

EPN Response to Pro Slaughter Vet

Equine Protection Network
www.EquineProtectionNetwork.com
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EPN Response to Pro Slaughter Vet, Vet Refers to List Members as "humanenics"

The recent EPN Newsletter with the EPN response to a pro slaughter paint breeder drew all positive responses from readers who supported our position of owner responsibility, except for one response from a pro slaughter vet who admits to being frustrated at not being able to change our views. The vet's name has been removed because they declined the EPN offer to post their response, along with others that we received.

Vet's Response to EPN Offer to Post Views

"I have given up on trying to talk reason to those with your views since it would only generate more rancorous responses if sent to the other subscribers, who are apparently equally humaneniatic ((My word for the PETA wannabees). In my experience there can not be civil dialogue on this issue it is just a real shame that the majority of Americans are so far from nature and "real" life they can not see the farce of the anti-slaughter movement. Yes there were abuses but abolishing the slaughter plants has only made the situation worse as predicted by the AAEP, AQHA and AVMA!!

My response to the vet's statements that there is not a humane difference between the captive bolt and lethal injection, and if the issue was just about disposal, why would we care about what happens to the carcass.

Dr Ralston,

I am a professional in the horse industry.

- Owned and operated a successful horse farm that boards on average 10-15 horses and has a waiting list for owners wanting to board their horses with me;
- Employed by Brook Ledge Horse Transportation, including managing their layover farm for the largest Standardbred sale in the World;
- Employed on Thoroughbred & Standardbred breeding farms that have foaled out Triple Crown winners;
- Trained and showed my quarter horses to state and regional championships on the AQHA circuit in the Youth and Adult divisions;
- Employed at various horse barns
- Owned horses for 40 years

As such I am offended by your referral to me as a "humaneniatic ((My word for the PETA wannabees)" and your assumption that I cannot carry on a civil dialogue, or that I would allow anything but to be posted on this list.

EPN Response to Pro Slaughter Vet

The EPN advocates for owner accountability and responsibility, and we work with law enforcement assisting them in investigating and prosecuting, if necessary, owners who violate the law, including dealers and rescues because the law applies to us all. The EPN is also opposed to slaughter because I am an American and the consumption of a horse is offensive to me.

I stood up in 1996, a professional in the horse industry, and proved that the management, conditions, handling, and transport of horses at some horse auctions was cruel and in violation of several laws and NOT accepted horse industry management practices, and the transport of horses in double deck trailers was wrong.

I was immediately labeled with adjectives meant to discredit me, simply because the people and organizations who supported the inhumane transport and conditions at the auctions, none of which are acceptable horse industry management practices were unable to articulate that I was wrong, instead they resorted to name-calling. Is that a civil discussion?

During my 40 years in horses, I have subscribed to numerous horse publications including: Equus -30 years, Quarter Horse Journal- 20, Horse Illustrated, Horse of Course, Performance and Practical Horseman, The Horse, Horse & Rider, Western Horseman, and numerous regional publications.

I have never heard or read a published study or article that advocates the use of a double deck trailer to transport horses, nor have I seen ads for these trailers for horses in any of those magazines.

Nor I have been advised when my horse founders, suffers a broken leg, or any other career ending injury or life ending injury or condition for that matter, to send him to an auction. Nor I have been advised to starve my horse. The recommendations for sick and injured horses is to administer first aid until the vet arrives to treat the horse, and if necessary to have the horse put down. Yet when I attended these non-catalogued horse auctions that is exactly what I observed. Because I stood up and said that, this is "cruel and inhumane" I was labeled with a term that in the horse world is considered a negative, "an animal rights activist". Never mind that none of the conditions or management practices were accepted by the horse industry.

Now Dr. you refuse to participate in a discussion on this issue for fear it will not be civil; but Dr. you are the one who stooped to calling me a raving lunatic because I disagree with you on the slaughter issue. I am an American and we do not eat horses. I am offended at your attack on my culture, calling me a "humane raving lunatic" because my culture does not eat horsemeat!

Definition of Maniac Raving with madness; raging with disordered intellect; affected with mania; mad. A raving lunatic; a madman

EPN Response to Pro Slaughter Vet

Are you proposing that equine vets come to their clients armed with the mechanical captive bolt and knife to slit their throat so that when clients bury their horses we do not contaminate the ground? I am not being sarcastic, I am dead serious. What method are you proposing that owners should employ when it is time to put their horses down? Please give me the names of equine veterinarians who use the captive dead bolt in their private practice when called upon by their clients for euthanasia?

Is this what you are proposing because the drugs from lethal injection may contaminate the environment? Are you willing to stand up and tell horse owners that they should have the vet captive bolt their horse? I can give you the numbers of all my boarders and you are welcome to call them up and tell them that they can no longer have the vet out to give their horse a lethal injection and bury it on my farm. I am dead serious Dr., just say the word & I will give you the numbers.

My owners do not want their horses sent to slaughter, nor do they want them sent to a renderer. They want them buried and/or cremated. They want them killed via lethal injection, not a gunshot, and not the captive bolt. I have had, and held horses put down via lethal injection. I have had, and witnessed horses being shot. I have documented the collection and the transport of horses to slaughter week in and week out for five years, and I have seen the slaughter. Lethal injection is calm and peaceful. Gunshot is violent and disturbing and a mess to clean up. So disturbing that I will avoid it at all costs.

You may find it interesting that the man who does the shooting for the rendering company, who shoots animals every day for a living, did not like shooting horses. He told us, "Horses are just different". Are you going to tell me he is not in touch with "real" life and nature??

Dr. Ralston if you and the AAEP believe so strongly that there is not a humane difference between the captive bolt and lethal injection, then why with the whole world watching and an opportunity to put this issue to rest once and for all, did the vets who euthanized Eight Belles choose to use lethal injection and not the captive bolt?

Dr. Charles Liskey, D.V.M, an equine surgeon with a private practice in California addressed the AAEP at one of their annual conferences several years back. He made the observation that it would be quite a practice builder if he were to respond to a client call for euthanasia by telling the client they would have to move the cars from their driveway because after captive dead bolting their child's pony, he was going to have to bleed it out. He stated that no private practitioner is going to respond to their clientele this way when called to put a horse down.

As an American, you will never convince me it is OK to eat a horse, a dog, a cat, or any other animal that Americans consider non-food animals. So does that make me a raving lunatic, a madman? I think sociologists would beg to differ.

Dr. Ralston, you are right, when the horse is dead, if the method is humane, what does it matter what happens to the carcass? That is where culture comes in to the equation,

EPN Response to Pro Slaughter Vet

because culture determines how we dispose of our dead, how we live, what we eat, how we marry, bury our dead, our jobs, and our laws. Does culture make scientific sense, maybe not to you, but it is a powerful influence, just ask any sociologist.

The issue is not about cruelty, it is not about the method of death -it is about the disposal of the carcass - it is about the fact that we are talking about EATING a horse, an animal that as an American, I do not eat and no science will ever convince me it is OK to eat.

Why?

Because it is against my culture. Just as you will never convince me, it is OK to stop shaving my underarms, and my legs - like some foreign women do-you will not convince me it is OK to eat a horse. That is culture. All the science in the world will never stop me from shaving my underarms because as an American woman, we shave under our arms!

Dr. Ralston, you are right about the costs being lower if horses were classified as a food animal. So why is the government being allowed to tax me unfairly? Because America has decided that the horse is a non-food animal, and has classified the American horse as a sporting and recreational animal, taxed and revered as such

Keeping Slaughter Legal

If we are going to keep slaughter legal, and it is except in 4 states, (CA, IL, OK and TX), thus declaring horses a food animal, then the taxes on horses must be repealed. Do you think the states are going to give up the state sales tax revenue? I do not think so because they are financially strapped now. Why give up billions in state sales tax revenue so a few people, less than one percent, can sell their horse to a foreign owned slaughterhouse, which does nothing for their coffers?

Lethal injection or gunshot with disposal in a landfill, burial, cemetery, rendering, cremating, all of those create demand for American owned companies providing those services and benefiting the states who earn revenue on the sales tax charged on the items and services. Companies providing animal memorials, dead haulers, pharmaceutical companies, animal cemeteries, and the list goes on, all benefit from horses not being slaughtered.

State laws regulate the disposal, including the burial of dead animals. PA and I believe NJ, state that the carcass must be covered with 6' of good earth. That is not a shallow grave. The argument that people do not follow that, can also be applied to the fact that the humane slaughter regulations are not followed either. Same with the commercial transportation of horses to slaughter act are not being followed, nor are they being enforced.

According to the law only a veterinarian may buy and administer the solution. Therefore, the random animal put down on an unincorporated, rural property by lethal injection and back hoed is not going to cause any ground water toxicity. Are you telling me that the

EPN Response to Pro Slaughter Vet

vets are so irresponsible that they are going to say nothing to their clients about proper burial if there is a risk to wildlife and other animals from eating the carcass?

What about the contamination from the carcasses of rodents and other animals exterminated on farms by poisons? In incorporated less rural areas, a vet performs the euthanasia and a dead hauler or owner takes the carcass to a rendering plant, landfill, cemetery, or cremation facility. The cost of private cremation is relative to one – two months board depending on the area with communal cremation even less.

What about "green burials" Human remains from certain faiths prohibits embalming and requires burial in a pine box. There are untold chemicals in the human remains, especially from a person who died from a long-term illness and was on opiate-based pain medication. The EPA has not found any problems with ground contamination from these burials.

The collection and the transport to slaughter is full of lies, fraud, cruelty, and criminal acts. The slaughter was not humane because the horses were terrified and were hit numerous times. The abuses have not been addressed; one only has to look at the continued violations of the Commercial Transportation of Horses to Slaughter Regulations, violations of local and state laws. When are you going to realize that many of these people involved in the collection and transport are nothing more than common criminals as demonstrated by their continued violations and convictions? Law enforcement officers and prosecutors familiar with these dealers and haulers agree with me, are they raving lunatics also?

I have seen people, my own farm neighbors who grew up butchering their own animals for 40 years, shocked and appalled at the slaughter of horses. These people are in touch with real life and nature, every year they plant their garden, raise their steer, shoot their deer, and butcher the steer. They know horses are not food animals Dr. Ralston, so like me, these Americans, they are repulsed at the slaughter of a non-food animal.

I have also watched how the businesses involved behave when they know they are being watched and when they believe that they are not. They put on a performance for the inspectors. Not to mention the preparation done in advance of the planned visit to, "observe the conditions". I watched as New Holland underwent a metamorphous in preparation for the USDA research studies conducted by Temple Grandin and Carolyn Stull. What they observed and documented is not the way it works at New Holland or during the transport, I know because I was taking notes, photographing and videotaping week in and week out.

I will never change my opinion on whether or not it is OK to slaughter a horse because I am an American. I have listened to the pro slaughter arguments for the 40 years I have been in horses. I have listened to the lies and spin put on the industry's method of disposal.

I always knew in my gut it was wrong. America does not need slaughter.

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It will never be an accepted practice for the vast majority of horse owners who call on their veterinarian to humanely euthanize their horse, to have their vets crush the skull of their beloved horse with a retractable gun and then slit their throats so other cultures may eat them.

No Dr Ralston, it is a very simple issue. Do we humanely euthanize non-food animals in this country and culture, or do we cruelly slaughter them?

If there were a solution, which did not render the meat unusable, there could be a different debate, but there, is not. All we have to do is look up the words in a dictionary:

Humane: compassionate;

Euthanasia: the putting to death painlessly;

Humane Euthanasia: The good death;

Slaughter: great and violent destruction of life, massacre, to kill with violence.

We are a democratic society. When we legislate social policy, it is by the majority of the "reasonable community", the people who vote. If given the chance tomorrow, Americans would overwhelmingly, at least 80%, vote to outlaw the slaughter. Despite special interests and lobbyists, who have stalled the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act in Congress, the fact remains that there are no slaughterhouses in the United States where once there was 14. Why? Because this is the United States of America, where horses are revered and not classified as food animals.

It is not going to happen. Thank God for America and God Bless America!

Christine Berry
EPN