



4. I am rancher and also a horse owner.
5. I believe that horses are slaughtered humanely at horse processing facilities when they are in operation. Government regulations require this and are enforced. I also feel that there is self-enforcement by the facilities themselves. I know that cattle, hogs and sheep are humanely slaughtered as per regulations and enforcement.
6. Horse meat is definitely safe for human consumption. Having been consumed by man for thousands of years, it has provided a source of sustenance with no ill effects. If horse meat is not safe for human consumption, it is due to mishandling of the meat after slaughter as it moves to consumption by the consumer. Like cattle, hogs and sheep, drug withdrawal times prior to slaughter would be regulated and enforced.
7. Collateral effects on the environment and the safety of the nation's food supply are nonexistent. I fail to see why either would be an issue! Environmental regulations are in place to prevent this as well as food safety laws. In the horse processing facilities, these regulations would be strictly observed by the operators of the facility and by the government. This would be due to the high profile of the horse slaughter issue. A negative environmental impact comes from horses overgrazing areas where they are dumped because the owner cannot dispose of them.
8. On the matter of the inspection process being delayed by the imposition of the NEPA process, I feel it is totally unnecessary. NEPA inspections are not required for other animal processing facilities and should not ever be. If the horse processing facilities are required NEPA inspections, it will soon be applied to other animal processing facilities.
9. The failure of timely inspection of the Valley Meat facility has the potential to lead to the ban of such facilities again through legal maneuvering led by those opposing humane slaughter of horses. Since 2007, the horse industry has been adversely affected by the ban that was in place. I have personally seen the effects of this. Horses that are not fit to ride for one reason or another, or owners who are not able to dispose of the horses, have driven the price of such horses down to such a level that they are unsalable in many cases. I know of cases in our area where horses have suffered neglect due the owners not having an outlet to dispose of them.
10. As a horse owner, it hurts me to know that horses die a lingering death due to starvation or abuse or neglect because the owner is unable to sell them for slaughter. As a horse owner, I feel fortunate that any horses we have that might be sold for slaughter instead are able to be humanely euthanized and disposed of on our ranch. As a person who loves horses, I

