



Animal Welfare Institute

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Animal Welfare Institute and National Black Farmers Association Launch “Project Wanted Horse”

Announcement Disproves Slaughter Industry’s “Unwanted” Horse Theory

Washington, D.C. (June 17, 2008) – The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) and the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) today launched a national partnership aimed at helping American horses in need by finding them homes on farms operated by NBFA members. The announcement of the “Project Wanted Horse” partnership comes as Congress considers the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, and essentially disproves bill opponents’ arguments that the campaign to end horse slaughter has resulted in a glut of unwanted horses in the United States and that slaughter is therefore necessary.

While horse slaughter no longer occurs in the United States, in 2007, more than 130,000 American horses were exported to Canada and Mexico where they were killed, their meat processed and exported for human consumption in Europe and Asia. In many cases, the animals are often acquired under false pretense and killed by brutal methods that are outlawed in the United States.

“One of the horse slaughter industry’s main arguments is that these horses are unwanted and have no homes to go to. Today, we’re standing up and standing together to demonstrate that this is simply untrue,” said **Chris Heyde, deputy director of government and legal affairs for the Animal Welfare Institute**. “The coming together of our national organizations sends a significant message that these horses are valued and wanted. In making this announcement, we call on others, like the American Veterinary Medical Association, American Association of Equine Practitioners and National Farm Bureau, to join our cause to end this barbaric, unthinkable and inhumane practice. It is time to take action and stop the cruelty and stop the political spin.”

“Having seen the recent HBO ‘Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel’ segment on horse slaughtering, I had no choice but to act,” said **Dr. John Boyd, founder and president of the National Black Farmers Association**. “Horse slaughter, in all circumstances, is a violent, brutal process. Horses play an important role in our members’ lives, not just because of their role on the farm, but because they are often part of our families. By joining the Animal Welfare Institute, we hope to end, once and for all, the transportation and brutal killing of these animals for human consumption.”



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More specifically, "Project Wanted Horse" will ensure that horses rescued by equine protection organizations, from the slaughter pipeline, or, are saved from an abusive situation, are placed on the farms operated by NBFA's 94,000 members across the country. The Animal Welfare Institute will oversee the placement of horses with NBFA members. Each placed animal will be accompanied by a legally binding contract ensuring quality lifetime care and that they will not be resold only to end up in the slaughter pipeline. "Project Wanted Horse" is not intended to be a dumping ground for irresponsible owners or those wanting to thin their herds, but instead, provides a place for those horses truly in need of a home. Owning a horse is a significant responsibility that must not be entered into lightly.

Each year, thousands of horses are purchased at auction by killer-buyers, stolen from farms and acquired illegally. These horses are then transported across the border to be killed. Killing methods often include barbaric practices such as shooting or stabbing to death.

Congress is currently considering the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (S. 311/ H.R. 503), which would outlaw the transportation of horses either domestically or internationally for slaughter. The legislation is sponsored by Senators Mary Landrieu (D-La.) and John Ensign (R-Nev.) and Representatives Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), John Spratt (D-S.C.), Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) and Ed Whitfield (R-Ky.). The Senate bill, S.311 has 38 cosponsors including presidential contenders John McCain (R-Ariz.), and Barack Obama (D-Ill.) while the House bill, H.R. 503, has 204 cosponsors.

Dr. Boyd will be in Washington, D.C., on June 18 and is available for media interviews. To arrange an interview, please call Chris Heyde at 703-836-4300 (o) or 202-423-8689 (c).

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For more than 57 years, the Animal Welfare Institute has been the leading voice for animals across the country and on Capitol Hill to reduce the sum total of pain and fear inflicted on animals by humans. Find out more at: www.awionline.org.

The National Black Farmers Association was founded in 1995. Today the NBFA has more than 94,000 members. For more information, please visit our Web site at: www.blackfarmers.org.