



## Investigation of Kentucky Slaughter Buyers and Horse Auctions June/July 2011

### **Introduction:**

Kentucky is among the worst states in terms of animal cruelty laws. The state has no provisions for the forfeiture of abused animals, no restrictions on the future ownership of animals for those convicted of cruelty to animals, no provisions to help offset the high costs of caring for abused animals, inadequate animal fighting provisions, and no requirements for mental health evaluations or counseling following a conviction. The investigation was triggered by numerous complaints Animals' Angels received from private individuals concerned about the conditions for "slaughter" horses in their state.

### **Investigation:**

#### **1. T & M Horse Sale, Smiths Grove, KY**

##### **Date:**

6/25/11

##### **Location:**

Mammoth Cave Dairy Auction  
350 Oakland Flatrock Rd  
Smiths Grove, KY 42171  
(502) 843-6963

##### **Schedule:**

2nd & 4th Saturday

##### **Owner/Manager:**

Mike Hatcher  
270-563-2131

##### **Observations:**

The horse auction is being held at the The Mammoth Cave Dairy Auction. It is a large auction with an extensive outside & inside pen area, a restaurant and auction ring. Investigators arrived at 4:00pm. It was a hot & humid day with temperatures of 90 degrees. While fans were installed in the barn, no fans were running, which created a very stale and dusty atmosphere. No water or food was provided for the animals. All horses were kept in the sheltered pen area, while all the dairy cows were in outside pens. There were several loading ramps in front of the building.

Approx. 300 horses, 15 donkeys & mules and 10 minis were present. One of the donkeys was severely emaciated. Three mares had foals by their side. A woman was "test riding" one of the mares in the parking lot for hours, forcing the foal to chase after the mother for the entire time. The little foal was covered in sweat, appeared very exhausted and had trouble keeping up.

While all the riding horses were put in front pens close to the overlooking catwalk, all the “slaughter” horses were put in 4 large pens all the way in the back, out of reach from the public eye. When investigators checked on these horses, they noticed that several were emaciated and many were very thin. One horse was observed with a fresh forehead injury that was bleeding profusely.



All the “slaughter” horses were moved through a narrow chute, 3 at a time, where kill buyer Tim Ryan took their blood for Coggins testing. The handling around the chute was rough and many of the horses did not want to go in there.

**302 KAR 20:065 Sale & Exhibition**

All horses and other equidae, except un-weaned foals accompanied by their dam, offered for sale, traded, given away, leased, or moved for the purpose of change of ownership shall be negative to an AGID test or other USDA approved test for equine infectious anemia within the previous twelve (12) months. Equine which are offered for sale at approved auction markets without proof of a negative test for EIA within the previous twelve (12) months shall have a blood sample drawn at the market by the approved market veterinarian at the seller's expense.



Ryan drawing blood



Chute used to restrain horses

The parking lot was crowded with pick up trucks and large stock trailers. Several kill buyers were present and ready to buy. Ryan, who appears to manage the sale, had brought his large stock trailer. R & R livestock arrived with a semi and single deck trailer at 5:18pm, backed up to the loading dock and unloaded a few resale horses. The truck & trailer of William Middleton was parked in front of the barn.



*R & R Livestock*



The registered horse /riding horse sale started at 6:00pm and continued well into the night. The auctioneer took a very long time trying to sell each individual horse. After the sale, when the majority of the public had left, the “slaughter” horses were sold. Unlike the riding horses, these horses went through the ring very fast. Kill buyers Randy Ray and Tim Ryan were buying enough to fill their trailers.

## **2. David Shaw Slaughter Horse Collecting Station, Scottsville, KY**

**Date:**

6/26/11-6/27/11

**Location:**

Scottsville, KY 42164

**Slaughter Buyer:**

David Shaw

**Additional Information:**

David Shaw is known as a kill buyer only since last year, due to the exposure of his operation in the news. According to information provided in the 2010 WBKO articles, Shaw ships his horses to Canada for slaughter:

<http://www.wbko.com/home/headlines/101012504.html>

<http://www.wbko.com/news/headlines/101388544.html?storySection=story>

**Observations:**

When investigators arrived at the premises, there were approx. 35 -40 horses present. The property also contains a small butcher shop (Countryside Meats). A 2009 inspection by the Allen County Health Department revealed several problems, such as the lack of frequent cleaning of utensils and microwave.

The pen area appeared extremely filthy, with no grass and trash scattered about. Manure was piled up in one corner of the pen area and the horses were forced to move around in a mixture of manure and mud. Several horses were standing in mud well above their ankles. A dilapidated shed was visible in the back of the pen area with a caved in roof. A second, smaller shed and a loading ramp suitable for single and double deck trailers were next to the pen area. Several horses were thin, appeared lethargic and were holding their heads low. Some were coughing.



All horses had green USDA slaughter tags attached to them. Investigators continued to observe the premises for two days, but Shaw did not load the horses during that timeframe.



## 2. Ryans Horse Company, KY

**Date:**

6/28/11

**Locations:**

Ryans 4 R Ranch  
Rineyville, KY 40162

Elisabethtown, KY 42701

**Slaughter Buyer/Horse Trader:**

Tim & Buck Ryan

**Violations of the Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter Regulation:**

Case #: TX03270, TX05216 & TX06156

**Additional Information:**

The Ryan family has been in the slaughter business for a very long time. Before the closure of the US plants, they used to ship horses to Beltex for slaughter. James (Jim) Ryan, died 2005 in a truck accident on Interstate 70. Ryan was driving a pick-up truck and had 15 draft horses in the attached 30-foot horse trailer. According to documents obtained by Animals' Angels from the USDA, the Ryan Horse Company provides horses to large scale kill buyer Jeron Gold in Michigan.

**Observations:**

The investigation found horses found at two different, 20 + acres farms. The majority was found at the 4 R Ranch in Rineyville, KY. The property appeared well maintained and contains a large barn, a loading ramp and extensive pastures in the back. The same truck & trailer that was observed at the Smiths Grove Auction a few days earlier, was parked next to the loading ramp.



Some horses were visible in the pasture, gathered around a bale of hay. All of them appeared to be in good condition. Investigators suspected more horses inside the barn, but there was no way to access it.

### 3. Wright Horse Company, Sturgis, KY

**Date:**  
6/28/11

**Location:**  
Sturgis, KY 42459

**Violations of the Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter Regulation:**

Case #: KY06066 & TX05128

**Observations:**

The property consists of a smaller family home, pastures and a completely closed up barn behind the house. In front of the barn is a wooden loading ramp and a stock trailer was backed up to it. There were only very few horses in the pasture with auction tags still attached to them. Investigators observed the premises for several hours, but there was no activity.



### 4. R & R Livestock Collecting Station, Murray, KY

**Date:**  
6/29/11-7/2/11

**Location:**  
Murray, KY 42071

**Slaughter Buyer/Horse Trader:**  
Randy Ray

**DOT:**  
1595800

**Violations for Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations:**

392.2S	Driver	No	Speeding	Unsafe
395.3(a)(2)	Driver	Yes	14 Hour Rule Violation (Property)	Fatigued

**Violations of the Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter Regulation:**

Case #: IL07185

**Observations:**

The R & R slaughter horse collecting station operated by Randy Ray, who is also on the “*Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter*” violators list. According to documents obtained from the USDA, R & R livestock provides horses for kill buyer Jeron Gold in Michigan. The large property has extensive pastures, a trailer home and a barn with a wooden loading ramp next to it.



*Thin horse with plastic water buckets*



*Loading ramp*

The white truck with the rusted single deck trailer, which investigators saw at the Smiths Grove Auction a few days earlier, was backed up to a loading ramp. The condition of the trailer is of great concern, since it appears to be so rusted that a horse could kick through the weakened sides.



The horses on the premises were divided in two different pastures, it appeared that the resale horses & ponies were kept separate from the “slaughter” horses.



Resale horses

There were approx 30 “slaughter” horses, some cattle and goats in the pasture with the loading ramp. Several of the horses were thin and some were pregnant. During the four days on which investigators observed the premises, R & R loaded one trailer with “slaughter” horses. None of them had slaughter tags attached, which confirms the information that R & R is currently supplying other kill buyers with horses and does not ship to the plants himself.

## 5. Mayfield Horse Auction, KY

### Location:

91 East Vaugh Rd  
Mayfield, KY 42567

### Schedule:

1st Saturday 5:00pm

### Observations:

The smaller auction has a covered pen area, a restaurant and a barn with a few additional pens and the sale area. It was a very hot and humid day with temperatures of 90 degrees. Fans were running above the sale area to cool down the visitors, but there were no fans installed in the pen area. Outside, a single deck trailer from *Three Angel Farms* in Tennessee was backed up to the loading ramp.





The parking lot was crowded with pick up trucks and stock trailers. There was only one tractor/trailer present (no DOT #), but the license plates showed that it was from Tennessee. There were approx. 60 horses in the pen area. Investigators noted that most of the “cheap” horses were put together in one of the large pens. All of them had a metal clip attached to their mane, most likely a sign for an existing Coggins test. Several of them were thin, a grey mare was limping and a bay mare had a large growth on her belly.



*Metal clip in mane*

In another pen, three thin stallions were observed. They were very agitated, kicking and scratching the pen floor. Investigators also noted a thin mule, covered with lumps.



The horse sale started at 6:00pm. Horses were ridden through or walked through the auction ring individually. Two guys were standing along the railing close to the auctioneer and were buying most of the cheaper horses. Horses sold for next to nothing, despite the fact that the auctioneer took a very long time trying to sell them. Several horses were “no-saled”. The sale ended at 7:45pm, 43 horses went through the auction ring. The horses from the large pen were not part of the auction.



After the sale was over, investigators went outside to observe what would happen with the horses in the large pen. The parking lot started to clear out quickly and all the visitors left. The investigators were approached by someone apparently linked to the auction, who inquired what they were doing. When investigators responded that they were waiting for the horses in the large pen to be sold, the man responded that those were already bought by someone else. There was no more activity and investigators decided to leave the premises. When they returned early the next morning, the horses were gone.

## **6. Larry Browning Collecting Station, Butler, KY**

**Date:**

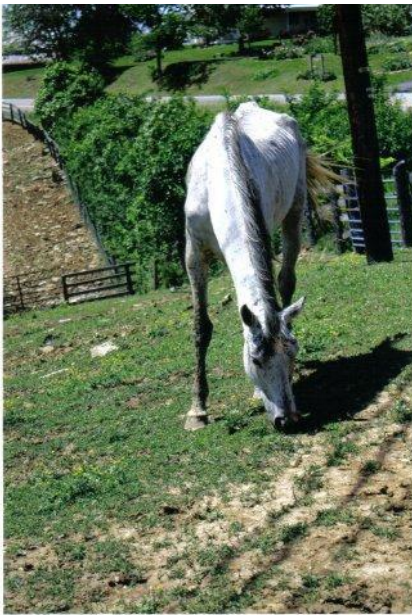
7/3/11-7/4/11

**Location:**

Butler, KY 41006

**Additional Information:**

AA investigators visited the Larry Browning property after receiving alarming evidence of starving horses on his pastures. Photos showed horses with a life threatening body score of 1.5 or less.



Complaints caused an investigation by the KY Department of Agriculture. However, the local Animal Control Officer who visited the premises together with a KDA investigator just a day after the complaint was received claimed that none of the horses found were in alarming condition. The report stated that all horses observed on the property had a body score of 3.5 or more and were being fed “adequate quality hay”. No pictures were taken to validate this statement and no charges were filed.

**Observations:**

When investigators arrived at the location, there were approx 100 horses on different pastures and inside a dark barn. A small, older stock trailer was parked next to a fenced in area close to the barn. No semis or large single/double deck trailers were visible. The extensive pastures surround the barn and cover an entire valley. There were horses throughout these pastures, but many of them were all the way on the other side of the valley and it was impossible to judge their condition from that distance. Several of the ones that were close enough to observe were very thin. (BCS 2)

However, a group of 12 horses & ponies was kept in a smaller, fenced in area next to the barn. Apparently the area was also used for manure disposal and the horses were standing on ground covered with manure and urine, their hay thrown on top of the filth.



All of them were thin, 2 were emaciated with ribs clearly visible and sunken loin. (BCS 2)



Another fenced in area across the street contained a group of 7 horses and 5 of them were thin. All the hay that was being fed to the animals throughout the premises appeared to be very low quality, moldy and rotten.



**KRS 525.130 Cruelty to animals in the second degree**

1) A person is guilty of cruelty to animals in the second degree when except as authorized by law he intentionally or wantonly:

(a) Subjects any animal to or causes cruel or injurious mistreatment through abandonment, participates other than as provided in KRS 525.125 in causing it to fight for pleasure or profit (including, but not limited to being a spectator or vendor at an event where a four (4) legged animal is caused to fight for pleasure or profit), mutilation, beating, torturing any animal other than a dog or cat, tormenting, **failing to provide adequate food, drink, space, or health care, or by any other means;**

(b) Subjects any animal in his custody to **cruel neglect**

**7. Willie Rudd Collecting Station, Williamstown, KY**

**Date:**

7/5/11

**Location:**

Williamstown, KY 41097

The 20+ acres property of horse trader Willie Rudd welcomes visitors with a real size statute of a horse. Investigators observe approx. 25 horses gathered around a dark & filthy looking barn. Junk was scattered around the barn and no hay was visible. Some horses were thin. According to insider information, Rudd has several other rented farms in Kentucky and Ohio where he keeps horses. There was no activity during the time of the observation.



## 8. Ramey Collecting Station, Flemingsburg, KY

**Date:**

7/6/11

**Location:**

Flemingsburg, KY 41041

**Additional Information:**

In September of 2004 Jodie Ramey had a terrible accident with his double deck trailer on State Route 1 in Indiana. There were more than 50 horses loaded on the trailer, 21 horses died in the accident. State Route 1 is commonly used by truck drivers to avoid the scales.

Dozens of horses killed after trailer overturns:

<http://www.wlwt.com/news/3733772/detail.html>

Officials: Horse trailer accident could have been prevented:

<http://www.wlwt.com/r/3757890/detail.html>

**DOT Information:**

**- Ramey Livestock LLC**  
 DOT: 956085

DATE:            CASE:            STATE:

1	9/23/2010	<u>COX000366472</u>	CO	A13554	KY	Truck Tractor	5	2	10
	Violation: 392.2S Speeding ( <b>Non-OOS</b> )						5		
2	2/8/2010	<u>KS0000365210</u>	KS	9NA546	KY	Truck Tractor	5	1	5
	Violation: 392.71(a) Using or equipping a CMV with radar detector ( <b>Non-OOS</b> )						5		
3	2/4/2010	<u>COX000372089</u>	CO	9NA546	KY	Truck Tractor	5	1	5
	Violation: 392.2S Speeding ( <b>Non-OOS</b> )								
1	2/10/2010	<u>MO1514003208</u>	MO	9NA546	KY	Semi-Trailer	7	1	7
	Violation: 395.8 Log violation (general/form and manner) ( <b>Non-OOS</b> )						2		
	Violation: 395.8(f)(1) Driver's record of duty status not current ( <b>Non-OOS</b> )						5		
2	2/4/2010	<u>COX000372089</u>	CO	9NA546	KY	Truck Tractor	5	1	5
	Violation: 395.8(f)(1) Driver's record of duty status not current ( <b>Non-OOS</b> )						5		
3	12/3/2009	<u>MOA3W1006519</u>	MO	9NA546	KY	Truck Tractor	9	1	9
	Violation: 395.3(a)(2) Requiring or permitting driver to drive after 14 hours on duty ( <b>OOS</b> )						9		=7 (viol weight) + 2 (OOS)
4	9/24/2009	<u>KS00ZN005750</u>	KS	9NA546	KY	Truck Tractor	5	1	5

**Violations of the Commercial Transport of Equines to Slaughter Regulation:**

Case #: IN04038

**Observations:**

Ramey Livestock LLC and the Ramey family have several locations around Flemingsburg. However, only at one of them horses were found. Investigators saw a small group of horses grazing in a large pasture with an older, wooden barn. No trucks or trailers were visible. All horses observed appeared to be in average condition, with body scores between 3 and 4. There was no activity during the time of the investigation.


**Conclusion:**



INVESTIGATIONS & ADVOCACY

(443) 821-3343  
animalsangels.org

Animal's Angels first Kentucky investigation has revealed that this state deserves a lot of our attention. We have identified the main kill buyers and started to documented conditions of the horses and the sites. But this is just the start, more investigations will follow. Our goal is to collect and use evidence to create **significant public awareness**, to push hard for **better laws and better enforcement** and to **target offenders in the courts**.