Imported horse meat: a new European rule may exacerbate the suffering of horses

Six international animal welfare organizations * are calling for a ban on horse and equine meat imported into Europe and Switzerland from horses slaughtered in the Americas. Supported by the Eurogroup for Animals, they denounce the deplorable conditions of keeping, transporting and slaughtering horses whose meat is destined for the European market. This trade, which is a source of great suffering, does not comply with the requirements of the European Union in terms of animal protection. In addition to maltreatment, the ** survey conducted in the United States reveals a lack of traceability of slaughtered animals, which is likely to present a risk to public health.

From today, 1st March 2017, a recent resolution of the European Commission *** applies imported horse meat will now be derived "from domestic socalled which have been kept for at least six months" in The third country before slaughter. This quarantine measure, taken to address the problem of traceability of horses and to minimize the risk of drug residues in meat, appears inadequate and may further aggravate the dramatic situation of the approximately 44,000 American horses slaughtered in Canada, as well as Brazilian horses slaughtered in Uruguay for export to the European market.

Indeed, the requirement of a six-month waiting period will not clarify the origin of horses trafficked (flights in Argentina or smuggling in Uruguay) or offer guarantees concerning the absence of residues Of substances prohibited in meat, such as phenylbutazone, after this period. On the other hand, the gathering and gathering pens of horses intended for butchery, dirty and already saturated, will have to keep waiting more animals wounded, weakened or even gestating. The list of the suffering inflicted on horses destined for the international trade in meat is long: transport over hundreds of kilometers without water or food in obsolete trucks, brutal handling by unskilled personnel, feedlots and enclosures of non-compliant slaughterhouses And overcrowded,

The two-year survey (2015-2016) in the United States, Canada, Uruguay and Argentina by the associations AWF and TSB, Animals' Angels USA and FTA shows that the conditions of detention, Slaughtering of horses for slaughter has not improved since that carried out in 2012. This new survey reveals cruel practices throughout the production chain which run counter to the standards of animal welfare in force in Europe or in Switzerland, as well as an absence of traceability, notes the Eurogroup for Animals. While previous investigations have resulted in a ban on Mexican horse meat imports into the EU in 2015, such a ban has not been applied to countries such as Argentina, Uruguay and Canada. However, production conditions in approved abattoirs in North and South America pose similar problems, in terms of equine welfare and consumer protection, than those reported in Mexico.

For animal welfare organizations, "the only way to remedy this situation is a European ban on imports of horse meat produced in cruel conditions on the other side of the Atlantic". They also call for the labeling of origin of meat, which has become compulsory in the bovine and swine sectors, to be required for horsemeat. For now, there is no obligation to mention the country of origin on the label.

On a herd of more than one million horses, France raises less than 10% for the production of horses especially to Italy. Conversely, it imports massive adult horse meat to meet the demand of French consumers from France is derived from domestic production. Almost all the meat sold by the supermarket is imp

Latin America, Canada, Argentina and Uruguay are the largest suppliers in France. On their side,
The collective, supported by Eurogroup for Animals (Brussels), includes Welfarm (France), the Association Animaux (France), the Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF,), Tierschutzbund Zürich (TSB, Switzerland), Eyes on the Animals (USA) and For the Animals (FTA, Uruguay).

** https://youtu.be/Jo_G9DXIOx8


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