

May 31, 2007

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ANIMALS AND THE LAW

A.2572/S.1462

By: Glick, Co-Sponsors Ball/Rosenthal
Status: Referred to Agriculture 1/17/07
Senate-Third Reading
Effective: on the 120th day after bill
becomes a law

AN ACT to amend the Agriculture and Markets Law in relation to prohibiting the slaughtering of horses for human consumption.

Law and Sections Referred to: Amend the Agriculture and Markets Law by adding a new section 380 prohibiting the slaughtering of horses for human consumption.

Report prepared by: Special Committee on Animals and the Law

THIS BILL IS RECOMMENDED FOR PASSAGE

The Committee supports the basic purpose of this bill in prohibiting the slaughter of horses for human consumption and recommends passage. However, we would like to point out that the Committee as well as many equine organizations note the underlying dilemma and controversy over this bill which centers on the over population of horses and the need to deal with this issue as well.

Clearly, the slaughtering of horses, which this bill defines to include all members of the equine family, is the ultimate form of animal cruelty. The undiscerning methods used to bring work horses, race horses, pet horses and wild horses to the slaughter house is beyond deplorable.

More than 49,000 horses have been slaughtered in the United States in 2003. A vast majority of these horses are being slaughtered for human consumption abroad. There are presently three USDA inspected horse slaughter plants in the United States, none in New York, and four in Canada, which all process horse meat for human consumption in Europe and Japan. It has become a very lucrative business with horse meat selling for up to \$25.00 per pound, yielding a annual revenue of more than \$300 million. In the United States, eating horse meat is as un-American as wearing dog fur. It does not stand to reason then, that the United States should be the major exporter of horse meat. It does not reason that New York should allow the transport of horses to slaughter for human consumption

It is estimated that more than a third of all slaughter-bound horses in the United States have been bred for racing. They are either no longer competitive or just do not make the grade. Others include camp, show, "backyard", rental, urban carriage horses, PMU mares and foals, and unwanted pregnant mares and barren broodmares. Most horses sold at auction are purchased by "killer buyers" (middlemen for the slaughter houses), and go directly to slaughter without

disclosure or the knowledge of the sellers. This promotes and often results in consumer fraud and often enough, horse theft.

The transport of horses going to the slaughterhouse has been the subject of much criticism and legal action. New York Agriculture and Markets Law Section 359-a entitled the Transportation of Horses, makes it illegal to transport horses to slaughter using the inhumane methods that are being utilized by the “killer buyers”. Horses are being shipped in cattle trailers, sometimes over thirty hours without food, water or rest. Arriving at the slaughterhouse, they are driven out into the killing factory and bludgeoned with a four inch captive bolt gun which drives a spike into their skull. This treatment to say the least is cruel and inhumane showing a blatant disregard to one of America’s most majestic and noble creatures. Making it illegal to transport horses to slaughter for human consumption will make many of the issues involving the existing conditions present during transport non issues. The resources allocated for the enforcement of Agriculture and Markets Law Section 359-a can be used to enforce a law all together prohibiting the transport of horses to slaughter. The method by which the horses get transported will no longer be at issue or of concern.

The proposed bill does not address the issue which is the crux of the argument used to oppose this bill, specifically that there is a gross equine over population.

Efforts need to be made to educate the public with respect to responsible horse ownership, which includes discriminate, thoughtful breeding practices and humane euthanasia. Organizations such as the Unwanted Horse Coalition need state and local support of its mission to reduce the number of unwanted horses and to improve their welfare through education and commitment to the health, safety and responsible care and disposition of these horses.

Horses are an integral part of our heritage and culture and just like cats and dogs have been favored animals. Americans do not eat horses, just as they do not eat cats and dogs. Some cultures do eat cats and dogs, but we would be appalled to supply those countries with such a food service. We choose to humanely euthanize animals considered to be our beloved pets and companions. Horses are companion animals, just like dogs and cats. Like our beloved canine and feline friends, equines deserve love and compassion at the end of their lives instead of terror and abuse. Horse slaughter is not and never will be a form of humane euthanasia. It is an industry based on greed and used as a tool to dispose of unwanted horses for profit.

While the present bill does not deal with the issue of the existing equine over population, this bill is significant and critical in the efforts to provide humane treatment to another domesticated animal. For these reasons, this bill is recommended for passage by the Assembly and the Senate.

Chair of the Committee: Holly Kennedy Passantino, Esq.