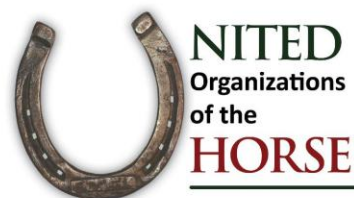


# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**Contact:** Sue Wallis, President, United Organizations of the Horse, 307 685 8248, sue.wallis52@gmail.com

## GAO Report Confirms Suffering of Horses and Horse People as a Result of Slaughter Plants Closing

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released today a report, [HORSE WELFARE: Action Needed to Address Unintended Consequences from Cessation of Domestic Slaughter.](#)

[The United Organizations of the Horse](#), (UOH) joins a broad-based coalition of horse industry groups and individuals, state and local governments, tribes, animal agriculture organizations, pet and other animal owner groups, land and resource managers, animal scientists, veterinarians, animal welfare organizations, and more in commending GAO for a thorough report.

As noted in the report, the controversy around horse slaughter is driven by polarized views of horses. On one side there are emotional views of horses as pets, on the other side is a pragmatic view held by the majority of horse owners and the agricultural community that horses are multi-purpose animals who have been used as food animals throughout history. For many it is more respectful of an animal's life to ensure that their death is quick, painless, and professionally done and that the valuable, wholesome meat is not wasted.

From a [moral and cultural](#) standpoint it is generally accepted that human beings are omnivores that require both animal and plant products for good health. Horses, so long as they are well treated and humanely handled may be ethically used as food animals. The enjoyment of horse meat is a cultural choice that is common and accepted in most of the world including Canada, Mexico, South America, Europe, Asia, and Russia. Better cuts bring attractive prices in gourmet markets and restaurants worldwide.

Sue Wallis, Wyoming State Representative and President of UOH, noted that "We welcome this important report. It was long in coming, but it

does confirm all of the things that the horse industry has been saying since 2007. The GAO is known for its accuracy, integrity, and reliability, and this will be a good source of information for Congress as they grapple with these very serious issues."

Wallis also noted that the horse industry is pleased that the report calls for action, and for the most part, agrees with GAO conclusions.

The United Organizations of the Horse is dedicated to political action on behalf of the welfare of horses and horse people, and will continue to advocate for the responsible and regulated inspection of horses and horse meat in this country where U.S. agencies can ensure the welfare of horses.

Of the two options for action laid out by GAO for Congress to consider: 1) return regulation and inspection in the U.S., or 2) permanently and completely outlaw the use of horses for food animals, the choice for Congress will be very clear.

The first way will improve the welfare of horses, will create over a thousand jobs practically overnight, restore a multi-billion dollar overall horse industry to its former vibrancy, and allow U.S. businesses to participate in [a thriving worldwide market](#) thus providing tax revenues and improving the economy.

The second way will only exacerbate and intensify the suffering of horses that we already see, eliminate the private property rights of individuals, as well as the states' right to enhance their agricultural and rural economies, will kill jobs, and continue the liquidation of an entire horse industry resulting in less horses, less jobs, less equipment and feed sales, less of everything to the point where only the very wealthy can afford a horse in their lives. Local and state governments will be facing massive impacts amounting to another unfunded federal mandate. Every community would then need to look at "horse pounds" to go along with the dog and cat shelters that they already support on taxpayer dollars. Taxpayers would ultimately be responsible for the care and feeding, or euthanize and dispose of in excess of 100,000 horses per year, with all of the the associated environmental impacts and costs.

Either way, that thriving worldwide market for horse meat is going to continue with or without us. If the horse industry has the opportunity to recover then the benefits will be enormous in terms of both welfare and

the economy. Otherwise, the only thing that will change is how much suffering is inflicted on the horses and horse people of the United States.

## Full Report

## Highlights

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# UNITED Horsemen

*Horsepeople working for horse welfare - and to restore the health of the horse industry.*

**TED ROBINSON**



"Today horses are the most neglected/abused animals you will find. Something has to be done to remedy the situation. It will take an organization like United Horsemen, working on all fronts, to bring about a common sense solution. This is an organization that I believe needs the support of everyone in the horse industry."

**BOB LOOMIS**



"The banning of horse slaughter in the U.S. has had a major negative impact on our entire industry. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of horses have been neglected and starved as a result. United Horsemen is working logically to reinstate humane slaughter, something that will benefit not only our industry, but the economy overall. What they need is for all of us to join with them. Numbers make a difference. We all need to stand up and be counted."

**JD YATES**



"We are currently in a situation where there are far more horses unattended to than ever before. As an industry, we need to develop programs that will address the best interests of those horses. I believe United Horsemen is taking a common sense approach to help us reach that goal. In order to properly care for those horses and further the well-being of the horse industry, I would urge everyone who truly cares about horses to support United Horsemen in their efforts."

[www.united-horsemen.org](http://www.united-horsemen.org)