

For immediate release

February 10, 2017

## EU Campaign Turns the Spotlight on Canada



The extensive field work conducted by Animals' Angels and Tierschutzbund Zurich of Switzerland was instrumental in the EU's 2015 banning of horse meat imported from Mexico. We're grateful to our European partners, Global Action in the Interest of Animals (GAIA, Belgium), Eyes on Animals (Netherlands), Eurogroup for Animals, Welfarm (France), and Afaad (France) for their unwavering support and assistance in raising the awareness needed abroad to make our EU campaign a success.

According to Sonja Meadows, President of AA, *"When the EU Commission banned the import of horsemeat from Mexico it was a time of rejoicing, but rejoicing tempered with the knowledge that there was still work to be done. The Commission had taken no steps against the importation of horsemeat from Canada."*

Animals' Angels immediately started an in-depth investigation into the horse slaughter pipeline to Canada, and has spent the last two years gathering additional proof that the inhumane and illegal behavior that often runs rampant in the horse slaughter industry is by no means confined to Mexico.

In 2016, over 30,000 of the horses slaughtered in Canada were imported from the United States.

Animals' Angels has been investigating the feedlots and auctions of the main U.S suppliers of slaughter horses to document the conditions and treatment these horses endure before, during, and after their arrival at Canadian slaughter houses. We have also conducted extensive research of public documents and evidence obtained via Freedom of Information Act requests which added valuable supplementary information to our investigations.

We supplied this information to the EU Commission to raise awareness during their decision-making process, and in fact, they have put into place tougher restrictions on horse meat imported from Canada – but we are strongly urging the EU Commission to issue an outright ban. In the field, we continue to witness the inherent cruelty of the horse slaughter trade, and the complete indifference to the suffering of the animals is shocking.

Our investigations documented not only inhumane treatment of the horses, but also inaccurate health and shipping paperwork which is a common occurrence throughout the industry.

### **Illegal activities by those profiting from the Canadian horse slaughter pipeline put human health at risk.**

- Almost every single kill buyer currently providing horses to the Canadian horse slaughter plants has a well-documented history of providing inaccurate export paperwork. There is no accountability or reliability regarding the information on owner/shipper paperwork or on EID's regarding a horses' drug history, which poses a significant risk that horses with phenylbutazone or other restricted substances in their system will enter the food chain.

## **Inhumane and cruel treatment to which slaughter horses are subjected is horrific and unacceptable.**

- Almost every single kill buyer has demonstrated a complete lack of concern for the well-being and the welfare of the slaughter horses in his care. Public documents and investigative results show that severely injured, sick, and emaciated horses are shipped to slaughter. Horses are routinely kept in overcrowded, filthy conditions without shelter. Access to necessary veterinary care or a farrier is virtually nonexistent and wounded or ill horses are often left to die alone, without any intervention.
- The conditions at auctions providing horses to the slaughter buyers are equally poor. Cruel handling, overcrowded conditions, lack of shelter, pens literally awash in manure, and no veterinary care have been documented.
- Transport routes remain long, especially for large scale kill buyers like Keith Tongen and Scott Kurtenbach. With their feedlots 1344 and 1160 miles away from the plant, they are pushing transport times of well over 20 hours.

As stated by Sonja Meadows, who is also the lead investigator for Animals' Angels, *"Our investigators have taken and continue to take risks on a weekly basis to obtain the evidence of the illicit and inhumane activities which are endemic in the Canadian horse slaughter industry."*

*The evidence we are currently presenting to legislators in Europe documents not only the persistent maltreatment of horses, but also, and from their standpoint perhaps more serious, the very grave dangers to the health of their own citizens through the continued import of Canadian horsemeat."*

*"We are confident," she continued, "that the evidence we've gathered will have a tremendous and far-reaching impact in the fight against horse slaughter."*

Below is a link to a film produced by Animals' Angels and the Tierschutzbund Zurich/Animal Welfare Foundation that illustrates our findings on the Canadian horse slaughter industry. Please watch this educational film to learn more about this "pipeline to hell."

**Video:** [The Cruel Truth of the Horse Slaughter Pipeline to Canada](#)

### **Notes to Editor:**

Animals' Angels USA, a certified 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in Maryland, has been a leading force behind the fight to end horse slaughter since 2007. We live by our mission statement: "We are there with the animals." Animals' Angels USA conducts investigations into the treatment of farm animals and horses by documenting the conditions at livestock auctions, slaughterhouses, during transport, and more.

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