

A Timeline of Horse Slaughter Legislation in the United States

The complicated legal issue of horse slaughter for human consumption has been debated in U.S. courts and Congress for years.

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The horse slaughter argument has heated up in recent months since the 2012 appropriations bill was approved without a ban for horsemeat inspections. But this isn't the first time the horse slaughter debate has been a hot topic. The timeline below lists some of the key dates in the United States horse slaughter industry.

Updated January 2014

Nov. 3, 1998: California voters passed [Proposition 6](#) which banned the slaughter of horses, donkeys and mules and sale of horsemeat for human consumption.

June 8, 2005: Rep. John Sweeney (R-NY) proposes an amendment to the 2005-2006 appropriations bill that prohibits the use of federal funding for inspections of horses for meat. The amendment passed on a vote of 269-158.:

Sept. 20, 2005: Sen. John Ensign (R-NV), a veterinarian, and nine co-sponsors proposed a companion amendment to the Sweeney amendment that had passed the House of Representatives. The Senate amendment passed a funding limitation to ban horse slaughter by a 69-28 margin, following a bipartisan House vote of 269-158 in June 2005. *Funding limitations remained in place in the federal budget until 2011.*

Nov. 10, 2005: The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2005-2006 was signed into law. This appropriation bill included the following paragraph that ultimately led to the closure of horse slaughterhouses in the United States.

H. R. 2744—45

SEC. 794. Effective 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, none of the funds made available in this Act may be used to pay the salaries or expenses of personnel to inspect horses under section 3 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 603) or

under the guidelines issued under section 903 the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 1901 note; Public Law 104-127). ([full text](#))

Feb. 8, 2006: The USDA issued a [regulation \(CFR 352.19\)](#) that allowed the remaining slaughterhouses to circumvent the horse inspection funding ban by paying for their own inspections.

Sept. 7, 2006: The House of Representatives passes [the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act](#), which would ban the sale and transport of American horses for human consumption, passed the House by a 263-146 vote. The Senate bill died in committee.

Jan. 7, 2007: Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-IL) [reintroduced the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act \(H.R. 503\)](#). The bill was referred to the House Agriculture Committee and never moved to a full vote.

Jan 17, 2007: Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA) introduced [S. 311](#), the senate version of the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act. It never reached a full vote of the Senate.

January 19, 2007: The a three-judge panel from the U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit upheld Chapter 149 of the Texas Agriculture Code banning the sale, transfer or possession of horse meat for human consumption. This decision was upheld by the 19 judges of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on March 6, 2007. The statute had been in effect since 1949 but had not been enforced during the years that the Texas slaughterhouses were operational. This decision was upheld by the 19 judges of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on March 6, 2007.

March 23, 2007: The Dallas Crown slaughterhouse of Kaufman, Texas shut down operations. The mayor and residents of Kaufman had fought a long and expensive battle in an effort to shutter the plant, which had a long list of environmental complaints and was considered a public nuisance.

March 28, 2007: U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that it was illegal for horse slaughterhouses to pay the USDA for their own horse meat inspections, closing the loophole that had allowed horse slaughter to continue around the federal law. USDA inspectors were pulled from Cavel International, the equine slaughterhouse in DeKalb, Ill. the following day, and operations were shut down.

However, Cavel appealed the decision and argued for an injunction in July 2007, and were able to resume slaughter while the case was still under consideration.

April 2007: Senate Commerce Committee passed S. 311, a ban on horse slaughter, by a 15-7 vote.

May 24, 2007: Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed [H.B. 1711](#) into law, banning the slaughter of horses for human consumption in that state. The bill had been sponsored by Rep Robert Molaro (D-Chicago) and Sen. John Cullerton (D-Chicago) in February 2007. The bill was appealed by the operators of Belgian-owned Cavel International slaughterhouse in DeKalb, Ill.

Sept. 21, 2007: The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled that the Illinois horse slaughter ban was constitutional, putting the final nail in the coffin of the last operational horse slaughterhouse in the U.S.

September 2008: House Judiciary Committee passes ban on horse slaughter by voice vote.

July 9, 2011: Sen Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and cosponsor Lindsey Graham (R-SC) reintroduced the American Horse Slaughter Protection Act (S. 1176).

Sept. 9, 2011: The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a version of the agriculture appropriations bill that no longer contained the ban on funding for horsemeat inspections opening the door for horse slaughter operations to return to U.S. soil.

Nov. 17, 2011: The [agriculture appropriations bill for 2012](#) was passed by Congress and signed into law without the wording that had prohibited horsemeat inspections since 2006.

May 2012: The House Appropriations Committee adopted the Moran Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections.

March 2013: [The Safeguard American Food Exports Act](#) was introduced in both the House and Senate. If passed into law, the Act would declare horsemeat unsafe and ban the sale of horses to slaughter and of horsemeat for human consumption.

April 2013: The White House released a [budget proposal for 2014](#) that would once again prohibit federal funding of horsemeat inspections.

June 13, 2013: House Agriculture Appropriations Committee adopts Moran-Young Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections.

June 20, 2013: Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee adopts Landrieu Amendment to defund horse slaughter inspections.

January 2014: A [new federal budget with the horse slaughter prohibition](#) language included was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama.