

AUCTIONS AND HORSE SLAUGHTER

Did you know your horse is at great risk if you send him to auction? The average number of horses sold to kill buyers in Canada is 69.2%.

What are horse auctions?

In Canada, the local horse auction is the primary place where people buy and sell horses. Generally held at rural livestock markets on a weekly or monthly basis, horse auctions are the place where people conduct the commercial trade in equines. But there is a darker side to these auctions.

What kinds of horses are auctioned at these sales?

Thousands of horses are auctioned each year. This includes healthy pleasure horses and ponies, racehorses who didn't make it at the track, draft horses (especially at risk), donkeys, mules. They can come from any source.

Who buys all these horses?

While some people looking for inexpensive riding horses or ponies do purchase them at auction, the majority of horses sold at auction are bought by "kill buyers" who buy for the federally licensed horse slaughterhouses in Canada. Statistics were captured at the OLEX Ontario auction from Jan to Aug 2013 which showed an overall average of 69.2% of the horses there went to slaughter. This is likely common for all 'kill' auctions.

Do most unwanted horses go directly to the slaughterhouse?

Disregarding regulations forbidding it, most do, but not all. Some kill buyers take them to feedlots, fatten them up and then send them to slaughter weeks or months later. Some horses end up going from one auction to another, changing hands numerous times before ultimately ending up at the slaughterhouse. Because kill buyers are paid by the pound for the horses they deliver, they look for healthy horses in good body condition as well as horses in poor condition who can be fattened up.

What conditions are auction horses in?

Their conditions vary greatly. Some horses are in excellent health showing that they had good care before ending up at auction. Sometimes their owners are present fussing over them and looking for buyers who will provide good homes.



Beautiful discarded horses – kill pen
OLEX, ONTARIO 2011

Others have been trucked to auction by haulers from farms where they received little or no care or where a breeder is unloading "cull" horses. Some can be in very poor body condition indicating very little care. Some are victims of the generally poor economy with owners who want to make profit off of their horses.

How do horses end up in this condition?

The reasons are varied. Some people don't realize the responsibility, cost or time involved in caring for horses.

Owners may not be aware of the horse's specialized requirements nor can they afford proper veterinary care.

The winter months are particularly bad for neglected horses because they can't graze on pasture. Denied necessary sustenance and in a weakened condition, these horses are often just loaded onto trailers and shipped off to auction for sale to the kill buyers.



Thoroughbred – Kamloops, BC
Feb 2011



Belgian – OLEX 2009

Aren't live animal auctions regulated in some way?

There are no federal laws specifically addressing horse auctions. While some provinces have vague laws regulating the operation of livestock markets, few address the care or treatment of horses at auction. There is no requirement to provide horses with food or water. Sick horses are mixed in with healthy. Cruelty happens before and after the auction. In addition, auctions indirectly promote neglect by providing outlets for the sale of abused or simply unwanted horses deflecting responsibility from the owner. Without auctions, irresponsible horse owners and unscrupulous dealers would have no place to buy and sell these unfortunate horses.

What awaits horses transported for slaughter?

Slaughter-bound horses come from many sources but all fall victim to the horsemeat industry to satisfy wealthy diners from Europe and Japan. Overcrowded feedlots, poor transport conditions and cruel treatment at the slaughter plant are the norm. These concerns have been widely documented and continue to horrify and anger many Canadians who believe that the slaughter industry must be abolished on humane grounds.

What can you do?

Every responsible horse owner must plan for the entire life of their horse. If you can no longer keep your horse carefully locate a caring home for him. A horse who can no longer live comfortably due to age or illness should be humanely euthanized rather than suffer the cruelty of auctions and a journey to the slaughterhouse.

For more information please visit our website:

www.defendhorsescanada.org



Blind Clydesdale Mare
OLEX 2012



*All of the horses in these photos sold to kill buyers.

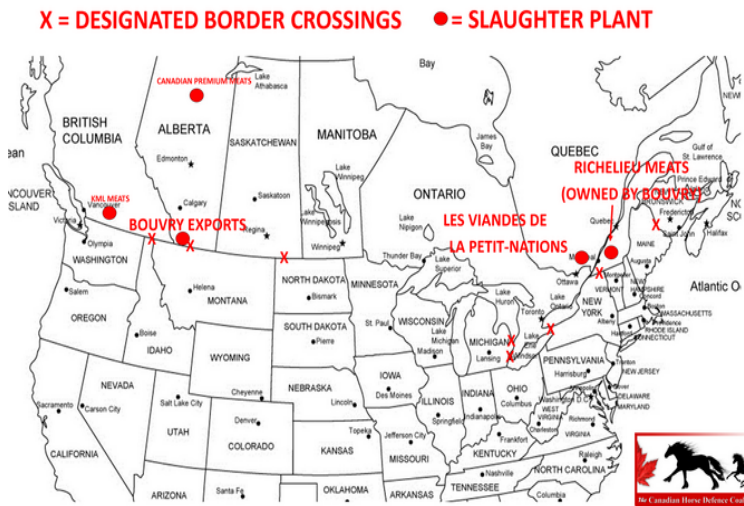
What you can do to help horses:

- ✓ If you own a horse, ensure that this is a lifetime commitment
- ✓ If you *must* give up your horse for reasons beyond your control, *never* take him to an auction. Take the time to find a good home, investigate it and require the future owner to sign a contract stating that you are to be contacted if they cannot keep him. Be sure to check on your horse from time to time.
- ✓ If your horse is stolen, check auctions, the internet, the slaughterhouses. Micro-chipping your horse is the most effective way of protecting him.
- ✓ Do not breed. Just as there is a surplus of dogs and cats, there is also a surplus of horses. You know what happens to the surplus.
- ✓ If your horse *must* be put down, let it be by a qualified veterinarian.
- ✓ Rescue a horse whenever possible and give him a good home or if you don't have the facility rescue a horse and place him in an approved sanctuary and contribute to his upkeep.
- ✓ Make regular donations for the care of horses already at sanctuaries.
- ✓ Speak out and write against horse slaughter at every opportunity.
- ✓ Write to your politicians and ask that horses be reclassified as a companion animal or "special" livestock.
- ✓ Join groups that advocate for horses.
- ✓ Support bills and legislation to end horse slaughter

**EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING AND
EVERYONE MUST IF OUR HORSES ARE TO
BE SAVED!**

From: "The Horse – The Most Abused Domestic Animal" by
Greta Bunting – ISBN - 0966341104

This map shows the five licensed
equine slaughterhouses in Canada
and the designated border
crossings from the US



Horse being cruelly whipped at the
Woodville, ON auction - June 2009



Horses at a Dawson Creek, BC kill
auction. Note the baby with his
mother. Sold to kill.



Comment by an auction regular
Grunthal, MB - 2010

