



## Facts & Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

- IEBA member companies are privately held companies formed for the purpose of developing humane meat processing options for the horse industry and marketing humanely produced and verified food safe equine products.
- IEBA member companies work with local, state, and tribal economic development and regulatory entities to ensure success, and to provide humane and economically feasible horse management and land resource solutions.
- IEBA member companies specialize in equine and other alternative, high quality protein products.
- Animals will be procured from a variety of sources that will be processed at the facilities.
- IEBA member companies partner with international and U.S. based companies with domestic and worldwide markets for horse meat. Product will be distributed to a variety of domestic ethnic, specialty, and gourmet markets, in addition to global customers in the protein industry.
- All plants will be equine processing facilities. In some cases the facilities may be capable of processing equine, beef, and bison. The primary species is likely to be equine.
- IEBA member companies affiliated plants will pay competitive salaries with benefits, and will primarily employ and fully train local workers.
- The plants will operate as “humanely certified” processing facilities under the auspices of the International Equine Business Association. All affiliated facilities will be managed and audited to ensure the highest standard of humane handling, and the highest standard of food safety including scientifically valid testing throughout the supply chain that ensures zero tolerance for drug residue or other contamination, and produces the highest possible quality product to every IEBA member company’s customers.
- Humane handling systems will reduce animal fear and stress providing a higher quality product and allow the use of a humane designation in marketing programs.
- Plants will comply with all local, state, tribal, and federal regulations, will be environmentally sound, will mitigate all negative impacts to the community, and will work proactively with local, state, tribal, and regional stakeholders to ensure the sustainable economic and social benefits brought by a successful and well-managed enterprise.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### What kind of product will be produced?

- The primary product will be fresh and frozen meat.
- The various cuts of horse meat are similar to beef or bison, ranging from high-end roasts and steaks, to ground meat, and specialty meats.

### Is there a market for horse meat in the United States?

- Yes. There was a fairly robust niche market for horse meat in the United States into the early 1990s.
- This is a protein valued by three-quarters of the world's cultures, and there are, according to Bouvry Exports, one of the leading horse meat companies in the world, more meals of horse meat served every day, worldwide, than there are MacDonald's hamburgers. China is the largest consumer, followed closely by Mexico, which uses 50% of its production of horse meat at home, the other half exported. Horse meat is available throughout Canada. It is used in the Caribbean and South America. There is a thriving market in Asia. Argentina is now the largest exporter of horse meat in the world, and their largest customer is Russia. Obviously, the U.S. has citizens from all of these cultures, and ethnic communities in major cities are welcoming the re-introduction of horse meat. These groups include the Tongan population in Salt Lake City, the Mongolians in Seattle and Washington D.C., and others.
- You could buy a horse steak at the dining room at Harvard in the 1980s, and there was a successful horse meat business on both the East and West Coasts throughout that decade. The U.S. is currently importing nearly 400 tons of horse meat from Canada for zoo and circus animal diets today.
- There are essentially three reasons why consumers choose horse meat:
  1. **Gourmet** - Horse meat is a delicious meat prized by culinary aficionados that is often described as dark red, sweet, and similar to elk or bison.
  2. **Health Conscious** - Horse meat is a lean, nutritious meat containing up to 55% more protein (55% more for ground meat/20% more protein in steaks and roasts), 40% less fat, very high in iron and other nutrients (thus the dark red color), and has up to 18 times the Omega-3 fatty acids of beef. Because of its nutritional density and high protein it is sought after by athletes. It is prized by mothers as baby food in places like Japan and Italy.
  3. **Value Conscious** - In every country where horse meat is commonly used today it is generally 40% less in cost than beef and represents a good value for those seeking to feed their families on a tight budget.

### How will waste be handled?

- Plants work with leading nation-wide environmental firms and industry experts to incorporate state-of-the-art waste handling systems.
- According to experts, an equine processing plant will have less demand on the waste water treatment system than a standard livestock processing facility because an equine carcass has much less fat, that component of animal processing most subject to collection and disposal .

- Initial facilities are existing meat processing plants with lagoon systems that have already been permitted and approved by the state environmental agencies.
- Residual bones will be marketed for reprocessing for use in porcelain production and other purposes.
- All blood will be collected through a blood collection/processing system for various industrial, consumer product and agricultural applications.
- Remaining waste will be collected by regional licensed rendering companies.

**Will there be odors or other troubling aesthetic problems?**

- Horses are naturally clean animals with less smell than other forms of livestock, and all corral and pen odors from manure will be mitigated by good livestock handling procedures that keep odor minimized.
- The plant itself will not produce any odors that would bother even close neighbors.
- The pens and corrals are covered, as are all chutes leading into the plant. Casual passers-by will observe well cared-for horses standing in a corral or small pen.
- Plants will be located in rural areas away from housing and traffic.

**Where will plant employees come from?**

- We expect all employees will come from the local area.
- Every employee will undergo an extremely detailed and rigorous pre-employment background check.
- Once hired, employees will receive a competitive salary with benefits, and upon becoming vested, also have the opportunity to acquire an ownership share in the company.

**Will the local community and the state benefit from this company?**

- Management and employees will be residents and active members of the community.
- Employees will be encouraged to be involved in civic projects and organizations.
- Economic opportunity afforded by a well-managed company will provide revenue to support local governments, and will provide a much needed boost to the local economy.

**Will the community experience a sudden rise in crime?**

- There's no reason to expect any impact on local crime rates. All employees and contractors will be carefully and thoroughly screened, and most will be established area residents. These will be employees who are well compensated and fairly treated by management.
- In the case where the plant has been a meat processing facility for many years, there is no reason to expect any sudden change of demographics as a result of a switch from cattle to horses as the species being processed.

**Will a meat processing facility in our community increase or decrease the property values of our homes?**

- If there is any correlation at all between the presence of a well managed meat processing facility and area home values, it is likely an increase in value because of lower community unemployment and more economic investment and opportunity for the community at large.

### **What sort of horses will be processed?**

- Plants will primarily procure mature horses that are in good shape, and free of any veterinary medicine residues. Eligibility for processing will be verified through a rigid testing protocol. These horses will be purchased from a variety of sources where the sellers are assured they will be humanely euthanized in a government-regulated facility that is designed for the unique characteristics of the equine species -- although the plants may be capable of processing beef and bison as well.
- Horses that have prospects for other purposes because of training and temperament may be provided to **United Horsemen**, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, that will market those horses for appropriate uses, or provide them to charitable organizations, such as equine therapy programs.
- IEBA member companies associated plants will be set up to primarily provide the high-quality well-processed meat sought by the international marketplace, as well as by domestic gourmet, specialty, health-conscious, and value-seeking customers.

### **Will horses be cloned, or will horses be bred specifically as food animals?**

- Cloning is a very expensive procedure that is only used for the most high quality breeding and performance animals, and costs many thousands of dollars per head.
- Horses are bred specifically for certain specialized markets in both Canada and Europe. Individual U.S. producers may decide to participate in that, but it is not likely.
- Generally, in the U.S., the processing of horses has always been and will likely continue to be a secondary use for horses that are otherwise unwanted or unusable for other purposes, and allows for the good and valuable use of the animal.

### **Isn't horse processing cruel and inhumane?**

- No. All horses moving to processing facilities must be transported under U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Humane Transport of Horses to Slaughter Act regulations.
- Horses, like all other species of livestock used for food, are regulated by USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS), which provides all federally trained and supervised in-plant inspectors. All livestock must be euthanized and processed following regulations under the [U.S. Humane Methods of Slaughter Act](#), one of the highest standards for humane handling in the world. This law requires all animals be handled with a minimum of stress, and that they be humanely killed in a manner that ensures instantaneous insensibility.
- There are two approved methods of stunning horses in order to ensure instantaneous insensibility, either gunshot, or penetrating captive bolt.
- USDA FSIS inspectors are required to be present when any animal is processed for food. This inspection requires examining the live animal prior to processing (ante mortem inspection), ensuring complete and total insensibility before the animal is processed, and examining the carcass afterwards (postmortem inspection).
- All equine plants will be utilizing the "[Recommended Handling Guidelines and Animal Welfare Assessment Tool for Horses](#)" developed by the Horse Welfare Alliance of Canada (HWAC) and adopted by the International Equine Business Association (IEBA). This system provides progressive, comprehensive and consistent animal welfare standards for the handling of horses at processing. The system will be utilized for third party audits and by

the company for guidance, education and in-house assessments. These guidelines offer detailed information about equine behavior and handling, facility design, transport, compromised animals, effective stunning and willful acts of abuse. The system is based on the understanding animal behavior is key to humane livestock handling. When proper handling techniques are used the animals experience less fear and stress, and the job of moving animals is easier. Reduced stress also provides for a higher quality end product.

- Just as is done in leading Canadian horse meat facilities, U.S. plants will be utilizing video surveillance throughout the facility.

***“It is our belief that these tools developed for the welfare of horses will set the standards for the meat processing industry. The program will provide our management and employees with the training and guidance they need to ensure all horses are handled properly. The guidelines, along with video surveillance, will bring confidence to our producers and our customers.”***

*Claude Bouvry, Bouvry Exports, Alberta, Canada.*

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