

Testimony of Lester Castro Freidlander DVM

June 5th, 2019

Before the NYS Senate on Racing and Wagering - Concerning Racehorses

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.

My name is Lester Castro Friedlander. I am a Former New York State Horse Racing and Wagering Board Veterinarian. I am also a former United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Inspection Service Supervisory Veterinary Medical Officer; I was the USDA Veterinary Trainer of the Year.

I came here to speak against the slaughter of horses. New York State should not be a pipeline for horses to be slaughtered in Canada. I am basing my professional opinion as a horse race track veterinarian; as a veterinarian for USDA, FSIS, a veterinary trainer and also my knowledge of The United States Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA).

Cattle can be put in a head restraint, to immobilize their head allowing for the correct placing of the captive bolt in the middle of the forehead, resulting in accurate penetration the brain and disrupting the central nervous system impulses to the rest of the body, leaving the animal insensitive to pain. Horses are creatures of flight, they are stronger than cattle, and their necks are anatomically longer and therefore cannot be put in a head restraint to immobilize their head so that they can be accurately stunned by the captive bolt. Therefore, they are often conscious during butchering.

Furthermore, if the horse is struck more than 1 time with the captive bolt, it is a violation of The Humane Methods of Slaughter Act.

The use of a 22 caliber or higher pistol is also a challenge in stunning a horse. The Plant Employee must hit the forehead of the horse at a 90 degree angle to penetrate the skull to be effective. If this is not done, the bullet will ricochet off the skull and could endanger humans who are working near the stunning box.

Also, several medications routinely administered to equines are carcinogens and detrimental to humans and other animals. Several of these medications administered to horses, are labeled "Not to be used on animals intended for human consumption." The most up to date list enumerates that there are 119 different drugs found in Race Horses; this is why in the 1970's, the United States Food and Drug Administration, (FDA) made the statement that "Equines are considered Companion Animals, like Dogs and Cats, and should not be considered Livestock."

After considering the pain and suffering, the inhumane treatment and abuse that equines go thru during the transport and slaughter process and the public health significance of eating horse meat, I believe that horses, when they are no longer wanted or useful, should be humanely euthanized.

Respectfully Yours,

Dr. Lester Castro Friedlander, BA, DVM President, Citizens Against Equine Slaughter -
www.noequineslaughter.org Board of Directors: International Fund for Horses