



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Ending horse soring and slaughter in the U.S.

Keith Dane, Senior Director, Equine Protection



Spring of Tennessee Walking Horses



“Big Lick” horses
sored with
chemicals, action
devices



Mechanical
soring with
“stacks”

“Pressure
shoeing”

Hoof bands



Tungsten shoes
weigh up to
12 pounds

Hoof bands



1970 Horse Protection Act

- Prohibits the exhibition, public sale (auction) of a horse that is sore, and transport to these events—but not soring
- Has civil and criminal penalties
- 1976 amendment resulted in USDA creation of Horse Industry Organization self-regulatory scheme (HIOs)
- APHIS enforcement sporadic, underfunded, subject to politics
- HIO inspectors find far fewer violations than agency veterinarians, yet APHIS has put them in the role of primary enforcer

1970 Horse Protection Act

Typical showring equipment allowed by USDA



Over 10,000 horses' lives filled with chronic pain







Prevent All Sorring Tactics (PAST) Act

H.R.3090/S.4004

- Amends HPA
- Ends corrupt industry self-policing
- Bans sorring devices
- Increases penalties
- Makes sorring illegal



Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act

H.R.3090/S.4004

- Supported by horse industry, vets, law enforcement
- Passed twice in House
- Currently 245 House, 53 Senate cosponsors in 118th Congress
- Politicians in KY, TN have blocked passage; polls



USDA HPA rule

- Agency has authority to implement sweeping changes through regulation
- 2017 rule finalized under Obama but frozen by Trump
- HSUS/HSLF sued USDA to press for new rule under Biden, Vilsack
- Agency proposed new rule for public comment fall 2023



USDA HPA rule

GOOD NEWS!!

- 4/29 Agency finalized new rule for implementation February 2025
- Eliminates stacks, action devices on TWHs/RHs in show ring
- Eliminates industry inspection scheme
- Does not cover Spotted Saddle Horses
- Does not ban heavy shoes/bands



USDA HPA rule

BAD NEWS!!

- But Tennessee Walking Horse Celebration has filed suit vs. USDA to block rule's implementation
- House Agriculture Appropriations included bad non-binding report language in FY25 spending bill
- Rep. Rose (TN) introduced an amendment to that bill defunding implementation of the rule
- PAST Act still needed to codify reforms into the Horse Protection Act

A white horse with a dark mane and tail is looking out from a metal cage. The cage is made of dark metal bars. The horse's head is in the center, looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light color. The text "Slaughter of America's equines" is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

Slaughter of America's equines

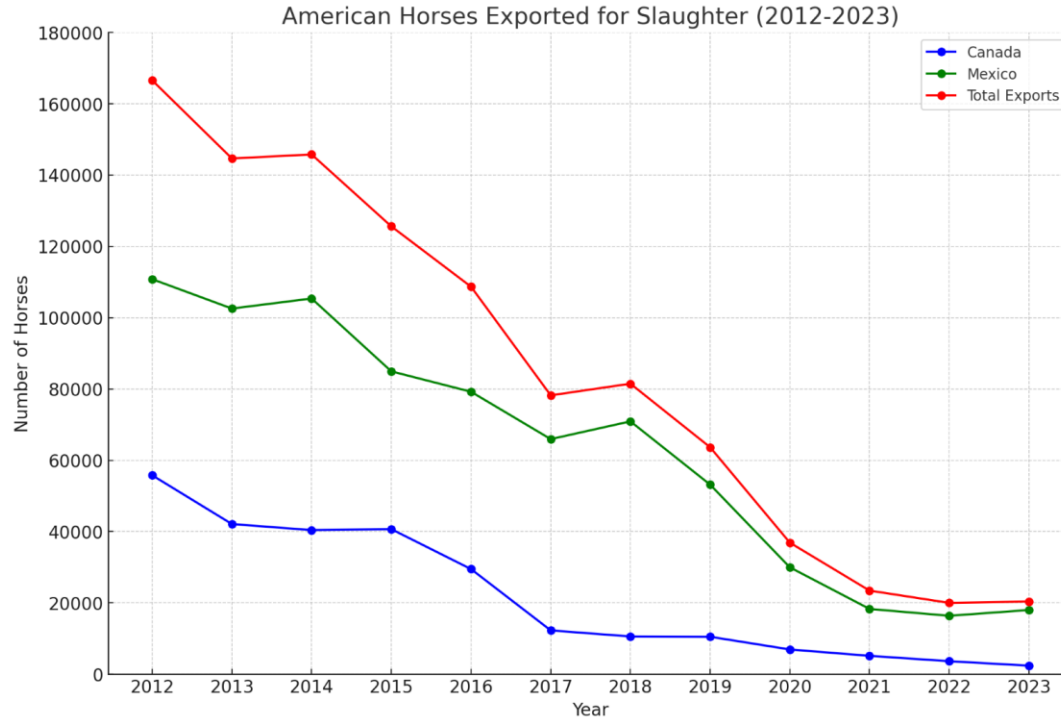
Current status of horse slaughter

- Last slaughterhouses in United States closed in 2007
- No new plants opened due to annual defunding of USDA inspections
- 20,370 horses exported to Canada and Mexico in 2023
- Numbers declining since high of 166,000 in 2012

Current status of horse slaughter

- Average lifespan of 25-30 years horses often have multiple homes and careers in their lives
- Kill buyer networks outbid legitimate buyers and trick people into selling horses to slaughter
- Most of the horses could be sold, donated or otherwise rehomed.
- Significant rise in rescue operations and adoption services for at risk horses
- Responsible breeding more closely matches the demand of the market
- Racing industry investing in aftercare, rehoming efforts

Current status of horse slaughter



Animal welfare concerns

- Commercial slaughter is not humane euthanasia
- Disposal or “unwanted” mentality impacts treatment in slaughter pipeline
- Horses are not handled humanely during transport and at the slaughter plant
- Contracted kill buyers cut corners impacting animal welfare



Animal welfare concerns

- Horses trucked long distances in crowded trailers
- Often injured or dead on arrival at foreign plants
- Stunning methods unreliable due to horses' anatomy and flight response
- Often suffer multiple blows before rendered unconscious
- Sometimes still alive during dismemberment

Food safety concerns

- American horses not raised for food
- Treated with medications toxic to humans, prohibited for use in food-producing animals
- Little attention paid to bruising caused during transport/handling, drug and medication residues, health and origin of the animal

Food safety concerns

- European Union conducts audits on foreign slaughter plants
- Stopped imports from Mexico in 2015
- Imposed 6-month residency on American horses slaughtered in Canada
- Frequent detection of prohibited substances in meat still found in Canada

Food safety concerns

- Mexico imports vast majority of American horses exported for slaughter
- 2016 HSUS investigation found horsemeat, prohibited drugs in Mexican food chain
- If US plants ever reopened, horsemeat could be comingled with other meat in US food chain

Save America's Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act H.R.3475/S.2037

Federal Legislation to Ban Slaughter of American Horses



- Amends the Dog & Cat Meat Prohibition Act passed in the last Farm Bill
- Permanently ban horse slaughter plants in the US
- Close borders to exports for slaughter
- Ban the sale or transport of equines or their meat in interstate or foreign commerce if intended for human consumption

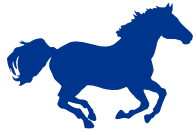
Save America's Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act H.R.3475/S.2007 Federal Legislation to Ban Slaughter of American Horses



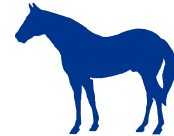
- Provides civil and criminal penalties for violations
- Cosponsored by majority of House (228)
- Current Farm Bill may be best vehicle for passage
- Ban endorsed by horse industry and rescue groups, humane organizations, celebrities
- 83% of Americans support end to horse slaughter



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Questions?



Keith Dane kdane@humanesociety.org