Celebrating Equestrian Women

DINNER WITH JOIE, JAMI, & LIZ

THE PALIO
Danger & Excitement on Horseback
Hi Geoff,

I just wanted to congratulate you for addressing the horse slaughter issue head-on. We need to face the realities of why Americans feel as they do about horses and that perhaps our emotional response is not in the best interest of horses over all.

The money being spent to ban slaughter of horses in America would be so much better spent to ensure the relative comfort of those animals as they are shipped, that the animals are kept only for a limited time in stockyards and that they are fed and watered adequately while they are there. And, finally that their lives are promptly and humanely ended with minimal fear and pain.

Kudos to Tom Moste for a timely article that does not embrace the rhetoric that is so popular in these debates, but rather presents the facts and history of this issue in a way that encourages open-minded consideration of what would happen in a perfect world and what would be the best that we can do in the real world.

Brenda Thomas

Hi Geoff,

Very interesting read. We’ve actually been pointing out for years that Pope Gregory forbade the consumption of horsemeat, so I’d be very interested to know if you ever receive a response from the Vatican. It’s by far the largest horsemeat-consuming nation in the world.

As far as the claim that horsemeat is “healthy,” well, I suppose that would depend upon where the horsemeat originated. US horsemeat most certainly is NOT a healthy choice. As you well know, US horses are not raised or medicated as an animal intended for human consumption. I certainly wouldn’t want to be the one chomping down on a horse-steak cut from one of our US racehorses loaded up on bute, lasix, steroids, diuretics, and goodness knows what else! It has always boggled my mind how our USDA can simply slap their stamp of approval on this meat, knowing full well that it is NOT safe for people to consume. Guess that says a great deal about how concerned USDA is about food safety. Scary.

Thank you so very much for your continued courage in keeping the discussion of this issue ongoing in the Horse Connection!

Kind regards,

Gail Vazza
Illinois Coordinator
National Horse Protection Coalition

Hi Geoff,

Some horses do not need to be trained. They can learn on their own. It's also important to train them in a way that is comfortable for both the horse and the trainer. Remember, a gentle touch goes a long way.

Kind regards,

CuChulain O'Reilly
To JC,

I honestly believe that until breeders (professional and backyard breeders alike) take responsibility for the foals they produce, there won't be a whole lot of good news for horses in general. The best of the breeders will still be high priced and valued, all other horses are subject to our throw-away society. I would love to see money set aside to assist gelding foals and incentives to encourage vets to offer low cost euthanasia and a low-cost solution to browning (creating a 100 pound animal). If we are going to regulate the horse industry, these are ways to curtail the overpopulation and assist culling of horses without the threat of the slaughterhouse.

Donna Taylor

Greetings,

I commend your publication for the invitation to dialog on the topic of horse slaughter.

I have studied this issue for 15 years, and I believe that I understand both sides so I would like to continue these thoughts.

I think that we can all agree that whether Americans want or not, change in the American way of life begins large on the horizon. Witness the price of fuel, which is skyrocketing and causing our way of life to change for better or worse. It will no longer be feasible to own-bred Thoroughbreds for racing or good-bred Quarter horses. The issue of over-breeding is significant for horses against slaughter, many used and have against this. Horses have been and remain over-bred. This is a fact.

Horses slaughtered provided many breeders, professional or backyard, with an opportunity to make a dollar on an animal no longer wanted or needed, but now, more than ever. All one had to do was drop the animal off at the "kill-shippers."

This has changed. It cannot and will never be again economically feasible to breed grade horses any longer anyway.

Besides, taking responsibility for horses bred is just a good idea, don't you think? If you can't find a home for the animal, don't breed it. If the horse is sick or has broken a limb, call a vet and have the animal euthanized. Of course, this will cost, but horses never were a poor or lower middle-class man's hobby anyway.

Thank you.
All the best.
Sharon Janus

Good afternoon Geoff,

You asked for positive input concerning horse slaughter. I will not pretend that I'm not an slaughteree but I will be positive. Let's start here:

"Many have forgotten this truth, but you must not forget it. You remain responsible forever, for what you have done." — Antoine de Saint-Exupery

You ask why the two sides have to be so polarized. There is your answer. The anti-slaughter forces are mostly talking about wanting PETS to be killed. There is no more defensible position that can say that horses are pets but that we can eat some of them. So you end up with a polarized issue where one side calls them pets and the other side must avoid giving them that status.

You ask the question, "why not allow horses be雕塑, after they die, to go to the greater good and provide nourishment for those people that care to eat them?" I know you asked for positive input but you cannot make a statement like that and not expect to be taken for it. First, your use of the term "the greater good" makes me want to vomit. There is no such thing. Most atrocities in human history have the words "the greater good" attached to them. Second, you have ignored the main question of the delete. We are not talking about whether or not it's OK to eat horses, we are talking about whether or not it's OK to eat pets.

Immediate treatment of "unwanted horses" should be the reason for the individual responsible to be "penned" walked before a judge and have the horse thrown at them. It should not be used as an excuse for slaughterhouses. If this were the case then the US should just start culling all of those "unwanted dogs" straight to China. Would you like to place a wager on which will happen?

I believe the solution to this issue is to institute a system that distinguishes 'pet' horses from 'livestock' horses. The system could use lip tattoos like those used by thoroughbred and warmblood breeders and this would make pet horses easy to distinguish during brand inspections. Once a horse is identified as a pet horse, it can be sold to an individual owner that horse cannot be sold as livestock and cannot be sent to slaughter for human consumption.

The end result of such a system would probably be high prices for pet horses because the individual owner would be responsible for the horse through its entire lifecycle which extends beyond most horses' " useful" lives. Instead of just getting rid of a horse after you can no longer ride it, owners would be forced to take care of the horse. Just as well, dogs and cats, backyard breeding would be highly discouraged and professional breeders would have to be careful with their breeding programs.

It's time for humans to start holding up their end of the deal and treat horses, with whom they interact for years, with the love and effort the horses have given us.

John West