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## Horsemen's Council of Illinois

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P.O. Box 1605 • Springfield, Illinois 62705

# Board of Director's Position on Horse Slaughter

(November, 2001)

First, we understand that humane slaughtering of horses is an emotional issue, but believe that a purely emotional and ill-informed response to this issue could cause permanent damage to the horse industry in Illinois, the Midwest and throughout the U.S. Humanely operated, federally inspected equine slaughter plants are needed to dispose of unhealthy, unsound, unruly and unwanted horses that have little to no value as working, sporting or companion animals. If slaughter facilities are not available in this country, horses here will likely face abuse, neglect or less humane methods of disposal.

Secondly, it is our opinion that local or regional slaughter facilities are required so that horses destined for slaughter need not be loaded into livestock trailers for cost effective shipment to distant locations. We believe that forcing the shipment of horses destined for slaughter to Canada or Mexico is potentially inhumane and support the operation of federally inspected plants in the U.S.

Moreover, it is important to the horse industry in general that at least a few strategically located plants be maintained in the U.S. These facilities provide jobs for their local economy, help place a "floor" under the sale prices of all horses and allow the removal of inferior animals that would negatively affect the overall quality of domestic horses.

Furthermore, we believe a closing of the slaughter plants or banning such activity would negatively impact the long-term welfare of horses in Illinois, the Midwest and throughout the country. Equine slaughter plants are subject to be inspected regularly by the United States Department of Agriculture and must comply with federal regulations regarding the treatment and processing of animals destined for slaughter.

In conclusion, it is the position of the Board of Directors of HCI that horse slaughter is necessary for the overall health of the equine industry. We expect that these facilities will treat all horses decently and humanely.