

THE NATIONAL COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION OF HORSES TO SLAUGHTER BILL.

CEC decried the virtues of this legislation from the beginning ('Western Horseman', March 1995) stating the horses would wind up with nothing more than rubber mats.

What was passed? Authority was given to the USDA to promulgate through "creating guidelines" for the transport of horses destined for slaughter. Provisions are however "subject to the availability of appropriations." And, no funds have been appropriated for the years 1996 or 1997. It will come up again for vote in 1998, but again, no appropriations, no enactment. Final language was amended deleting the words "safe and humane" from the bill; regulation was replaced with mere guidelines; recommendations will be performance based (vague and ambiguous) not engineering based; and the final version took on industry studies.

In other words: A heretofore highly controversial, totally unregulated, legally suspect industry which 93% of Americans want stopped is now protected through the USDA and inter-state commerce laws. The horse-slaughter industry continues unimpeded and with impunity.

Unanswered question? When it was completely apparent to everyone involved that the bill was a bad one, why did HSUS, American Humane, ASPCA and The Doris Day League lobby vigorously for its passage - refusing to leverage their support for amendments?

Bottomline: The horses did not get a thing. They are still being transported in double-decked cattle trucks with no water or rest without preloading veterinary inspections. No the horses did not even get rubber mats!

CEC thanks the organizations: Friends of Animals, Humane Farming, Last Chance For Animals, PETA, California State Horsemen's Association, California State Humane Association, Hooved Animal Humane Society, United Animal Nations, Animal Protection Institute, RedWings Horse Sanctuary, Equus Sanctuary, Project Equus, and Equine Advocates who did not cave-in or place short-sighted organizational concerns over the best interests of the horses.

Action: Write to:

Hon. Dan Glickman, Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, 14th & Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20250

Tim Cordes, D.V.M., Sr. Staff Veterinarian, Equine Disease, USDA, 4700 River Road, Unit 43, Riverdale, MD 20737

Paula Henstridge, Sr. Deputy, Legislative and Public Affairs, USDA/ APHIS, 14th & Independence Avenue, S. W., #1147, Washington, D. C. 20250

Respectfully request that proposed guidelines require vehicles commercially transporting horses to slaughter be one level and have a minimum headroom of seven feet with no protrusions. Require that horses be off-loaded, watered and rested every 12 hrs. Require that prior to loading, horses be inspected by a licensed equine veterinarian to determine if they are "fit to travel."