmer, VMD, AAEP President.** In reference to the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, the AAEP *“has partnered with the AVMA, the AQHA and some 200 other state and national equine and agricultural organizations to try to defeat this bill.”* - **David L. Foley AAEP Executive Director.**



The [USDA says that 90%](#) of the horses are healthy when they begin their horrific journey to the slaughterhouse. These horses are shipped in overcrowded transports, during which time they often have no food, water or rest for days and days. A **900 page** document produced by the **USDA** in response to a FOIA<sup>3</sup> request provides [irrefutable evidence](#) that horse slaughter is **INHUMANE**. Yet the AVMA and AAEP continue to inform their member base, the general public and U.S. policy makers that horse slaughter is humane.

Horse slaughter proponents have been relentless in their barrage of misinformation, reciting a handful of unsupported claims. Kill buyers, aka horse dealers and many others who stand to profit or that are involved in the slaughter pipeline, propagate the AVMA & AAEP stance that horse slaughter is humane when they know firsthand that it's not. What's worse is that many professional equine practitioners, with no firsthand knowledge of the slaughter process, wind up forming opinions, conducting consultations and educating others based on the same information propagated by the AVMA and AAEP.



Despite what most people have been led to believe by the proponents of slaughter, the majority of these horses are young, vibrant and healthy. “The average age of these horses is seven. These horses are wanted for their meat,” explains **Dr Lisa Jacobson, DVM.**

“The so called ‘unwanted horse problem’ is a phrase coined by the AAEP to support their position in favor of horse slaughter,” explains **Dr Nicholas Dodman DVM.** In fact it's one of the most popular and misleading arguments used by the slaughter movement. Even rescues that work in the trenches to save horses from slaughter find their work exploited by proponents such as the AAEP and its use of the “unwanted” horse argument. Despite proponents’ claims that, without horse slaughter, the instances of abuse, neglect and abandonment would sky rocket; it has been

<sup>1</sup> American Veterinary Medical Association [Position re HR 503](#)

<sup>2</sup> American Associate of Equine Practitioners [Press Release](#)

<sup>3</sup> Evidence produced by the USDA dated Oct 8, 2008 in response to a Nov 17, 2005 FOIA request by Julie Caramante

found that “**no increase in the abandonment or neglect of horses has been documented since the closure of the three domestic slaughter plants in the earlier part of 2007**”.<sup>4</sup>

Several horse rescues from around the country are struggling due to the economy, yet these same rescues do manage to find homes for many of these homeless horses. Unfortunately because of slaughter, for every horse that is rescued, another horse takes its place to fill the daily quotas set by the kill buyers.

Every day, there are countless horses in need of rescue; but it’s the international market of horsemeat that leads to the most urgent and widespread need of horse rescue in America. More than 90,000 American horses were purchased in 2009 by kill buyers. These horse dealers oftentimes outbid *legitimate* adopters and rescue groups at auction. Furthermore, there is an overwhelming lack of media exposure about horses and the cruelty they suffer due to slaughter. Without the convenience of horse slaughter, neglectful horse owners would be forced to take responsibility for the care of their horses and rescues could focus more of their efforts and resources on the placement of horses that need new homes.

"The duplicity of some horse people and of some horse organizations is appalling. They expect good treatment of the horse until it is convenient to dispose of them at which time they are OK with the horribly inhumane treatment of the horse in the horse slaughter system (from sale yard, hauling, feed lots to the slaughter plant)." - **Dr Lisa Jacobson, DVM**



The pro slaughter lobby argues that there are too many "unwanted" domestic horses and “excess” wild horses. They have stepped up their efforts toward government support to cull one of America’s most majestic and historic species. Just since the beginning of 2010, Illinois, Missouri & South Dakota have initiated aggressive campaigns calling for the return of horse slaughter to the U.S. for human consumption. (More on the subject of the pro slaughter lobby in Part Three of this special Slaughter Alert report.)

Read [part one](#) of this report to get the facts about the UOH’s newest campaign effort; a nationwide so-called 'Do Not Slaughter' registry.

(Read part three of this report Monday **Feb 15, 2010**)

**Learn more:**

[Saving America’s Horses - A Nation Betrayed](#)  
[Veterinarians for Equine Welfare](#)  
[Equine Welfare Alliance](#)

[Americans Against Horse Slaughter](#)  
[Animal Law Coalition](#)  
[Kaufman Zoning](#)

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<sup>4</sup> DELETING THE FICTION by John Holland, Valerie James-Patton & Terry Torrence  
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