Animals’ Angels Investigation at Slaughter Horse Collecting Stations in New York

1. Nickerson Collecting Station, Coventryville

**Location:**
Coventryville (Bainbridge), NY 13733

**Owner:**
The Property is owned by Donald Nickerson. Nickerson has been in the slaughter business for a very long time and has a history of violating animal protection laws as well as FMCSA regulations. In the 1990’s, Nickerson was convicted several times for transporting horses on double deck trailers. More recent violations include:

a) Violations of the Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter Regulations
   - Case # NY 05067 (9 CFR 88.4.a.3.vii)
   - Case # NY 05086 (9 CFR 88.4.2.3)

b) Violations of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations

Nickerson Livestock
DOT Number: 689688

- 398.8 Log violations/Driver Record of Duty Status not current (7 violations in 2009/2010)
  All violations were for fatigued driving or not maintaining a current log book, which is a severe safety concern.

According the owner/shipper papers Animals’ Angels obtained from the USDA, Nickerson ships approximately 1350 horses per year to the Canadian horse slaughter plant in Richelieu, Quebec.

**Observations:**
3/16/11

Not much has changed since our last visit in 2009. The majority of the horses are still kept in a small round pen close to the house. Only a few horses are out in the pastures behind the barn. Several of the horses already have a green USDA slaughter tag attached to their hips or foreheads. There were approx. 35 horses in the pen, most of them were gathered around a pile of hay in the middle, that appeared to be of very poor quality.

We saw three water troughs in the pen of which one was turned over and the other one had a big crack. The third one was usable, but had very little water in it.
Cracked and turned over water troughs

Horses gathered around hay

The small run-in shed that connects to the round pen was still in disrepair and even in the middle of a snow storm none of the horses ever attempted to enter it.
Several horses were coughing and emaciated.

Especially a black thoroughbred caught the investigators attention: He was very thin and front leg and sides were covered with sores and open wounds. He also had trouble putting weight on the right front leg, he tried to move as little as possible and was licking the sores. He was very skittish and would not let anyone approach him. A slaughter tag had already been attached.

This horse should not be shipped to slaughter in this condition, since it is at high risk of falling on the trailer and being trampled by other horses. (We were informed later that this horse apparently had been rescued from this location and is recovering. However, we are unable to confirm this at this point, since we have received no proof that this is really the case)

During the day, several pick up trucks with stock trailers pulled into the lot to load and unload horses. Nickerson’s truck with the single deck trailer was parked across the street. At 7:30pm there was no more activity.
2. Arlow Kiehl Collecting Station, Watertown, NY

Location:
Watertown, NY 13601

Owner:
The collecting station is operated by Arlow Kiehl, who has been in the slaughter horse trade for a very long time. Just like Nickerson, he has been convicted several times in the 1990’s for transporting slaughter horses on a double deck.

Violations of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations:

Arlow Kiehl
DOT Number: 694305

- 398.8 (f) 1 Log violations/Driver Record of Duty Status not current
- 3 violations found for fatigued driving or not maintaining a current log book, which is a severe safety concern.

Kiehls tractor trailer “Diamond K Ranch” was gone and did not return to the premises during our visit.

Observations:
The property is located in a residential area with mainly single family homes. There is a run-down barn, fenced pastures and a round pen next to what appears to be Kiehl’s private residence. The majority of the horses was kept in the round pen and gathered around a pile of hay in the middle. Water troughs were visible along the fence.

There were approx. 25 horses in the pen, some already had slaughter tags attached. Among them was an emaciated approx. 3 year old sorrel horse, it was standing completely still in between the other horses that were moving around and eating the hay.
In the pasture, where several horses are grazing there are a number of old rusted pieces of machinery, metal poles and pieces of fencing. A large amount of manure is piled up behind the barn and manure/waste water collects in an open pit. It was a cold day, but one can only imagine the smell his neighbors are exposed to during a hot summer month.

There was no activity at the time of the observation and investigators decided to move on and return at a later date.