

Stop the slaughter of America's (and Utah's) horses

By Cheryl Smith, Executive Director, Wasatch Humane

By a vote of 263 to 146, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to ban the slaughter of American horses, no thanks to Utah's three Representatives. But before the bill can be sent to President Bush to become law, it must be passed by the U.S. Senate. We don't have much time. The Senate MUST ACT before Congress adjourns in October for the November mid-term elections.

ACT NOW to protect horses--horses who have devoted their lifetimes to serving mankind in work, pleasure, and competition and have built the American West—from a horrific, inhumane, and undignified torture at the hands of foreign-owned slaughterhouse owners.

Call or write to Utah's Senators Orrin Hatch and Bob Bennett. Implore them not to adjourn before they have protected America's horses by voting for S. 1915. Tell them horses are unique animals to Utahns and all Americans and that in America, horses should not be slaughtered for food. The Senate has less than 20 legislative days in which to act on this historic legislation. Implore Senators Hatch and Bennett to vote for S.1915.

Utah does not have slaughterhouses, but we do have feed lots, horse traders and meat buyers who attend the weekly livestock auctions and buy horses from sellers who may have no idea that their beloved retired 4H pony, barrel champ or trail mount isn't going to a loving new home, but to a Texas slaughterhouse.

Visit www.wasatchhumane.org to see our adoptable horses, some we have rescued from feed lots, which are local traders who buy unwanted horses by the pound, and haul them, without water or rest, to Texas or Canada to slaughter.

These are young, healthy, sound horses disposed of like garbage, because their people weren't savvy or knowledgeable about how to train them humanely and successfully, or horses like little Buddy who had been in a home where he was ridden and cherished by an 8 year old girl, but her family sold the 3 year old mustang for meat to replace him with a "flashier" horse; my one-eyed horse Jack who carefully carries and nurtures my disabled son; or Sweetheart and Shasta, older mares who had taught generations of children how to ride and be compassionate and gentle...only for the families to dump them for the quick buck they can get for their flesh. Not a respectful or dignified (not to mention cruel and inhumane end) in exchange for the lifetime of joy and lessons in kindness that these horses have contributed to mankind....all to put on dinner plates in foreign countries.

Americans were outraged when our ports were about to be sold off to foreign interests in Dubai. And they loudly oppose horse slaughter for human consumption. So why are our president and our three Congressmen, (shamefully even Matheson) so eager to please these

foreign-owned special interests...at the expense of the noble, magnificent horse, the symbol of the American West? Presumably the special interests in the industry have convinced them with their lie that, without mass slaughterhouses, horse owners would neglect and abandon their animals in droves. This hasn't proved true in California that passed a slaughter ban. If there are too many unwanted horses, complacent mass slaughter by electrocuting their brains then slicing their throats is not the solution in a civilized society like the United States, just as genocide isn't the solution for human overpopulation or crowded orphanages. The solution is education: that horses deserve a better, kinder end. That horse owners should be responsible and quit breeding so many animals; consider placing their retired or unwanted horse with a rescue like ours or with any number of therapeutic riding programs for the handicapped; and when the time comes to end their lives, do it humanely and right: spend the \$200-300 to have their horses humanely euthanized by a vet. Utahns (with more horses per capita than any other state) are outraged that this is going on. The House has passed HR 503. Now the Senate must be urged to pass S 1915 before Congress adjourns for the holidays. Wonder what will be served at their Thanksgiving feasts?

Cheryl Smith

Executive Director

Wasatch Humane

Salt Lake City, Utah

801-486-6210