

The “Unwanted” Horse in the U.S.

An Overview of the Issue

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“Animal Welfare is fast becoming the major challenge of the veterinary profession for this century.”

Dr. Bernie Osborn, Dean of the University of California - Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine.

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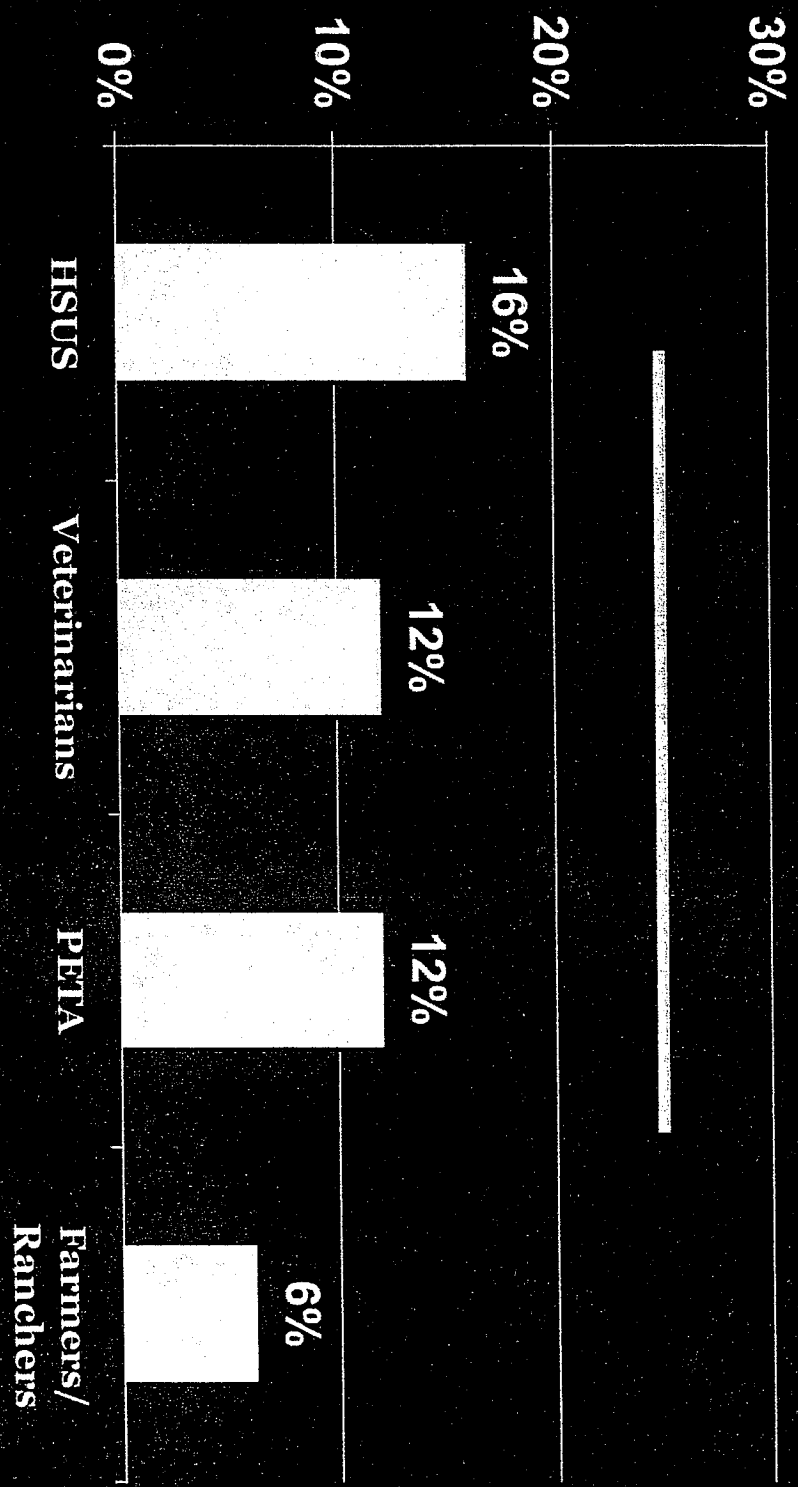
“Animal Welfare is fast becoming the major challenge of the veterinary profession for this century”

Dr. Bernie Osborn, Dean of the University of California -
Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine.

**“The greatest threat to animal agriculture is a
misinformed consumer”**

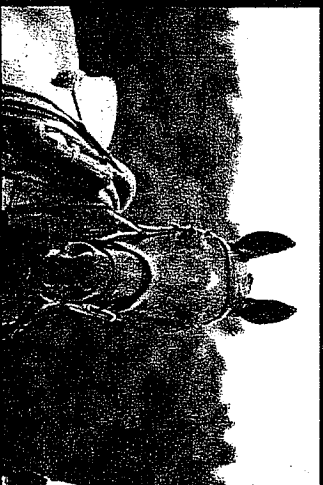
Todd Allen, Former President, Kansas Livestock
Association”

Center for Food Integrity Survey: Most credible source of information on farm animal care according to consumers



What Started the “Unwanted” Horse Discussion?

- ❖ 2000-BSE outbreak in Europe & 2001-Foot & Mouth disease epidemic in Great Britain
- ❖ Increased demand for horse meat in Europe
- ❖ Drew media attention to the horse processing plants in the U.S.
- ❖ Stimulated the introduction of federal legislation to ban horse slaughter
- ❖ Fostered realization in U.S. horse industry there was an “unwanted” horse issue



Unwanted Horse Issue

Complicated by:



Horses as livestock vs. companion animals

Horse Related Businesses

Understanding Their Viewpoint.....Experiences

- ❖ Production efficiencies
- ❖ Competitive Pressure, return on investment
- ❖ Tradition (habituation)
- ❖ Often viewed as 'cold' or 'uncaring' by public
- ❖ Equine welfare is important, butthey have to live with business practicalities & demands



Unwanted Horse Issue

Complicated by:



Processing of horses for human consumption

Unwanted Horse Issue

Complicated by:

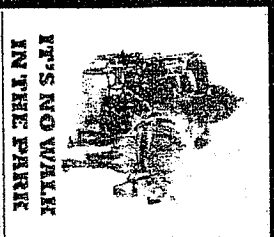


Aggressive campaign by animal activist groups

Animal Protection Activists

Understanding Their Viewpoints.....Experiences

- Come from all walks of life
- Many not familiar with animal industries and animal care practices
- Most driven by genuine desire or passion to make sure animals (as they view them) are used appropriately
- But.....their organizations need to survive/raise money
- Therefore
 - ◆ Create a platform and craft a message that resonates with donors (animal lovers)
 - ◆ Very effective in using 30 second sound bite
 - ◆ Use celebrities to strengthen message



Save all
Animal
NOW
Make a gift of
just \$19 a month.
More->

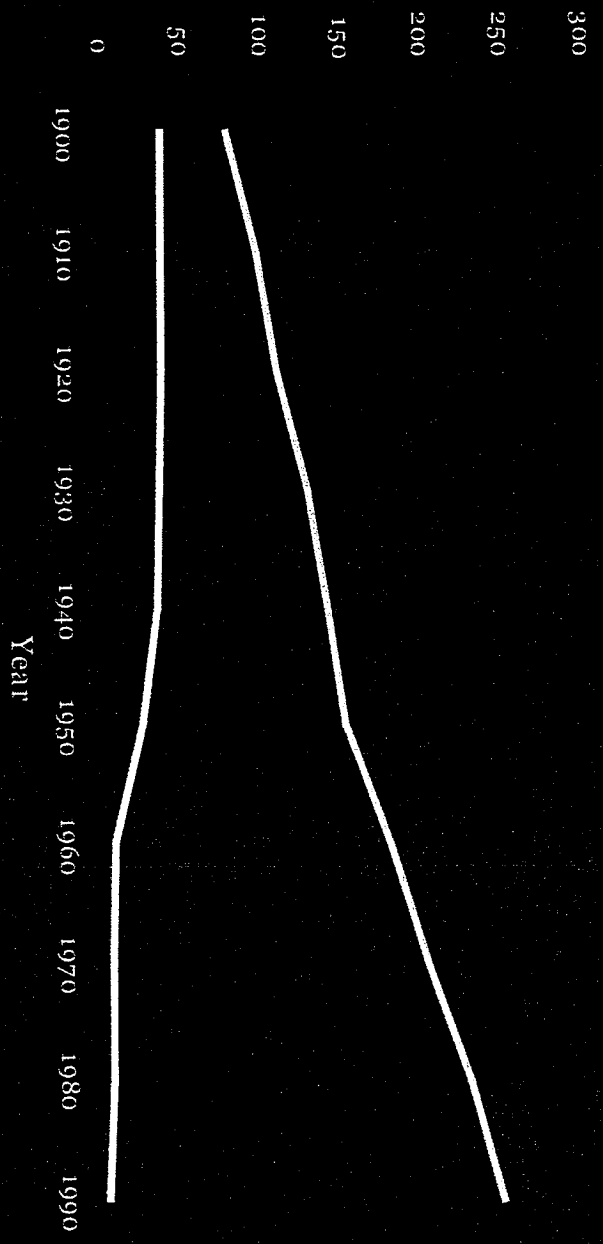


Shortly after the parade
HONORARY CAMPAIGNERS AND CITIES

© 1997 American SPCA

Unwanted Horse Issue Complicated by:

US and Farm Populations: 1900 - 1990

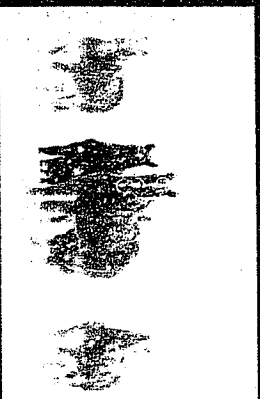


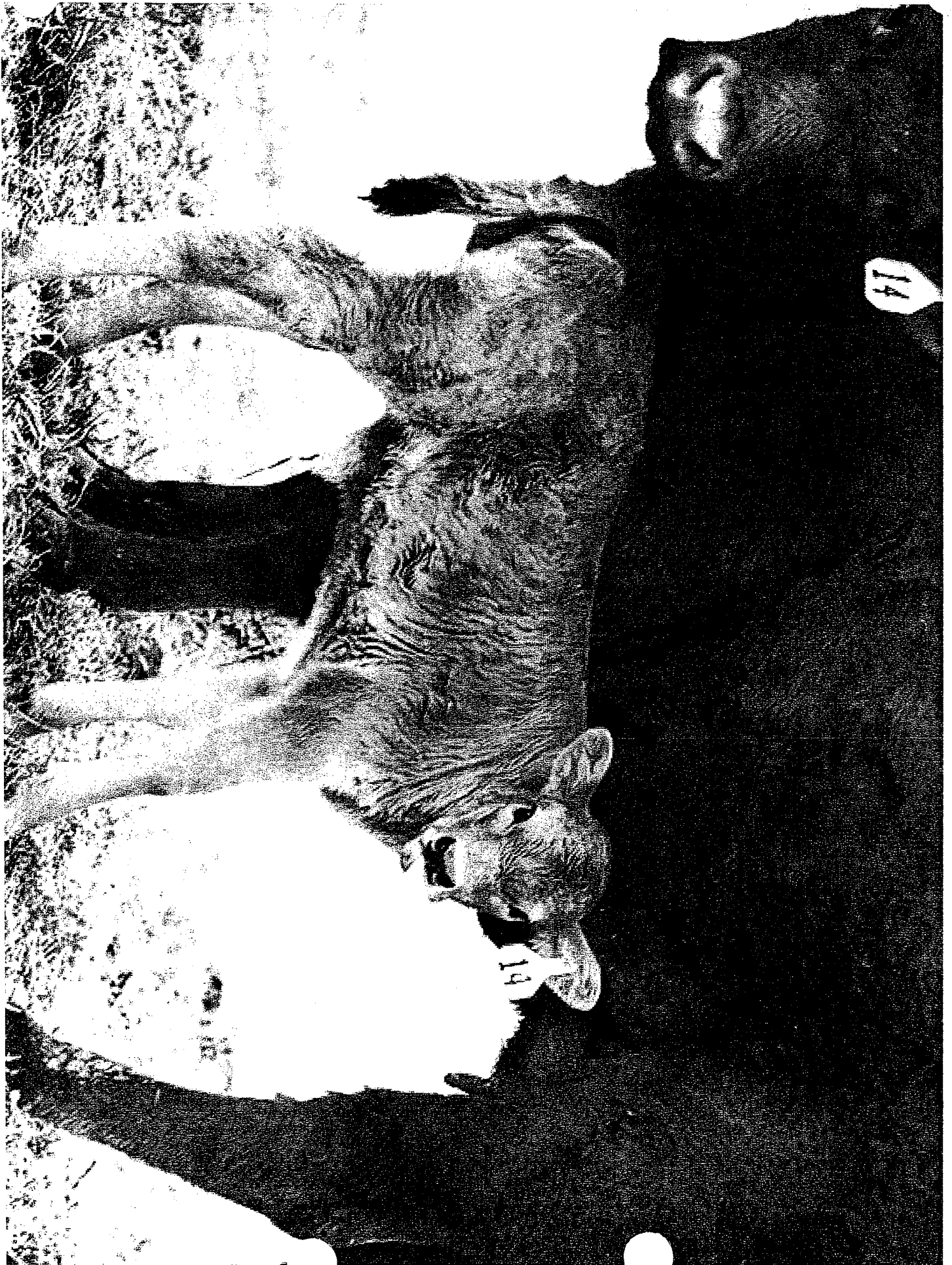
Urbanization

The Public

Understanding Their Viewpoints.....Experiences

- ❖ Urbanization
- ❖ Animals move from utility to companions
- ❖ Are moderate animal rights advocates
- ❖ Vision of animal welfare similar to their own, personal welfare needs
- ❖ Increase in disposable income
- ❖ Want to protect animal welfare.....but aren't always sure what that means





The Daily Journal

January 2009 — Kankakee, Illinois

JOURNAL

Serving Kankakee, Will, Tazewell, Ford, Grundy & Livingston counties.

Speakout from Jan. 4, 2009

It's really sad. And another thing is you could really use a stupid meter in this column because I can't believe the stupidity of most of the people that call into this column.

To all you hunters who kill animals for food, shame on you; you ought to go to the store and buy the meat that was made there, where no animals were harmed.

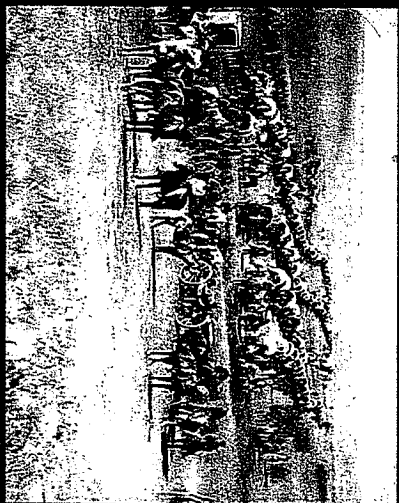
Speakout is an anonymous 24-hour phone line. The Daily Journal edits remarks before publication. Comments are not verified for accuracy; therefore, readers are advised not to rely on assertions of fact. To reach Speakout, call (815) 937-3878.

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Unwanted Horse Issue

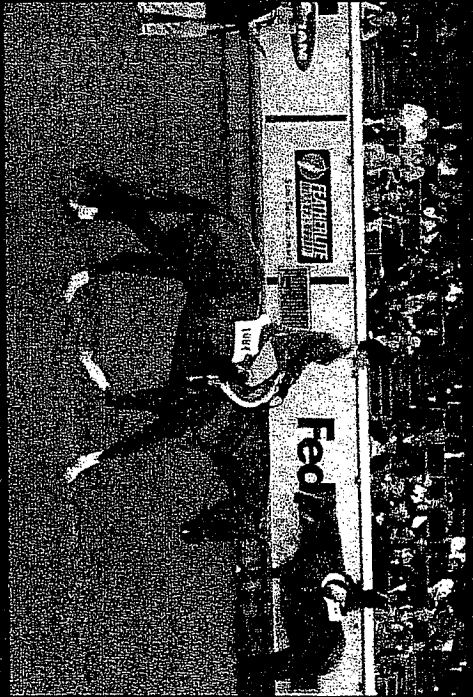
Complicated by:



American Public's love affair with the horse

Unwanted Horse/ Horse Slaughter Connection

- ❖ U.S. horse population peaked in 1910 at 19.8 million head
 - Numbers ↓ as horses lost value as work animals & recreational interest had not yet surfaced
 - Number of horses processed for meat ↑ as national herd was reduced
- ❖ Population reached an all time low of 1.6 million horses in 1974
 - Processing numbers followed & reached an all time low of 40,000 head in 2002
- ❖ Current U.S. horse population ~ 9.3 million
 - Processing numbers ~ 100,000/ Year

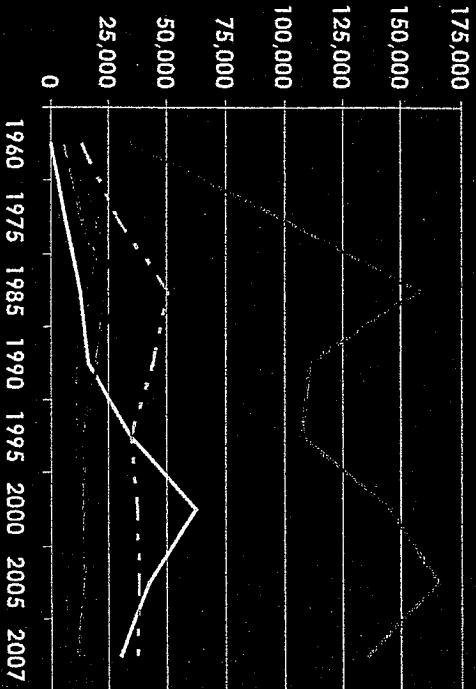


Unwanted Horse / Horse Slaughter Connection

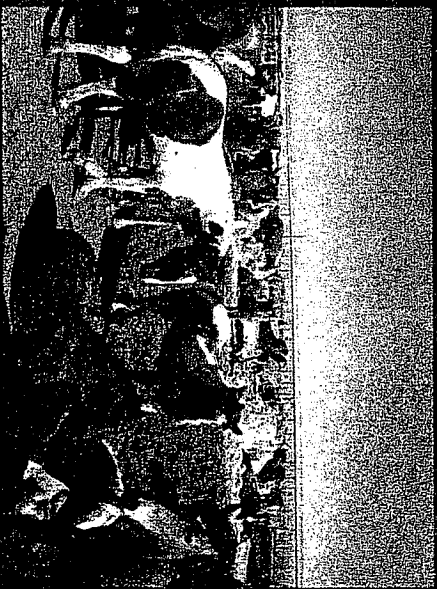
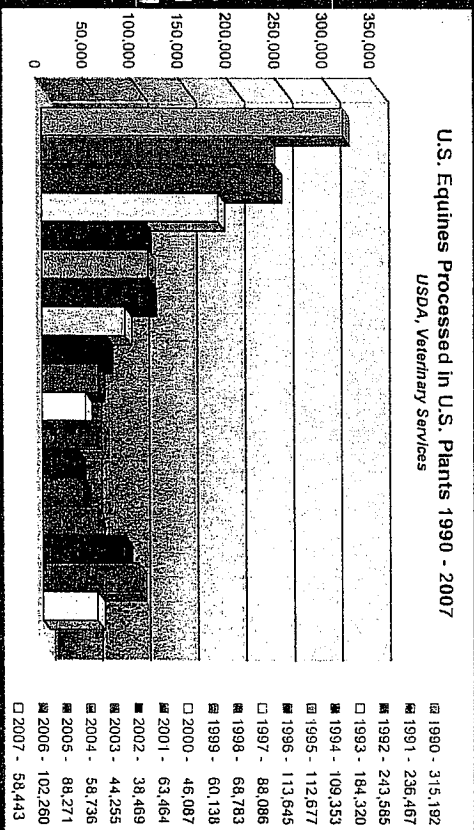
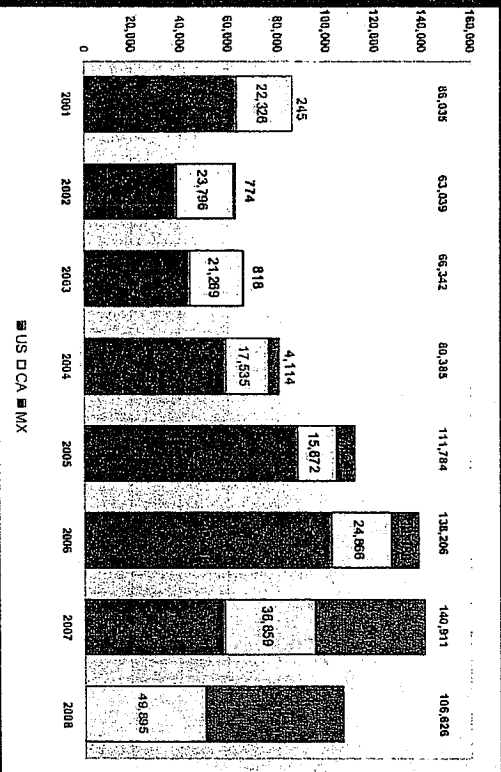
- ❖ Slaughtered horses represent the lowest economic level of the horses population and typify the “unwanted horse”
 - Set the bottom of the horse market
 - Market in U.S. driven by availability of cheap horses, not demand
- ❖ “Slaughter” (U.S.)
 - The humane ending of an animal's life under strict federal regulations and is used only when the carcass is processed at a licensed meat plant for food
- ❖ “Slaughter” (European Union)
 - Humane animal death, no matter the end result of the carcass.



Trends in U.S. Horses Processed for Meat



Appaloosa
 Arabian
 Paint
 Quarter Horse
 Standardbred
 Thoroughbred



What is an "Unwanted" Horse?

❖ Phrase 1st coined by AAEP

❖ "Horses which are no longer wanted by their current owner because they are old, injured, sick, unmanageable, or fail to meet their owner's expectations."*

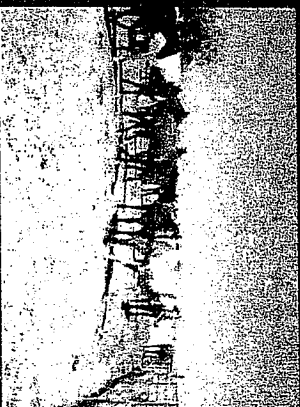
* AAEP hosted Unwanted Horse meeting-2005



Demographics of the “Unwanted” Horse

❖ Generally horses:

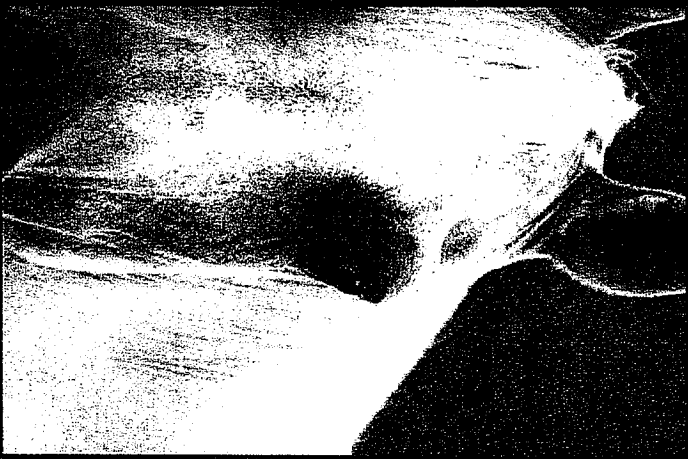
- Old
- Incurably lame
- Behavioral problems
- Dangerous
- Un-adoptable feral horses (mustangs)
- Fail to meet owner's expectations
 - ◆ Unattractive
 - ◆ Not athletic
 - ◆ Unmarketable
 - ◆ Wrong color (no color)
 - ◆ Cost too much to care for
- Normal, healthy horses of various ages and breeds



Demographics of the “Unwanted” Horse

❖ Initial Unknowns:

- What breeds are represented?
- Is there a sex predilection?
- What's their age?
- How many are purebred vs. grade?
- What was their most recent occupation?
- What was their original value?
- What is their current value?
- Do they become neglected, abused, or processed for meat?
- Who is responsible?



How Many "Unwanted" Horses are There?

Information on this page is based on data from the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and the National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS) as of October 2010. The data is preliminary and subject to change. For more information, please contact the Bureau of Land Management, Office of the Director, at (202) 254-2000.

❖ ± 42,178 horses exported to Canada annually for processing in 2009*

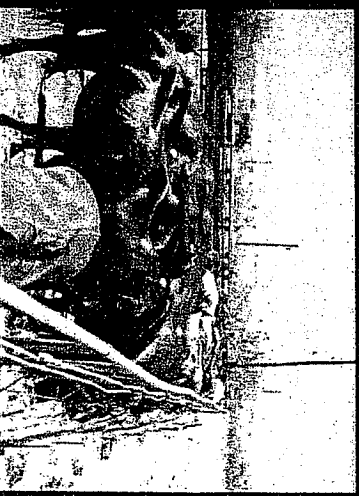
❖ ±46,098 horses exported to Mexico for processing in 2009*

❖ As of Oct. 2010, 103,040 exported for processing

❖ Others

- Indian Nations?
- Abandoned/ neglected/ abused?

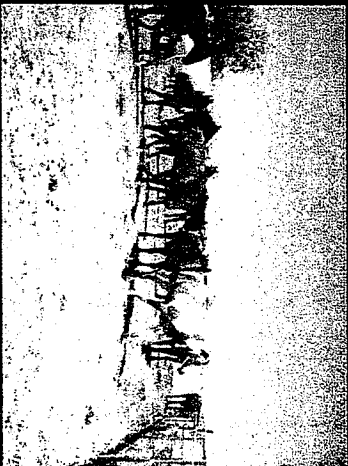
* USDA, Veterinary Services
** Bureau of Land Management



How Many “Unwanted” Horses are there?

❖ BLM Horses

- ❑ BLM Free Roaming Horses & Burros Act of 1971
- ❑ Since 1971, 235,000 horses & burros have been removed from federal lands & adopted
- ❑ Herds double in size every 4 years
- ❑ Horses over the age of 10 yrs or up for adoption 3 times go into long term holding facilities



How Many 'Unwanted' Horses are there?

❖ BLM Horses

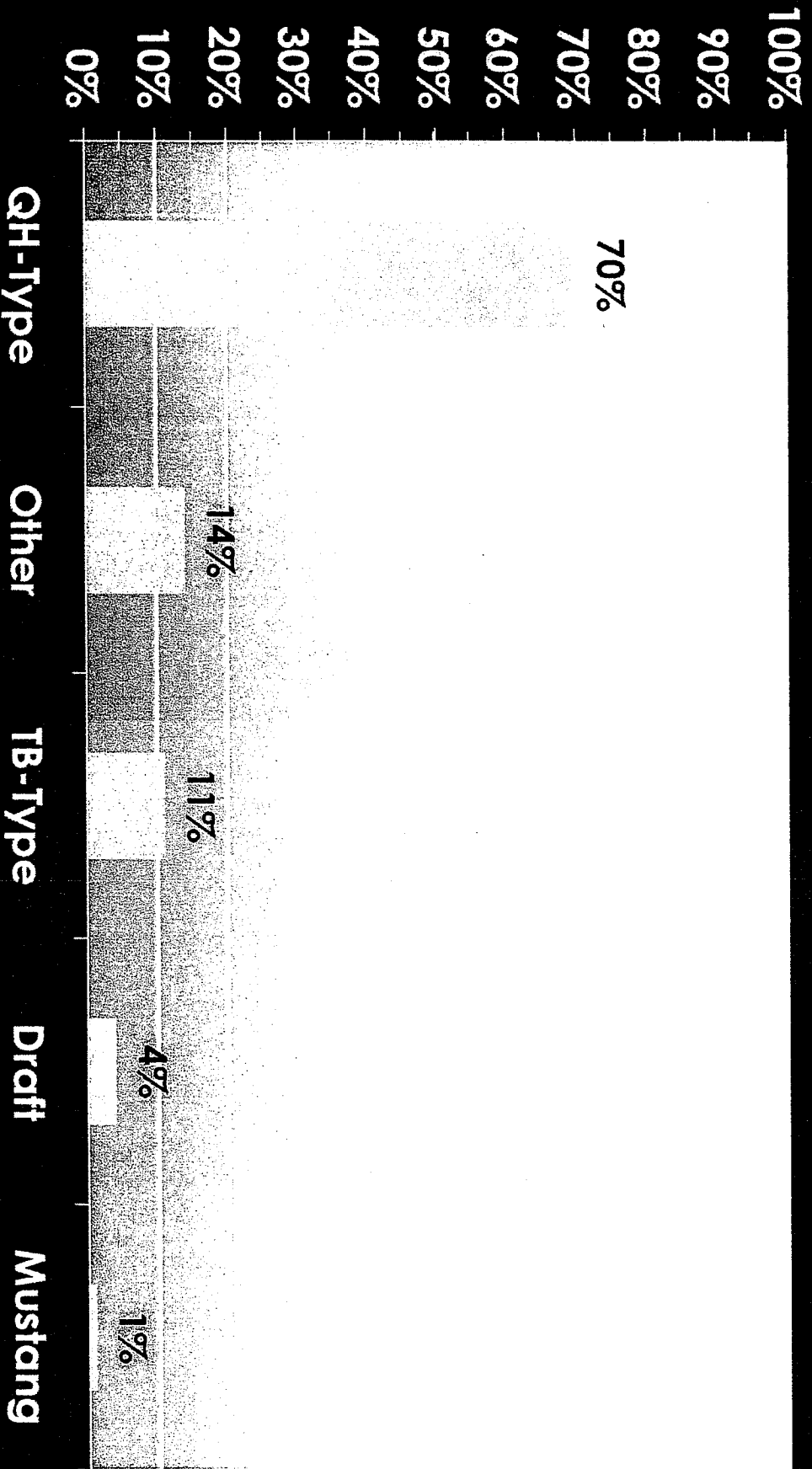
- ❑ 26,400 un-adoptable feral horses in BLM funded sanctuaries*
 - ◆ \$38 Mio spend each year
 - ◆ BLM budget – \$63.9 Mio
- ❑ 11,400 feral horses in BLM adoption pipeline
 - ◆ Cost per horse to remove - \$1,392
- ❑ 38,400 feral horses on the 26.6 million acres
 - ◆ 180 Herd management Areas
 - ◆ 12,000 over range's capacity



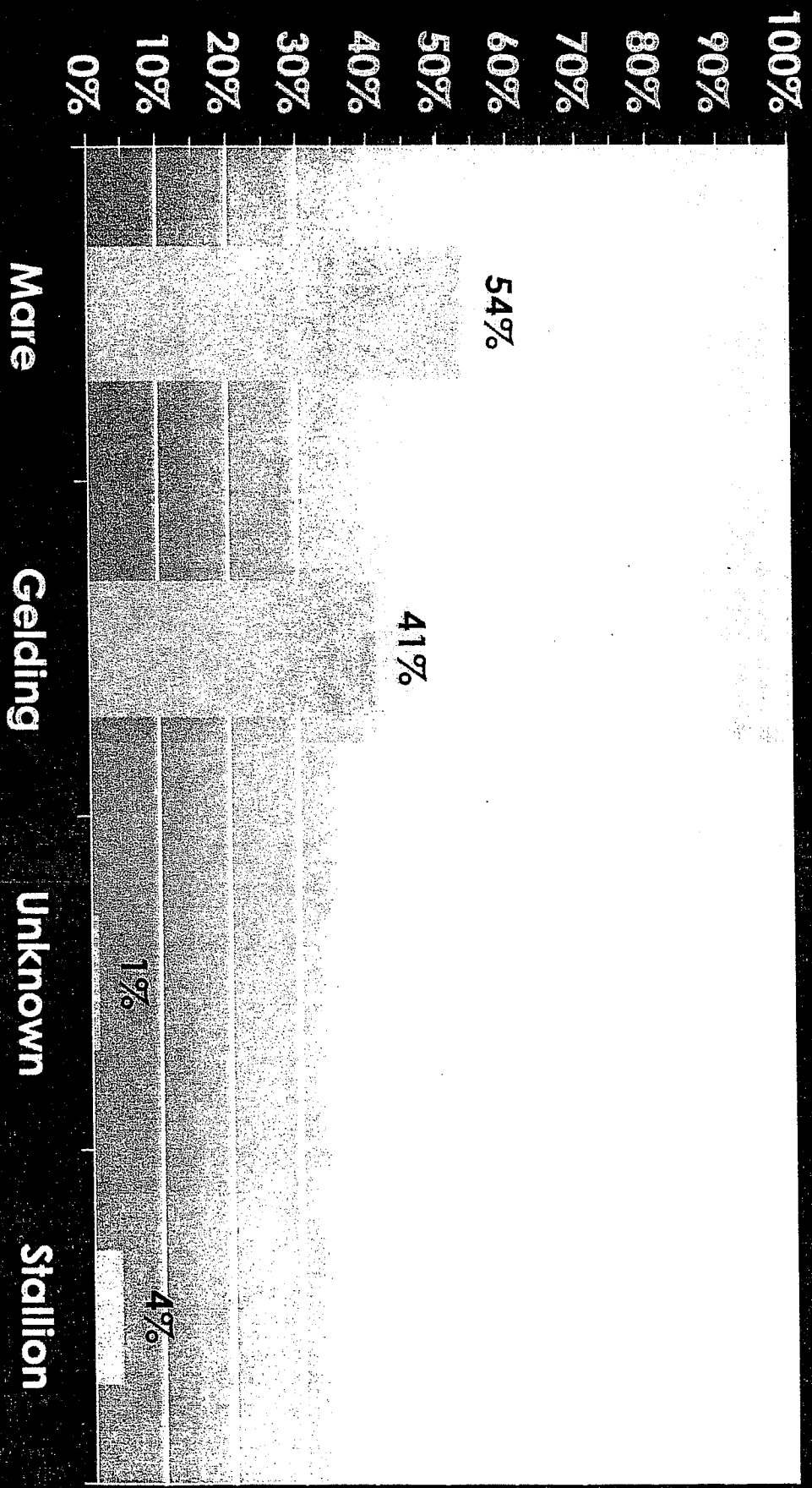
Breed/Type of Horses Processed in U.S.

2001 — 2005

(USDA, Veterinary Services)



Gender of Horses Processed in U.S. 2002 — 2005 (USDA, Veterinary Services)



Unwanted Horse Survey Highlights

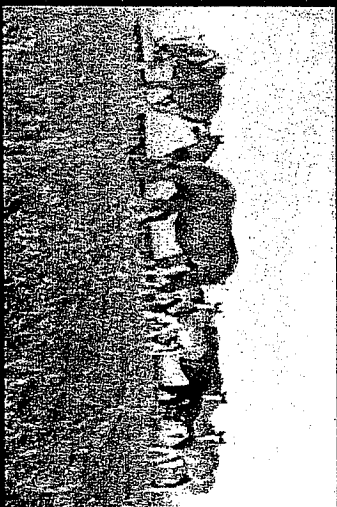
- ❖ **Conducted February – Dec. 2008-Feb. 2009**
 - ☐ **No significant difference by region, district or state**
- ❖ **Website Survey – 23,151 respondents**
 - ☐ **20,484 horse owners**
 - ☐ **2,245 influencers**
 - ◆ **Veterinarians**
 - ◆ **Horse trainers**
 - ◆ **Equine media**
 - ◆ **Equine association staff**
 - ☐ **60 rescue facilities**
 - ☐ **422 non-horse owners**



Unwanted Horse Contributing Factors*

- ❖ Downturn in the economy
- ❖ Closing of nation's processing facilities
- ❖ High cost of euthanasia / carcass disposal
- ❖ Indiscriminate breeding

*UHC's National Assessment Study of Contributing Factors Surrounding the Unwanted Horse Issue, 2009. www.unwantedhorsecoalition.com



Top Indexing Reasons Horses Become Unwanted

❖ Five relate to the owner and three are attributed to the horse itself

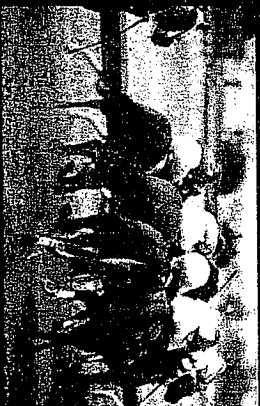
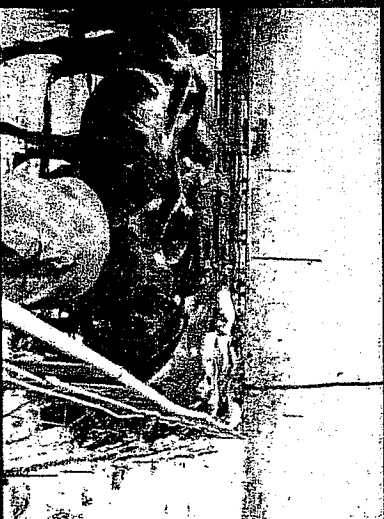
1. Owner could no longer afford
2. Horse was old/ injured
3. Horse was unmanageable/ trainable
4. Owner lost interest in owning a horse
5. Change in Owner's employment status
6. Owner no longer had a use for the horse
7. Horse did not meet owner's expectations
8. Owner no longer had time to spend with the horse



Unwanted Horse Demographics*

- ❖ Unwanted Horse most likely to be sold
 - Show / competition horse
 - Quarter Horse / Paint / Thoroughbred
 - Did not meet owner's expectations
 - 3-10 years of age
 - 45% mares / 48% geldings

- ❖ Unwanted Horse most likely to be donated
 - Race horse
 - Thoroughbred / Quarter Horse
 - Did not meet owner's expectations
 - 6-20 years of age
 - 33% mares / 63% geldings



*JHC's National Assessment Study of Contributing Factors Surrounding the Unwanted Horse Issue, 2009. www.unwantedhorsecoalition.com

Unwanted Horse Demographics

- ❖ Unwanted Horse most likely to be euthanized
 - Recreational/ riding horse
 - Horse was old or had terminal illness/ injury
 - Quarter Horse/ Thoroughbred/ Arabian
 - 10-21+ years
 - 55% geldings/ 42% mares
- ❖ Stallions are seldom sold or donated
- ❖ 75% of unwanted horses sold/donated/euthanized were registered



Horse Owners and Stakeholders have shared beliefs

- ❖ Horses are an integral part of their lifestyle & a vital part of their livelihood
- ❖ Believe the public and media do not fully understand the challenges of caring for, training and maintaining horses
- ❖ Top contributors to unwanted horse problem
 - ◆ Closing of processing plants
 - ◆ The economy
 - ◆ Irresponsible breeding
 - ◆ High cost of euthanasia/carcass disposal
- ❖ Responsible for solving - horse owners / breeders
- ❖ Solutions - reopen plants / educate owners / ↑ rescue funding



Rescues and non-owners have shared beliefs

- ❖ Rescue operators are voluntary caretakers who are passionate about their work
- ❖ Voice their opinions through the media and other public forums
- ❖ Believe processing plants should never be reopened
- ❖ Top contributors
 - The economy
 - Irresponsible breeding
 - Closing of plants not a factor
- ❖ Responsible for solving – equine associations / breeder
- ❖ Solutions - ↑ rescue funding / educate owners



Unwanted Horse Survey Highlights

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❖ Rescue / Retirement / Retraining Facilities

- American Defense Fund lists 432 rescue facilities nationally
 - ◆ Average maximum capacity – 42 horses
 - ◆ Can handle 18,060 horses
- UC-Davis Study
 - ◆ 326 registered non-profit rescues
 - ◆ Can handle 13,400 horse
- Depend on public donations
 - ◆ 58% - private donations
 - ◆ 25% - owner's personal income
 - ◆ 12% - facility fees
 - ◆ 5% - grants
- Average maintenance cost per horse per year - \$2300
- As many horses stay at facility for life as are adopted out



Top Indexing Solutions for Unwanted Horse*

- Educate owners to breed, purchase, & own responsibly.
- Increase ability of private rescue/retirement facilities to care for unwanted horses.
- Reopen U.S. processing plants.
- Increase options & resources to euthanize & dispose of unwanted horses.

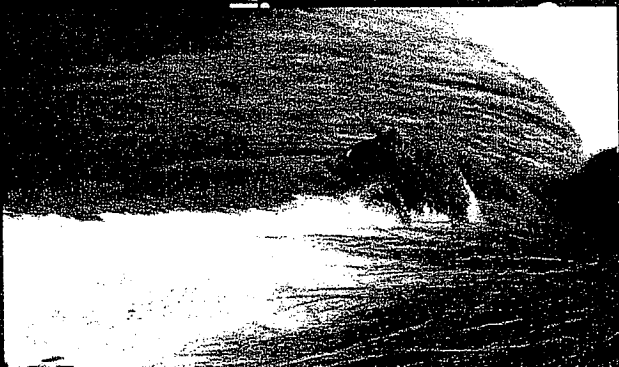
*UHC's National Assessment Study of Contributing Factors Surrounding the Unwanted Horse Issue, 2009



Unwanted Horse Survey Highlights

❖ Survey Respondent's Least Appealing Solutions:

- Expand legislation or regulation to control horses
- Secure federal funding for carcass removal
- Secure federal funding to expand horse adoption



Annual U.S. Equine Mortality Slaughter vs. Death/Euthanasia

- Horses processed for meat — ± 112,000 (1.24%)
- Died/euthanized (30 days of age or older) — ± 167,000 (1.8%)*
- Total Mortality — ± 270,000 horses (3%±)**
- %'s similar to 1998 report

*USDA & NAHMS 2005 Report

**AHC estimates U.S. Horse population - 9 million



Economic Impact: Euthanasia & Disposal vs. Care

- ❖ ≈100,000 “unwanted” horses per Year
- ❖ Cost of euthanasia & disposal @ \$383/ Head*
 - \$38.3 Million/year
- ❖ Cost of Care @ \$2340/head/year**
 - \$234 Million/year

*National Assessment Study of Contributing Factors Surrounding the Unwanted Horse. 2009.

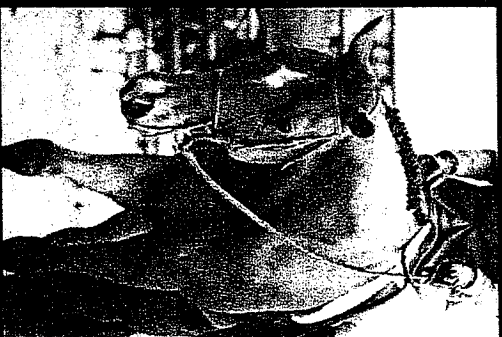
www.unwantedhorsecoalition.com

**North MS, Bailey D. 14th Annual World Food and Agribusiness Forum, 2004



Current Options for “Unwanted” Horses?

- ❖ Change of occupation
- ❖ Rescue/retirement facilities
- ❖ Adoption
- ❖ Donation to teaching/research institution
- ❖ Donation to therapeutic riding program
- ❖ Euthanasia at processing plant
- ❖ Euthanasia at request of owner
- ❖ Abuse/Abandonment/Neglect



Euthanasia

❖ One of the most difficult decisions for any horse owner

❖ Decision frequently avoided unless forced upon owner

❖ Derived from the Greek terms:

☐ Eu – good

☐ Thanatos – death



Euthanasia

EU – good/ Thanatos - death

- ❖ A “good death” occurs
 - With minimum pain
 - At a time in a horse's life that prevents unnecessary pain & suffering
- ❖ Criteria: Based on Medical Assessment
 - Condition presents a hopeless prognosis
 - Horse's condition causes unnecessary pain & suffering
 - Horse is a hazard to itself or its handlers
 - Horse requires continuous medication for relief of pain for the remainder of its life
- ❖ “No longer meets owners needs”???

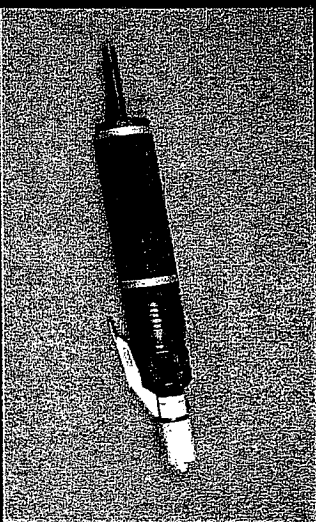
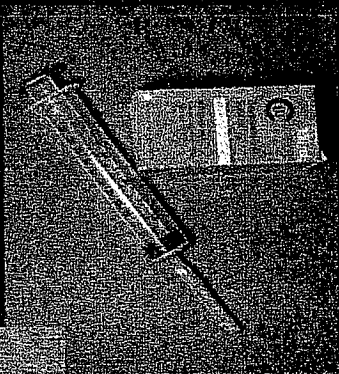


Euthanasia

❖ Acceptable methods:*

- Barbiturate Overdose
- Gunshot
- Penetrating Captive Bolt

*2000 AVMA Panel on Euthanasia-a 17 member panel of experts on animal behavior, anesthesia, animal protection, equine practice, neuroscience, small animal practice, wildlife biology-JAVMA, Vol. 218, 3/1/2001



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Are the Equine and Bovine Skulls Different?

(Courtesy - Dr. Nat Messer, Univ. of Missouri)



Carcass Disposal

❖ **Must be done in a safe manner that does not pose a hazard to people or animals**

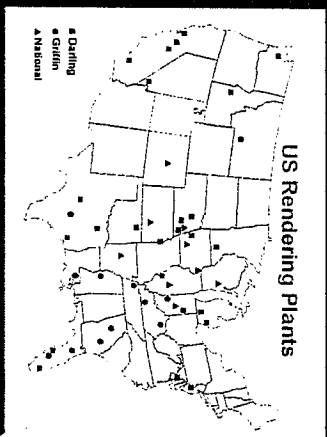
❖ **Wide variation**

- within animal species**
- states, counties and municipalities**



Current Disposal Options

- ❖ Burial...\$250-500
- ❖ Landfills...\$80-500
- ❖ Rendering...\$75-250
- ❖ Cremation...\$600-2000
- ❖ Composting
- ❖ Bio-digestion...\$225-1100
- ❖ Processing for Meat



American Horse Slaughter Prevention (Morella) Act - 2001

❖ Horse Industry View on Legislation

- Adequate regulations already in place.
 - ◆ Increase oversight & enforcement
- Legislation provides no infrastructure to address welfare of horses no longer removed from the horse population
- Legislation does not address carcass disposal issue
- Legislation does not provide enforcement plan or agency
- Legislation does not provide funding for enforcement plan



Legislation Affecting U.S. Horse Slaughter

❖ State laws closed all three U.S. plants in 2007

- 1949 Texas Ag code
- 2007 Illinois-HB1711

❖ 2009 pending legislation

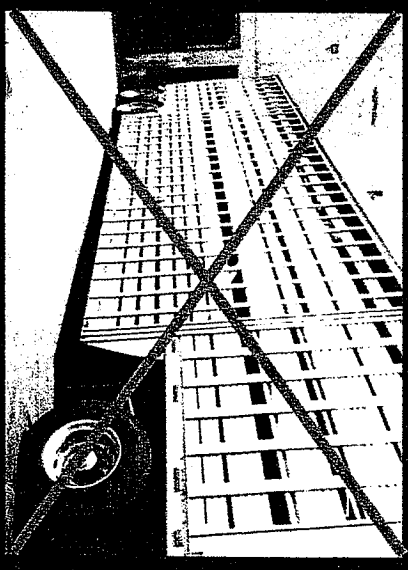
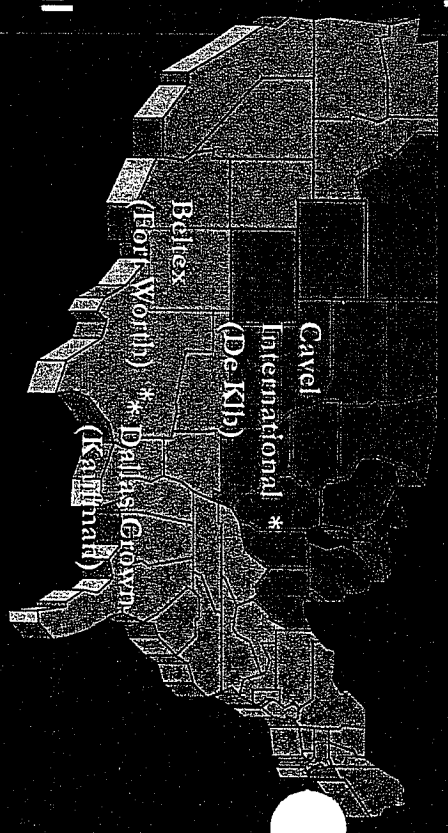
- H.R. 503/ S.727-Prevention of Equine Cruelty Acts of 2009
 - ◆ Amends horse protection act-illegal to sell, ship, etc. horse for slaughter for human consumption
 - ◆ Prevents export of horses to Mexico or Canada for slaughter

H.R. 305 -Horse Transportation Safety Act of 2009

- ◆ Prohibits transport of horses in double-decker trailers

❖ GAO Study -Sen. Brownback (R) KS

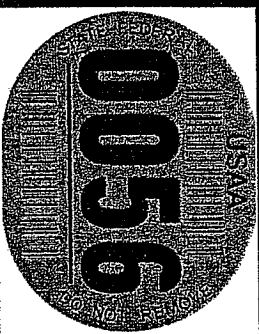
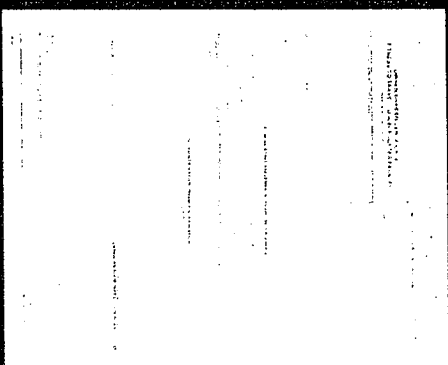
- Status of horse welfare after plants closed
- Affect closures have had on farm/ranch income



USDA Transport Requirements

1996 Farm Bill gave USDA responsibility for regulating commercial transport of horses to slaughter & ensures:

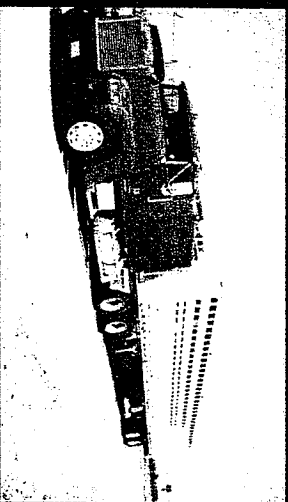
- ❖ Each horse is fit for travel
- ❖ Horses provided food, water and rest prior to loading on vehicles
- ❖ Each horse has enough floor space to avoid injury or discomfort.
- ❖ Stallions or aggressive horses are completely segregated
- ❖ Transport documents certify the date, time and place the equine(s) were loaded on conveyance.



Horse Transportation Studies

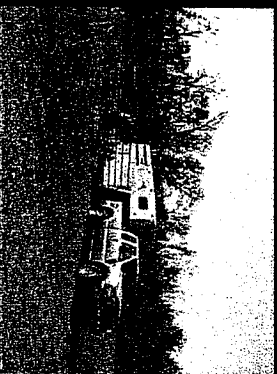
❖ Temple Grandin Study (CSU-1999)

- ❑ 63 trailer loads arriving at U.S. processing plants
 - ◆ 92% arrived in good condition
 - ◆ 7.7% had welfare issues
 - Poor Body Condition
 - Foot & limb problems
 - Lacerations
 - ◆ Fighting was major cause of injuries during shipment
 - ◆ 77% of welfare issues were due to neglect or abuse by owner



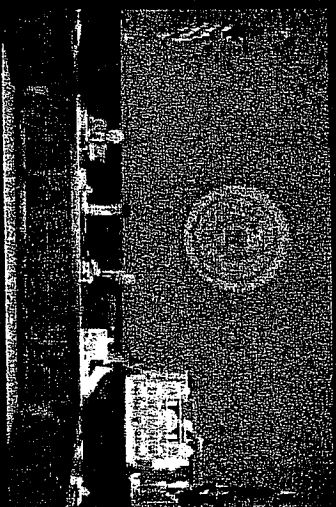
❖ Caroline Stull Study (UC-Davis-1999)

- ❑ 29.9% injury rate in double-decker trailers
- ❑ 8% injury rate in straight trailers



Anticipated Slaughter Federal Legislation

- ❖ Likely new anti-slaughter legislation will be reintroduced in 2011
- ❖ United Organizations of the Horse may introduce alternative legislation
 - Tightening of regulations on horse transportation and slaughter
- ❖ Change in leadership of House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee could reinstate USDA Inspector's salaries
- ❖ New Sustainable BLM plan
 - "Everything on table except euthanasia & unrestricted sale"
 - ◆ Bob Abbey – Director BLM



Mexican Horse Processing Plants Inspection (November 9, 2008)

- ❖ **Drs. Doug Corey, Sergio Salinas, & Tom Lenz**
- ❖ **TIF- Federal Inspection Type Plant**
 - One of two Mexican based plants processing American horses as well as Mexican horses.
 - Meat sent to Europe and Japan
 - Arrive in trailers sealed at U.S. border
 - Horses handled properly
 - Euthanized humanely with penetrating captive bolt
- ❖ **Local Mexican Plant**
 - Processes Mexican horses and meat consumed in Mexico
 - Well run, horses euthanized with penetrating captive bolt
- ❖ **Canadian Horse Processing Plants**



Mexico/ Canada Meat Processing

Facilities

❖ Mexican Plants

- ❑ TIF Plants (Tipo Inspección Federal)
 - ◆ Destination of all U.S. horses
 - ◆ Meet European standards
 - ◆ SAGAPA Vet. Inspectors
 - ◆ Captive bolt euthanasia
- ❑ Municipal Plants
 - ◆ Process Mexican horses
 - ◆ Meet Mexican Standards
- ❑ "Clandestine" Plants
 - ◆ Not regulated
 - ◆ "Puntilla" euthanasia?

❖ Canadian Plants



Affect of Unwanted Horse issue on U.S. Horse Industry

- ❖ Debate over horse slaughter has polarized the industry
 - Extremely emotional issue!
- ❖ Lowered prices paid for mid to low-end horses
 - Average registered QH - \$6840*
 - Average farm/ranch horse - \$2834**
 - Ft. Collins Weekly Horse Sale - \$23 - \$380
 - Bonner Springs, KS – Horses \$250/ Yearlings \$50-100
- ❖ Significant increase in number of horses abandoned or neglected
 - 3/23/08 – USA Today – “U.S. Shelters Saddled with Unwanted Horses”
 - 3/24/09 – Southern Maryland Online – “Homeless, Neglected Horses Multiply as Maryland’s Equine Industry Struggles”

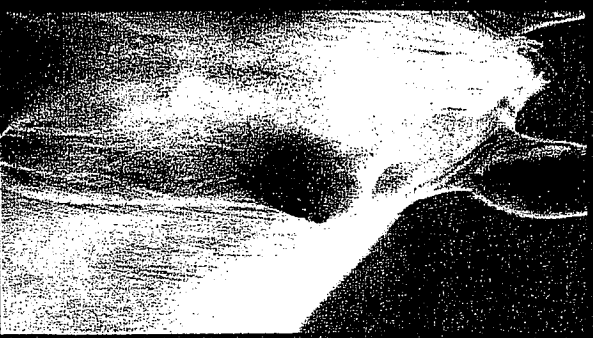


*AQHA, 5/1/2008

**National Agriculture Statistics System, 2006

Affect of Unwanted Horse issue on U.S. Horse Industry

- ❖ **69% of rescue, retirement, retraining facilities at or near capacity**
 - Turn away 38% of horses presented
 - As many stay at rescue for life as are adopted out
- ❖ **Increased activity by animal activists**
 - Increased fund raising opportunity
 - Increased criticism of horse industry
 - Increased lobbying efforts
- ❖ **Drawn the attention and input of the non-horse owning public**
 - ↑ pressure on government leaders to impose regulations



Industry Efforts to Resolve Problem

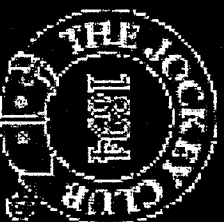
❖ Unwanted Horse Coalition

- Raise awareness & educate horse owners
- Castration/ hay banks
- Unwantedhorsecoalition.com



❖ Jockey Club Voluntary Check-off Program

- Focused on TB retraining & adoption
- Donations matched by Jockey Club



❖ AQHA Full Circle Program

- Original owner option to adopt horse back



Lessons Learned

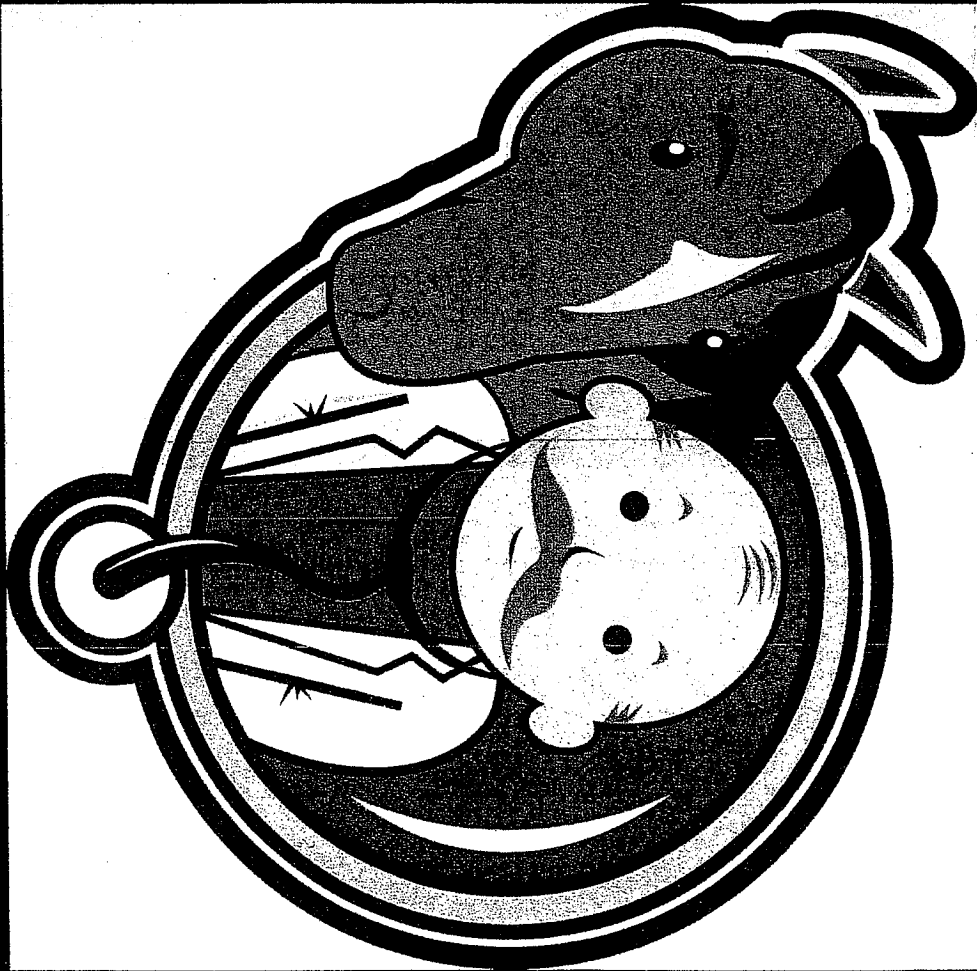
- ❖ Our viewpoints on animal welfare are conditioned by our individual knowledge base and life experiences
 - Farm vs. Urban background
 - Companion animal vs. Livestock
 - ◆ Care, compassion, guardian, humane vs.
 - ◆ Production medicine, herd health care, harvest
- ❖ And.....there are other players in the welfare debate
 - Equine-Related Businesses
 - Your neighbor or friends in the city
 - Animal protection activists
 - Public officials



Conclusions

- ❖ Horse industry has turned it's attention to the issue
- ❖ We cannot completely eliminate the "unwanted horses" problem
- ❖ We cannot prevent
 - Aging
 - All Injuries
 - Poor athletes
 - Unattractive horses
- ❖ We can minimize it
 - Buy rather than breed
 - Adopt rather than buy
 - Find alternative careers
 - Euthanize rather than discard





Thank You

Bio for Dr. Tom Lenz

Active in equine private practice, academia, and industry for over 35 years, Dr. Lenz is a Past President of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). He graduated from the University of Missouri's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1975, earned a Master of Science degree in Equine Reproduction from Texas A&M in 1988 and is a Diplomate of the American College of Theriogenologists (animal reproduction).

A long time advocate for the health and welfare of the horse, he has chaired the AAEP's Welfare Committee, served on the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) Welfare Committee and currently serves on the welfare committees of the American Horse Council and the Professional Rodeo Cowboy's Association. In recognition for his efforts in equine welfare, Dr. Lenz is the recipient of the AVMA's 2010 Animal Welfare Award. He is a trustee of the American Horse Council, where he is the immediate past Chair of their Unwanted Horse Coalition. In addition, Dr. Lenz is an Honorary Vice President of the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), where he chairs the AQHA Research Committee and writes a monthly horse health column for the *Quarter Horse Journal*. He is currently Senior Director of Equine Veterinary Operations for Pfizer Animal Health.