

To eat or not to eat horse meat

From [The Fund for Horses](#)

July 2022

Horse slaughter is not about controlling the “unwanted horse” population; a way of getting rid of sick, diseased or mentally disturbed horses; preventing horse abuse, abandonment, theft or similar crimes. Make no mistake. Horse slaughter exists solely to provide horse meat for its customers.



Horse slaughter is a brutal and terrifying death and exists to supply the human demand for horse meat and make a profit from it, and for no other reason. Should people be eating their meat?

Who eats it

In [an article](#) defending and promoting the human consumption of horse meat, [AG Daily recently wrote](#): “The top 10 horse meat-producers order are China, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Russia, the United States, Canada, Brazil, Australia, and Kyrgyzstan.”

“Surprisingly, although horse meat is consumed in most of Europe and Asia, there are a few countries that stray away from eating horse. For example, the United Kingdom abhors horse meat, sharing sentiments similar to many Americans, while Germans and South Koreans are also known to turn their noses up at horse dishes.”

Those who turn their noses up at horse meat are smart to. Here is why.

Horse meat is toxic

To those people who say it is perfectly alright for horse meat to enter the human food chain — consider this. Horse meat is toxic because of the number of drugs given them in their lifetimes which bars their meat from entering the human food chain.

Hundreds of chemicals are applied to or ingested by slaughter horses on a constant basis throughout their lives. These drugs are often labeled “Not for use in animals used for food/that will be eaten by humans.” Over fifty known drugs are expressly [prohibited by current federal regulations](#) for use in food animals (for example, Phenylbutazone, or “Bute,” a pain reliever known to cause potentially fatal human diseases). Any use of those drugs should block any animal’s use as food, yet almost every horse who is slaughtered for their meat has been exposed to many of these prohibited drugs.

Racehorses are not only given the above-mentioned drugs as a matter of routine, but many are also given illegal drugs as well, such as “chemicals that bulk up pigs and cattle before slaughter, cobra venom, Viagra, blood doping agents, stimulants and cancer drugs.” (*New York Times*, March 25, 2012)

“According to the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act horses are considered livestock. Otherwise, horses fall into a gray area because they have been slaughtered for human and animal consumption in the past but are also viewed as companion animals. Labels on FDA-approved horse drugs state, when applicable, that the product is not for use in horses intended for food production.” – From AVMA American Veterinary Medical Association

Additionally, there are many drugs and substances regularly used on horses that have never been tested on humans. The potential danger of eating them is completely unknown.

Finally, [The United States Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act](#) presumes any animals or food with prohibited substances are “adulterated” and cannot be sold for human consumption, and horse meat is most assuredly in our opinion tainted as a matter of routine. [**The United States Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act is a set of laws passed by Congress in 1938 giving authority to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to oversee the safety of food, drugs, medical devices, and cosmetics.* Updated 20 July 2022]

Testing

• Canada

The [AG Daily article](#) also states that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) performs safety inspections of horse meat. Phenylbutazone, or “bute” in particular, is not approved for use in food animals. So far so good, until this. “The CFIA has been testing horse meat since 2002 and has had few issues with compliance rates for drug residues.” Oh, really? That seems impossible.

Speaking of testing, *The Journal of Equine Veterinary Science* [noted](#) that phenylbutazone, commonly referred to as “bute” was one of the most frequently identified therapeutic medications found in equine anti-doping tests.

• Mexico

There are two horse slaughter facilities in Zacatecas, Mexico — both of which are federally inspected, but only one of them meets both Mexican and European standards. You can imagine the standard of horse meat they are producing. The AG Daily does not mention them.

Vet approved

In the US virtually every major veterinary organization is pro horse slaughter. They are the ones who [coined the phrase “unwanted horse”](#).

Horse slaughter is not about controlling the “unwanted horse” population; a way of getting rid of sick, diseased or mentally disturbed horses; preventing horse abuse, abandonment, theft or similar crimes. Make no mistake. Horse slaughter exists solely to provide horse meat for its customers.

By the way, it just so happens that all of animal agriculture, including slaughter facilities, employ a significantly high number of veterinarians.

We repeat

Horse slaughter exists to supply the human demand for horse meat and make a profit from it, and for no other reason.