



Animal Welfare Institute

900 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003 • www.awionline.org
telephone: (202) 337-2332 • facsimile: (202) 446-2131

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) has been honored to collaborate with Illinois Governor Pat Quinn toward the passage of The Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act (H.R. 503/S. 727). Currently, approximately 100,000 American horses per year are being unsafely transported across our nation's borders and subjected to the brutality of slaughter in both Mexico and Canada.

The great state of Illinois realized the cruelty involved in slaughtering horse for food and took action by closing the last remaining U.S. horse slaughter plant in 2005. Under Governor Quinn's leadership, Illinois has worked toward the betterment of animal welfare in the state and has silenced any attempts to revive this broken industry. Together with Illinois Senate President John Cullerton, Governor Quinn has become a strong voice against animal cruelty in the state and the nation by writing the U.S. Congress urging swift passage of a federal ban on horse slaughter. AWI was present in March of this year when State Representative Jim Sacia withdrew his bill to reopen horse slaughter plants due to lack of support. To drive the point home, AWI worked with State Representative John Fritchey to introduce a resolution urging the passage of the federal ban on horse slaughter to save America's horses from senseless abuse.

In the years previous to 2005, American horses were shipped nationwide to one of three horse slaughter plants (2 in Texas and 1 in Illinois). These horses, as they are today, were subjected to extended cruel transportation without food and water for over 30 hours in some cases. Buyers, who transport horses to slaughter, otherwise known as Killer-buyers, loaded horses in cattle trailers without tie downs or regard for gender separation and height requirements. Horses, when placed with unfamiliar peers, immediately establish a natural pecking order, causing severe trauma when placed in crowded trailers traveling at high speeds for several hours at a time. These animals also have a very complicated center of gravity, unlike lower necked livestock species that travel easier. Sometimes being loaded in low-ceilinged double-decker cattle trailers, horses have difficulty balancing and arrive at slaughter houses in horrendous conditions. A FOIA request to the USDA in 2005 revealed these injuries with the USDA's own inspectors submitting photos of horses shipped within the U.S. to slaughter plants. *(Photos attached)*

Beyond these abuses, horses are not raised for food in the U.S. and any meat obtained from these animals is toxic. Horses, like dogs, are given a host of medication in their lifetime, from a simple de-wormer (given every 6 weeks) to show enhancement drugs, like Phenylbutazone, which are toxic when ingested by humans. Because of this, the European Union (E.U.), in 2009, passed legislation requiring medical records to accompany horse meat entering the E.U. for a six month period preceding their slaughter. Since horse meat is not consumed in the U.S., these regulations impose a necessary restriction on killer-buyers who are looking to make a quick buck by purchasing healthy horses that would otherwise be re-homed and afforded the right to live a full life.

The American horse is commonly revered as a strong symbol of our nation's heritage. It is a shame these majestic, gentle creatures are being pawned by a few and subjected to multiple hits by a captive bolt gun or several stabs by puntilla knives in Mexico. (Video link: <http://www.youtube.com/user/animalwelfareinst#p/a/f/0/D3YrZVKAcvc>). Your boss' cosponsorship of The Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act is imperative to spare American horses from the cruelty associated with the horse slaughter industry!

To learn more, please visit, www.AWIONLINE.org or contact AWI staff.

Chris Heyde
Deputy Director
Government and Legal Affairs
Animal Welfare Institute
e: Chris@awionline.org
p: 202.446.2142

Christine Sequenzia
Federal Policy Advisor
Government and Legal Affairs
Animal Welfare Institute
e: Christine@awionline.org
p: 202.446.2140