



EDITORIAL | Absence of Logic *by Vicki Tobin*

December 28, 2010

Absence of Logic

It is said that you cannot teach someone common sense.

This is the case with the mantra of illogical statements we hear from horse slaughter supporters. The statements, spoken with such authority, in fact either lack common sense or amount to nothing more than finding a piece of jello they can nail to the wall.

The “unwanted” horse stories would lead the country to believe that millions of horses are running loose in our streets. Every sound bite and every article warns of unwanted horses. Another favorite is to start articles with; “since Congress banned horse slaughter” or “because of the slaughter ban.”

When the unwanted horses are combined with the ban on horse slaughter, it provides a powerful statement in favor of horse slaughter. That is, until you look at the facts. One need not be a horse owner to see the lack of logic behind the statements of slaughter supporters. This illogic is as easily detected by a New York apartment dweller as a seasoned horse owner.

In a recent article, [Horse Welfare Wars: When Emotion and Fact Collide](#), by Tom Lenz, the former head of the Unwanted Horse Coalition and American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), he defines unwanted horses as, “horses that are no longer wanted by their current owners because they are old, injured, sick, unmanageable, or simply fail to meet the owners' expectations.”

The reader must keep in mind that slaughter supporters frequently cite Tom Lenz and Temple Grandin as authorities with their words as gospel. Yet, statistics from Temple Grandin's [study](#) on horses arriving at slaughter and the United States Department of Agriculture have proven that over 90% of the horses going to slaughter do not meet the Tom Lenz definition of unwanted horses.

Therefore, the statement by horse slaughter supporters that the horses going to slaughter are unwanted is unfounded by their own definition. The data does not support their statement.

Combine the unwanted horse myth with the fact that Congress has not banned horse slaughter and you have a statement that is totally false. A quick look at the statistics of US horses that are slaughtered in Mexico and Canada quickly quash the mythical ban. American horses are still filling slaughter houses, just not in the US.

What is truly a sad commentary on today's society is that people actually believe these statements without question. Many that call themselves journalists happily repeat the statements over and over. Perhaps it is the lack of staff and being overworked but the days of actually investigating information before going to print, for many of these journalists, are long gone.

Lenz claims that the AAEP is not pro slaughter but Lenz himself testified before Congress on behalf of AAEP against the legislation that would ban horse slaughter. More words with contradictory actions.

A quick Google search of Lenz will produce numerous articles. Every article has references to "horse processing" ending, usually with overtones as the driver for neglect and yet, not one article mentions the drugs present in US horses that make them ineligible for human consumption. By profession, Tom Lenz is a well respected veterinarian. In all the years of practicing veterinary sciences, surely he must have read at least one label of the medications he has prescribed over the years.

While Lenz's most recent article has shown more emphasis on responsible horse ownership, there is still the overtone of promoting horse slaughter and still, no mention of food safety.

In a recent communication with [Horseback Magazine](#), Wyoming State Representative, Sue Wallis, has proclaimed herself a scientist and has changed Federal Drug Agency (FDA) and European Union (EU) regulations. Wallis' source to back her scientific evidence is backside track gossip from trainers of Thoroughbreds.

Equine welfare advocates do not deny a rise in neglect but it is not unique to horses. It is prevalent in cats, dogs, livestock and to an extent, humans. It is increasing in countries such as Canada and the UK, further proving that there is no correlation to the availability of slaughter.

The economy has taken a toll and instead of using a little common sense and a bit of research, the slaughter supporters follow and support the baseless claims like lemmings.

As the "unwanted" horses are being slaughtered this year, one would think, the "problem" would correct itself but alas, as I write this, the crop of unwanted horses for next year are being prepped by the breeders that produce them, year after year. We are asked to believe that there is no relationship between kill buyers buying horses and breeders breeding more.

Next time you read about how the mythical ban on horse slaughter is resulting in "unwanted" horses and an increase in neglect, ask the author to give you the data sources that back the statement. Chances are you will never receive a response or if you do, they'll ask if you live in New York City.

Equine Welfare Alliance is an umbrella organization representing over 125 organizations and hundreds of individuals across the United States and several countries worldwide.