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Horse Advocates Call Foul on Food Network

Chicago (EWA) – Equine Welfare Alliance (EWA) joins its Canadian partner, Canadian Horse Defence Coalition (CHDC) in calling for the withdrawal of an episode scheduled to air Monday, May 16 on the Food Network's program Top Chef Canada.

[The program](#) features "French Cuisine" including horse meat and foie gras, angering both horse advocates and animal welfare groups across the globe. The timing of this episode coincides with CHDC's May Equine Awareness [campaign](#).

In choosing these menu items, the program has completely ignored the cruelty involved in their production. Foie gras is diseased duck liver produced by force feeding ducks using a feeding tube thrust down their throats several times a day until they are too fat to even stand up. The liver becomes hugely swollen in an attempt to deal with the process.

Horse meat in Canada comes from horses that often suffer incredible abuse even before they arrive at slaughter. Beyond this, horse meat is likely to contain drugs that are illegal in food animals.

Last year, renowned chef at Pangaea Restaurant in Toronto, Martin Koupric, [removed horse meat](#) from the menu because slaughterhouses cannot tell him where the horses come from and whether the meat is free of toxic substances. "I cannot in good conscience serve that to my customers," said Koupric. "Every ingredient in my kitchen has a story, and if I don't know that story, I cannot serve it."

The investigations into two of the major horse slaughter plants in Canada last year revealed horrific conditions and has caused outrage across the world. A recent European Union Food and Veterinary

Office [investigation](#) into the horse slaughter plants in Mexico revealed numerous serious violations including drug residues in the meat.

North American horses are not raised or regulated as food animals. "Consumers need to be aware of the health dangers of eating horse meat and the cruelty the horses endure before ending up on their plates." commented John Holland, president of EWA.

"Many Canadians consider horses to be as dear to their hearts as dogs and cats," adds Sinikka Crosland, Executive Director of the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition. "Companion animals are not likely to be well-accepted as menu items in our country."

The Equine Welfare Alliance believes that the choice of horse meat was not an accidental social misjudgment, but more likely the result of influence from a well funded public relations effort on the part of horse slaughter supporters aimed at gaining acceptance for the meat and desensitizing viewers to horse slaughter in general. Case in point, The Toronto Observer also ran a [story](#) on May 11 defending the consumption of horsemeat.

It is in the best interest of the Food Network and consumers to withdraw the episode promoting food that is dangerous to consumers and cruel to equines. Fortunately, the French have many excellent sauces and dishes to choose from that do not involve cruelty and carcinogens as ingredients.

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The Equine Welfare Alliance is a dues free, umbrella organization with over 150 member organizations and hundreds of individual members worldwide. The organization focuses its efforts on the welfare of all equines and the preservation of wild equids. www.equinewelfarealliance.org

The Canadian Horse Defence Coalition is a collective of people and national groups that have joined forces in order to help protect equines in Canada from slaughter and the export of live equines for slaughter, by raising public awareness through education, and helping to achieve the enactment of legislation that will ban these practices in Canada. www.defendhorsescanada.org