

Iowa Voters Strongly Oppose Slaughter of Horses for Human Consumption According to New Research

Written by Maureen Linehan
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ASPCA urges support for the Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act to ban horse slaughter

NEW YORK—The [ASPCA](#)® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) today announced in a new poll conducted by Lake Research Partners that 71 percent of Iowa voters are opposed to the slaughter of U.S. horses for human consumption, and that 76 percent do not want a horse slaughter plant in their community. The statewide survey reveals that Iowans overwhelmingly oppose horse slaughter regardless of their political affiliation, gender, geographic location or whether they live in a city, a suburb, a small town or a rural area.

In 2007, the few remaining slaughter plants in the U.S. closed their doors when Congress chose to suspend funding for any further meat inspections. However, in the 2012 budget, the language preventing horse slaughter inspections was not included, opening the door for a return of horse slaughter on American soil, despite broad opposition to the practice. Several applications have been filed with the U.S. Department of Agriculture by companies that want to slaughter horses on American soil – including one in Sigourney, Iowa. If the application is approved, it would be the first facility in the U.S. to slaughter horses for human consumption since 2007.

“Iowa voters affirm what we learned in New Mexico and Missouri and what we discovered through national polls as well – an overwhelming majority of Americans believe that our horses deserve more than to be shuttled off to a gruesome death and served abroad as a toxic

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delicacy,” said Nancy Perry, senior vice president of ASPCA Government Relations. “With 71 percent of all registered voters in the state opposed to the slaughtering of American horses, opening a slaughterhouse in Iowa would be a tragic mistake, as voters have clearly stated that they would not support such a facility. Using precious tax dollars to enable the inhumane practice of horse slaughter on U.S. soil is irresponsible, and we urge legislators to take note and enact a permanent ban on horse slaughter.”

According to the new research, more than 7 in 10 Iowa registered voters are opposed to allowing American horses to be slaughtered for human consumption, with 54 percent in strong opposition to the practice, and only 15 percent approving of the practice. In addition, more than 3 in 4 Iowa voters do not want a horse slaughter plant in their community, with just 12 percent of voters supporting such a facility. Furthermore, opposition to a horse slaughtering facility extends across age, political affiliation, and geographic divides, including at least 69 percent opposed in every congressional district in the state, 84 percent of urban voters, 80 percent of suburban voters, 77 percent of small town, and 73 percent of rural voters disapproving of such a facility.

The surprising move toward a resumption of domestic horse slaughter comes in the wake of the recent scandal in the European Union, where consumers were alarmed by the discovery of horse meat mislabeled as beef in prepared food products ranging from lasagna to meatballs. Horses are routinely given medications and other substances that are toxic to humans and are expressly forbidden by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in animals intended for human consumption. In March, U.S. Sens. Mary Landrieu, D-La., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Reps. Patrick Meehan, R-Pa., and Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., introduced the [Safeguard American Food Exports \(SAFE\) Act](#) (S. 541/H.R. 1094) to prevent the introduction of horse slaughter operations in the U.S., end the current export of American horses for slaughter abroad, and protect the public from consuming toxic horse meat.

Horse slaughter is inherently cruel and often erroneously compared to humane euthanasia. The methods used to slaughter horses rarely result in quick, painless deaths, as horses are difficult to stun and often remain conscious during their butchering and dismemberment. Whether slaughter occurs in the U.S. or abroad, these equines suffer incredible abuse even before they arrive at the slaughterhouse, often transported for more than 24 hours at a time without food, water or rest, and in dangerously overcrowded trailers where the animals are often seriously injured or even killed in transit. The majority of horses killed for human consumption are young, healthy animals who could go on to lead productive lives with loving owners. Last year, more than 160,000 American horses were sent to a cruel death by a grisly foreign industry that produces unsafe food for consumers.

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For more information on the ASPCA's poll, please contact Maureen Linehan at Maureen.Linehan@aspca.org

or

[646-706-4602](tel:646-706-4602)

. To learn more about the ASPCA's efforts to ban horse slaughter or support the SAFE Act, please visit

www.aspca.org

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About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is the first animal welfare organization in North America and serves as the nation's leading voice for animals. More than two million supporters strong, the ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. For more information, please visit

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