



State of New Mexico

Susana Martinez
Governor

April 23, 2012

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I am writing to urge the Food Safety and Inspection Services (FSIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture to deny any application that would seek to operate a horse slaughterhouse in New Mexico. I understand that such an application has been filed, and FSIS is currently reviewing it for approval.

Like the overwhelming majority of Americans across the country, New Mexicans oppose the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Not only is there not a domestic demand for horsemeat, the act of slaughter itself is considered inhumane by experts, given that a horse's biology makes them difficult to stun, leaving them conscious during the slaughter process.

In many ways, it has been New Mexico's love of horses and our cowboy culture that has shaped our identity throughout the years. From our legendary rodeos and horse tracks around the state, New Mexicans' affinity for horses remains an integral part of who we are. In fact, the first horse race recorded on U.S. soil was run in 1540, in a small community, now known as Bernalillo, New Mexico.

Throughout the years, New Mexicans have considered horses as companions, contributing to the long-term success of our ranching and livestock industries, with the state's agricultural industry generating \$3 billion annually and directly supporting over 23,000 jobs.

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I am disappointed that the federal government lifted restrictions on horse meat processing for human consumption and I would respectfully request that the opposition of a state be considered when deciding whether to approve an application to operate a horse slaughterhouse within state boundaries.

I am committed to working with New Mexico's Congressional Delegation to support legislation that would reevaluate the practice of horse slaughter for human consumption in the United States.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susana Martinez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being significantly larger and more stylized than the others.

Susana Martinez
Governor