



The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Southeast Florida Constituent Services Center
8669 NW 36th Street, Suite 100
Doral, FL 33166

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart,

I am writing on behalf of the South Florida SPCA Board of Directors and our extensive membership. We respectfully urge you to support, in the strongest terms possible, retention of the ban on the use of tax dollars for horse slaughter inspections. It is critically important that you support this language when the FY 2019 Agriculture Appropriations bill comes before the House Appropriations Committee.

Slaughter is Not an Equine Management Solution

Sensible, thoughtful and vastly more humane options are readily available to manage equine populations. The solution lies in responsible breeding and ownership practices, supplemented by the hundreds of equine rescue programs that re-home, retrain, and rehabilitate horses in need of homes. The overwhelming majority of horses slaughtered each year are healthy and in good condition – 92%, according to the USDA. These horses would have enjoyed full, productive lives in good homes had they not fallen victim at auction to kill buyers. There are homes for these horses. Equine rescue and rehoming groups around the country, like the South Florida SPCA and the Right Horse Initiative, are working diligently to match horses with the right owners. A recent study showed that over 1.2 million homes are available for transitioning horses, and programs like the Right Horse Project along with rescues are diligently working to partner these horses with available homes. This is a solvable problem.

Inhumane Slaughter – No Better in Regulated U.S. Plants

Horse slaughter is not a form of euthanasia. Horses' skittish nature makes them extremely difficult to stun with the standard captive bolt method, which was not designed for use on horses. They often endure repeated blows to the head and sometimes are alive and kicking during dismemberment.

Prior to a cruel and prolonged slaughter process, horses experience a dangerous transport to the slaughter facility. Their health is compromised due to long periods without food or water, dangerously high temperatures, and severe injuries from other equines forced into close quarters with unfamiliar animals. Housing domestic slaughterhouses in our country does not mitigate this torturous transit in comparison to shipping equines to Mexico and Canada for slaughter. When horse slaughterhouses were open in the United States, horses were shipped across the country for thousands of miles. Additionally, when domestic slaughterhouse plants operated, many were charged with numerous violations, including: transportation, inhumane slaughter practices, and scores of serious environmental transgressions which adversely impacted the communities where they were located.

Meat from American Horses is Not Safe to Eat

Horses in the U.S. are raised as companion animals. Because they are not raised for food, they are routinely given hundreds of different drugs that are not approved by the FDA for human consumption. Many of these drugs, such as phenylbutazone (otherwise known as "bute") used for pain and inflammation, are highly toxic to humans if ingested. It is carcinogenic and leads to long-term health effects. It is safe to assume that nearly all horses in the U.S. have been administered bute at one point or

another – it is as common as aspirin is to people. Because drug contamination fears, the EU has banned all horsemeat imports from Mexico.



Funding horse slaughter inspections would divert precious resources away from the inspection of food products that Americans *actually* eat in favor of producing a toxic product that has no domestic market. The idea of slaughtering companion animals is unacceptable to the American people and will never be embraced. A national poll found that 80% of Americans oppose horse slaughter for human consumption.

The Ultimate Answer

Representative Diaz-Balart, the answer is not, and never will be, a return to subjecting our horses to abuse and inhumane conditions at plants in the U.S. The answer is to ban horse slaughter and to provide our horses with a decent life and, when necessary, a humane death.

Please be a firm voice for equine welfare, consumer safety, and fiscal responsibility. Please support the renewal of the current funding limitation in FY 2019.

If you are open to discussing this issue in person, I would be delighted to meet with you at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kathleen Monahan'.

Kathleen Monahan

President, South Florida SPCA

Board of Directors, South Florida SPCA

A list of six handwritten signatures in cursive script, stacked vertically. From top to bottom, they are: 'Julie Shelton', 'Patty Monaco', 'Alex B. H.', a signature that is mostly illegible but appears to start with 'C', 'Emily Villafrae (MD)', and 'Anna Figueroa (MD)'. The '(MD)' indicates that the last two individuals are veterinarians.