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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Canadian Regulations will Curtail Slaughter of North American Horses

CHICAGO, (EWA) – The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has issued the long awaited health [requirements](#) for all horses bound for slaughter in Canada. In 2009, 56% of the 93,812 horses slaughtered in Canada were U.S. exports.

The requirements posted on the CFIA website state, "Effective July 31, 2010, it will be mandatory for all CFIA inspected facilities in Canada engaged in the slaughter of equines for edible purposes to have complete records for all animals (domestic and imported) presented for slaughter."

A January 21st article in the Western Producer indicated that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was cooperating with the CFIA. When contacted on January 28th to determine how the USDA was cooperating, Dr. Cordes, National Equine Coordinator, stated that compliance was Canada's responsibility.

The European Union (EU), FDA and CFIA regulations have prohibited the slaughter of animals for human consumption that have ever received prohibited substances, but until now, there has been no serious attempt at enforcement.

Of particular concern is the common and widely used prohibited drug Phenylbutazone, also called PZB or Bute. "PBZ is a known carcinogen and can cause aplastic anemia (bone marrow suppression) in humans", states Equine Welfare Alliance's (EWA) Food Safety Subject Matter Expert, [Dr. Ann Marini](#), Ph.D./M.D. PBZ is used so prolifically in the racing industry that its administration before a race is noted on racing forms at many tracks.

Also listed is Clenbuterol, one of the most effective [FDA approved drugs](#) for treating COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder), a debilitating condition common in horses. Anabolic Steroids such as Winstrol, commonly used in racing and performance horses are also banned, as are drugs used by horse breeders to regulate estrus cycles.

Unlike the EU countries that electronically track veterinary records from birth, the US and Canada have no such system for horses, since they are not raised as food animals. Many slaughter bound horses have had multiple owners, and without a tracking system, it is impossible to guarantee that the horses have not been given prohibited substances. Also, most horse owners do not intend to send their horses to slaughter, as they unknowingly end up in the slaughter pipeline when sold to unscrupulous buyers or are taken to auctions where they are purchased by kill buyers.

The CFIA announcement states, "These new requirements are only the first step towards strengthening Canada's food safety and traceability system for equines." The EU has indicated this was part of a three year plan to bring third countries into complete compliance with current EU standards. This would mean that horses presented for slaughter will eventually require documentation from birth, assuring they have never received banned substances.

During 2008, in response to the closure of the three US based slaughter plants the previous year, the export of US horses for slaughter in Canada and Mexico soared to over 77,073 and 56,731 respectively. However in 2009, as the world economy declined, exports dropped by 20%. "The only practical means to meet these requirements is quarantine", explains EWA's John Holland, "and we estimate that will double the cost of these horses, further reducing the demand." The CHDC's Sinikka Crosland added, "The welfare of the horses has not been considered, and horses in quarantine feedlots will be at huge risk of sickness and suffering".

A Discussion Paper will be released by the EWA and CHDC in the coming days, detailing concerns with the newly announced regulations.

The EWA and CHDC have always warned that our equines are not safe for human consumption and implores Congress to step up to protect the health safety of foreign consumers by passing the legislation before it (HR 503 and S 727) that will stop the export of American horses.

CHDC and EWA urge all horse owners to end their horse's life by humane euthanasia as we do for all non-food animals in America.

www.equinewelfarealliance.org

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