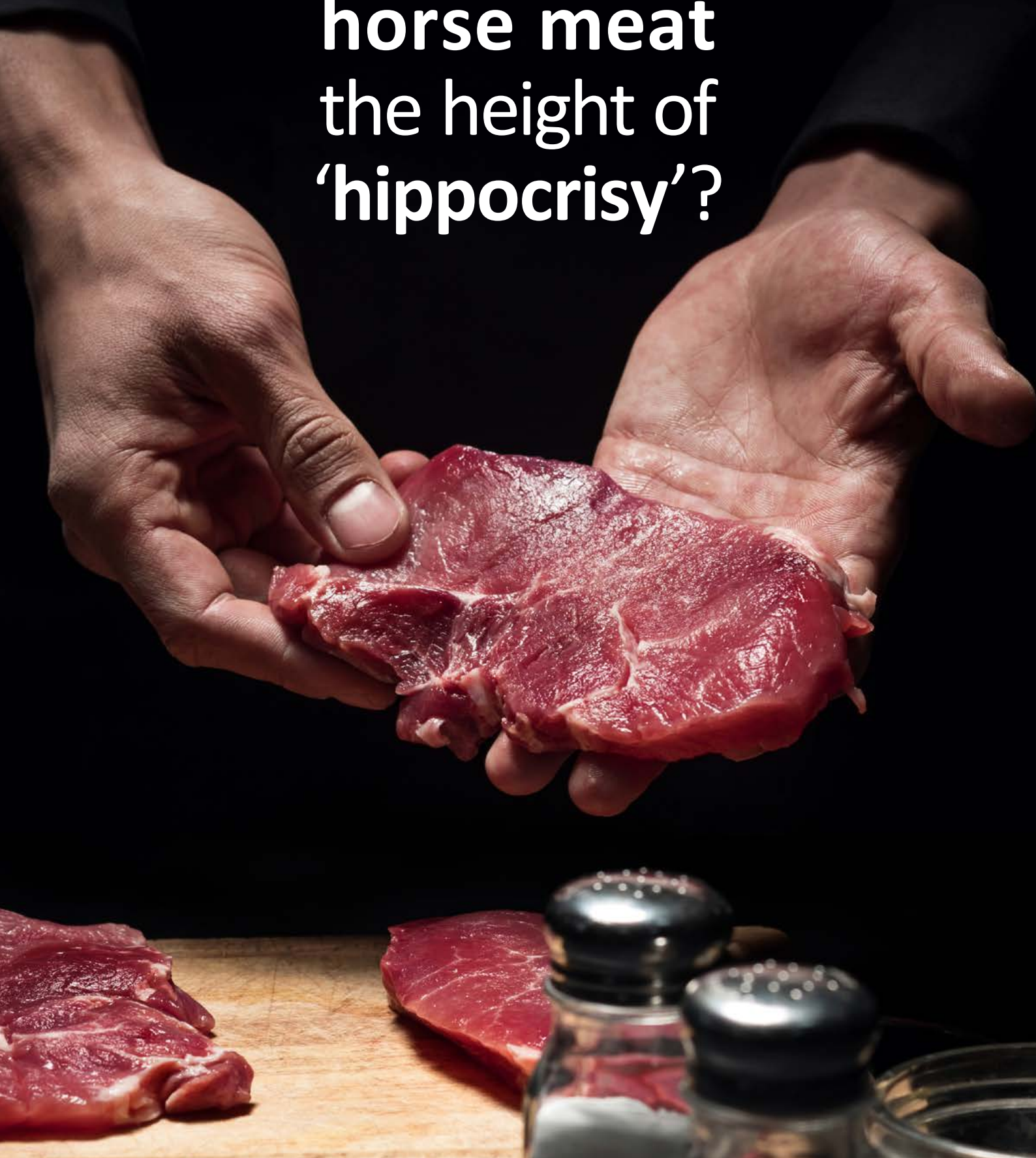


Is talk about  
horse meat  
the height of  
'hippocrisy'?



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There are indeed many stories circulating about the trading of horses both domestically and abroad. However, they often seem to be based on misunderstandings and misperceptions. In some cases, reality is even deliberately distorted or taken out of context to make the industry look bad. Hypocrisy - or should we call it 'hippocrisy'? – never escapes this facet in today's equestrian world. On top of that, emotions often run high, which makes a sober and objective view of the matter difficult, if not impossible. Yet we notice that even those who are passionate about the equestrian world often only know part of the story. This text is written by someone who has an in-depth knowledge of all facets of the trade, both the good ones and the not-so-good ones. Nothing is emphasised unnecessarily, nor have the darker sides been glossed over. We want to show the whole picture, the complete life cycle of the horse, as it is in reality. We shed light on the past, present and future trade, give you facts and figures, and dismantle misconceptions and distortions of reality. Horses are beautiful and noble animals that occupy an important place in many people's lives and brings them great pleasure. However, at the end of their lives, horses can also help to provide answers to the many challenges of our time, such as: avoiding the waste of valuable, healthy and high-quality food that is suitable for human consumption, helping to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions in the food chain, using the available space economically, preserving horse breeds and further optimising animal welfare by increasing scientific knowledge about horses. If you are not a supporter of trading of horses, we have no intention of changing your mind. However, by telling the whole story of the horse trade as it is in everyday life, we do want to give you the opportunity to substantiate your opinion with the right elements. And so perhaps you will see the industry in a more balanced way. Even if you have not yet formed an opinion, facts and figures can help you to do so, with the right arguments. After all, it is not always the case that those who shout the loudest are the ones that hold the truth...

# Some figures

## The horse world

- EU: 7 million horses (half of these, namely 3.5 million horses, are excluded from slaughter).
- United Kingdom: 1.2 million horses.
- Belgium: 300,000 horses.

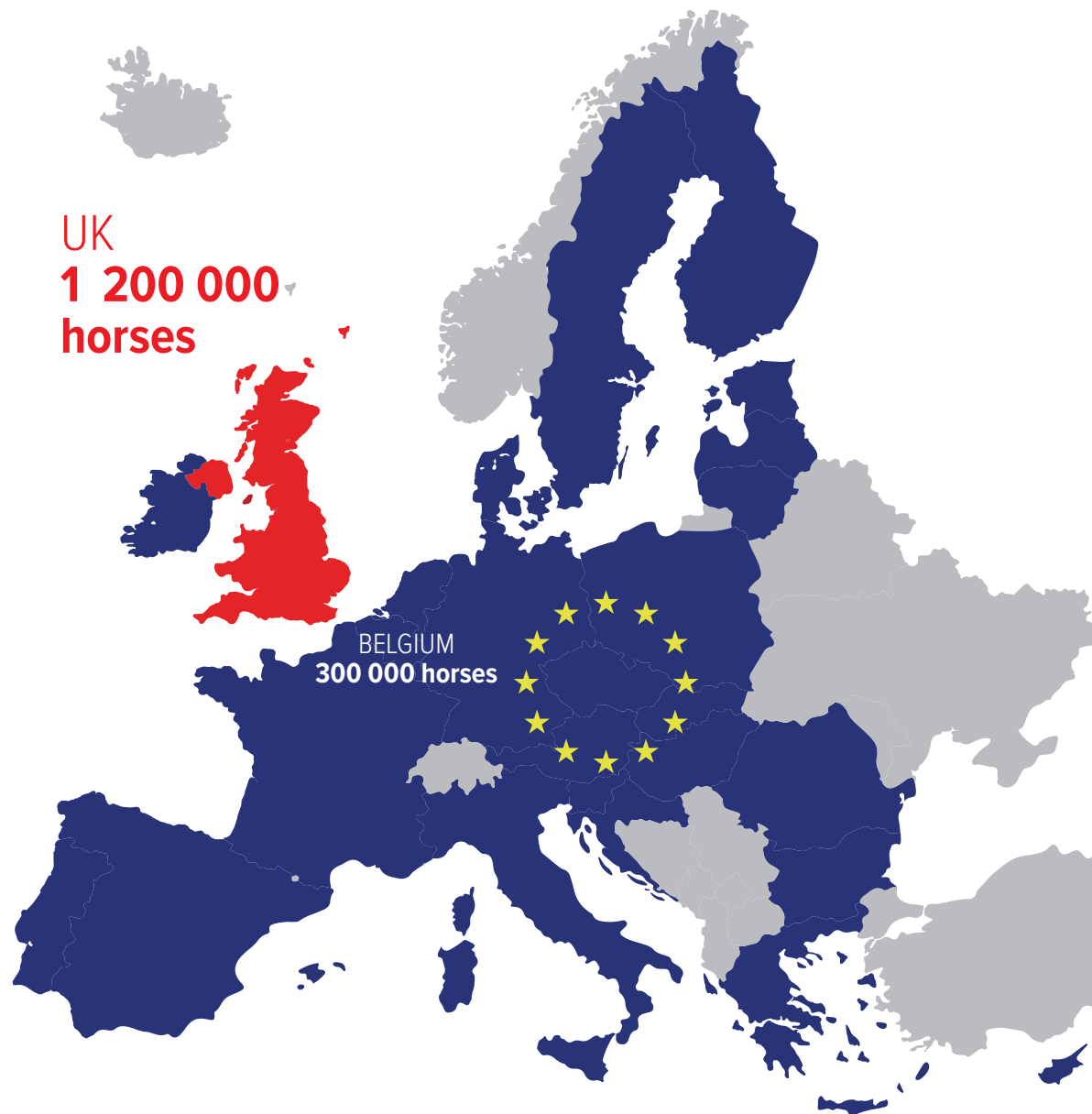
## Horse meat in Europe

- In contrast to other types of animals, horses are only slaughtered at the end of their lives, after a sporting, recreational, or functional career.
- The average horse weighs around 420 kg when it is slaughtered. This corresponds to a carcass weighing 240 kg and 170 kg of meat that is fit for human consumption.
- The average age of a horse when it is slaughtered is 13 years, but a horse can easily live to 20 to 30 years or more.
- In the past, horse meat was meat for poor people, since it was much cheaper than beef. Nowadays, both types of meat are around the same price.
- In the 1980s-1990s, the horse meat industry was hit by a scandal involving trichinellosis. Nevertheless, trichinellosis was never found in any horse. The crisis led to new legislation with stricter controls. All horses are now tested for trichinellosis when they are slaughtered.
- In fact, the horse meat scandal in 2013 was actually a scandal involving beef (see below).

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*Does closing  
abattoirs solve  
the problem?  
On the contrary,  
this is precisely when  
the misery starts  
for horses...*

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**EU 7 000 000 horses**

## What happens if abattoirs are closed

Some NGOs have seized on the horse meat scandals (alleged or otherwise) that occurred in recent decades to push through their own demands, namely, that abattoirs should be closed!

However, the situation in the United States proves that this would have perverse side effects that do not improve animal welfare at all. The horse meat industry was wiped off the map in America at the stroke of a pen in 2006. The US Government in Washington banned the financing of abattoir inspectors in The Horse Slaughter Prevention Act. As a result, horse meat suddenly became illegal and could no longer be sold for human consumption, which meant the permanent closure of horse abattoirs.

Naturally, this did not cause hundreds of thousands of horses in America to disappear overnight and there still needed to be a solution for horses that had reached the end of their lives. It meant that those horses were no longer slaughtered locally, but instead were slaughtered in Mexico, for instance. However, animal welfare regressed in two ways. The horses had to spend hours being transported and the remaining abattoirs in Mexico are no longer supervised by the EU (and therefore no longer export to the EU), which means that there are no guarantees that the animals are treated humanely. Furthermore, the closure of Mexican abattoirs monitored by the EU - and also the intense pressure by these NGOs on remaining abattoirs - led to a sharp reduction in the price that horse owners were able to get for their horses when they were slaughtered, which greatly increased the chance of neglect.\* The slaughter of horses was stopped in America, but there was still a great need for slaughtering services. The 'problem' was simply moved to a neighbouring country. However, as far as the NGOs that had insisted on the closure of the American abattoirs, that was the end of the matter...

*\* The local culinary culture plays an important role in the financial value placed on a horse. For instance, the consumption of horse meat is not popular in Mexico and it can no longer be exported to Europe as the abattoirs are no longer monitored by the EU. It means that anyone who can only sell on the local market will obtain a much lower price and will not be prepared to invest in the welfare of the animal. The situation is completely different in countries where abattoirs are still monitored by the EU and that export to Europe. European consumers only want good quality meat, and they expect that each link in the chain, from pasture to plate, does everything necessary to achieve this quality. Since horse owners in the second situation are paid a higher price for their animals, they make a much greater effort to comply with the EU standards, and ultimately this promotes animal welfare.*

### TAGS

#animalwelfare  
#closeabattoirs  
#writtenoffhorses  
#foreignabattoirs  
#Unitedstates  
#Mexico  
#horsemeatprice  
#emotionalbond  
#hippophagy



– Framing –  
how exceptions are depicted  
as the general situation





## Why the alternatives are not an alternative

After the abattoirs were closed in the United States, many horses were released into the wild and left to fend for themselves. It goes without saying that these horse populations are increasing exponentially, causing a lot of trouble.

Well-intentioned animal rights activists set up farms or horse sanctuaries in Europe and the United States to accommodate neglected horses, or horses in danger of being neglected (because they 'have been written off' for the purpose for which they were bred) until the end of their lives. Since the costs can be very high over the years, there is a limited number of places (in Belgium, there are only several hundred places). The capacity in Belgium and elsewhere is in stark contrast to the number of 'written off' horses that are owned privately or that live in the wild. That is why these sanctuaries have never been a viable alternative. In the United States, for instance, buyers who used to purchase horses for abattoirs have 'retrained'. They now buy unwanted horses to offer them to NGOs or other people who want to save these horses from slaughter. However, we find out that only a fraction of those horses are saved. The others ultimately still go to... Mexico. While animal welfare should apply to all horses, it seems that it only applies to a small minority of 'chosen ones'.

It is simply utopian to think that each of the estimated 150,000 horses excluded from slaughter in Belgium (and many times this number of horses across the whole of Europe, estimated at 3.5 million horses!) will be cared for by their owner until their final days (over the course of many decades). Imagine that a horse starts to limp when it is aged 15. It no longer has any functional purpose (and so is also unable to generate money in any way), but the costs to care for it (vet's bills, pain control medication, etc.) continue to mount. The costs of stables and feed will also continue for many years. The budget for looking after the animal for the rest of its life may come under pressure, particularly in economically challenging times. However, it is not only the exclusion from slaughter per se, but also the owner's emotional bond with the horse that stand in the way of a rational cost-benefit analysis. This is why the owner will put off the decision about the end of the horse's life. This is understandable, from a human perspective, but on the other hand, love for the animal will never compensate for the animal's potential future suffering. That is why it is essential to make or be able to make a well-considered and timely decision for the sake of the horse's welfare. This decision should not be hampered by ignorance and understandably noble intentions when excluding the horse from slaughter.

*TAGS: #animalwelfare #horsesanctuaries #Unitedstates #Mexico #excludedhorses #financialreturn*

## The shock effect

It is well-known how extremist NGOs go about fabricating a 'scandal'. Images (photos or video footage) recorded undercover of a couple of neglected, injured, or poorly treated animals are cut and edited to create a story to bring the horse meat industry into disrepute. We need to make two important points in this regard. Firstly, in the vast majority of cases, it is impossible to find out where and when exactly the images were recorded. Since there are many millions of horses around the world, it is impossible to rule out that there is someone somewhere who does not really care for the welfare of their animal. A horse that looks to be languishing in a Belgian pasture could just as easily be on any other continent. Zooming in on something literally makes the broader story invisible and erases all nuances.

Secondly, it is also important to research whether these images are unique cases or if they effectively indicate a *structural* problem, and whether there is a demonstrable link to the supply chain of horse meat from approved EU abattoirs. Putting together images of sporadic, one-off situations that have been taken out of context is an unfair attack on an industry that makes great efforts to guarantee maximum animal welfare.

TAGS: *#animalwelfare*

## Industry takes action against abuse

The efforts made by the horse meat industry to eradicate these abuses naturally also go unmentioned in the stories put out by these NGOs. European horse meat companies do not have any interest whatsoever in neglected or poorly treated horses entering the food chain. Only a horse that is healthy and has led a stress-free life until the time of slaughter produces top-quality horse meat. It is not only EU inspectors, but also the horse meat companies themselves who directly hold

## The horse meat industry exists as a result of hobbies and sport

people accountable in countries of origin where there is an indifferent attitude toward animal welfare and impose corrective measures.

TAGS: *#animalwelfare #industryinitiatives #foreignabattoirs #hippophagy*

## Emotions hinder rational debate

Extremist NGOs do not shy away from playing the emotional card, misusing the 'humanisation' of horses over recent decades to avoid and stifle any rational debate about the life cycle of horses, in particular, the end-of-life phase. They are cunningly silent about

the fact that closing abattoirs is not a solution to the problem, but, on the contrary, considerably increases the chances that animals will suffer. After all, this does not fit the revenue model of these NGOs, which see their membership numbers, and therefore also their income, rise during every campaign. Nuance does not sell, but a 'shock effect' does.

However, as long as there are horses, a solution will always have to be found for the end of their lives. The combination of the need for horse abattoirs and the fact that extremist NGOs take advantage of the cuddliness of horses creates perpetual motion. It means that these NGOs need our industry to boost their funding campaigns. After all, campaigns such as 'save the chicken' or 'save the pig' would not have quite the same impact on public opinion as saving the noble horse.

In the horse meat industry, we advocate a humane approach to slaughter and processing, the placement of economic value on the animal for the final owner, and the sustainable use of healthy meat in the food chain for human consumption. That is why we continue to reach out to animal rights organisations who are prepared to tell the full story, so that together we can strive for constructive, positive, and feasible measures.

TAGS: *#animalwelfare #emotionalbond #revenueModelngo #hippophagy #financialreturn*





## Breeding dozens of horses for a few top-class horses

What many people do not know, or rather do not *want* to know, is that a top-class horse is not supplied to order. Dozens of horses need to be bred in order to end up with only a few top-class horses. There are many good horses among these other horses that are able to perform a useful role. However, animals that do not find a place in the hobby or competition sectors are no longer wanted by their owners. The growth of equestrian sport over recent decades has led to the birth of greater numbers of horses. The fact that the horse meat industry continues to exist is precisely because there are increasing numbers of hobby riders and breeders of competition horses.

TAGS: *#writtenoffhorses #equestriansport #hippophagy #financialreturn*

## Horsification of the landscape

In addition, horses need a lot of space to be able to run freely. In recent decades, Flanders has seen its landscape become increasingly 'horsified'. Among other things, this is because horses that prove unsuitable for competition but are subject to the ban on slaughter for consumption have to spend many years being cared for until they die naturally, and they need to run freely. The land occupied for this purpose is land that was mainly used for farming in the past. In a region where claims on open space are increasingly becoming a cause of conflict, this horsification is really not a good example of efficient use of space. What is now already a problem in Flanders, will certainly become one in other countries and regions in the future as well.

TAGS: *#horsification #equestriansport #writtenoffhorses #excludedhorses*

## Excluded from slaughter

In 2008, the European Union introduced the obligation to register new horses. Foals are recorded in a database when they are born. A microchip is inserted into their neck so that they can always be identified. Since 2009, the European Union has given horse owners the chance to have a horse registered as being excluded from slaughter. This exclusion can only be applied for once during the life of the horse, and is irreversible. It means that the next owner of the horse cannot reverse this exclusion. Because of this decision, the horse must stay alive until it dies of natural causes or is euthanised.

*TAGS: #excludedhorses #foodwaste #sustainability*

## Majority of horses are not slaughtered

Nowadays, it is no longer possible to release half of the horses for slaughter as they have already been excluded from slaughter, mainly for emotional reasons. This applies to no fewer than 3.5 million horses across Europe! This number will continue to rise in coming years because more and more horses will be excluded and consequently cannot be slaughtered. In many ways, this is a ticking time bomb!

Horses that are slaughtered anyway no longer meet the requirements of horse owners. However, the fact that so many horses cannot be slaughtered has serious (and long-term) implications. Because a horse can live up to the age of 20, or even 30 years or older, the horse owner has to meet the costs of feed, care, and stables (an average of 180 euros per month in the cheapest case) throughout the horse's lifetime.

This is not always easy (or feasible), which is why horses are often given away for free in times of crisis. Sometimes an excluded horse with a 'hidden defect', such as a limp, is sold to a layman who is unable to assess the true condition of the horse. This new owner buys an animal he cannot use for anything. In the past, these horses would have been taken to an abattoir, but the owner will now be faced with the fact that the animal will need accommodation, feeding and care for many years to come. Furthermore, it will not provide any financial return at the end of its life, as the amount paid by the slaughterhouse will only cover a part of the costs. This is not exactly a great example of animal welfare either.

*TAGS: #excludedhorses #emotionalbond #writtenoffhorses #financialreturn #foodwaste #sustainability*

## Destroying or incinerating meat is a waste of food



When horses that are not intended for consumption die, the carcass is collected by a rendering firm, or it is incinerated at an animal crematorium. This is in complete contradiction with the current trends in Europe under the Green Deal, where sustainable food is the new norm and food waste is banned wherever possible. Europe has 3.5 million excluded horses, and as each horse provides an average of 170 kg of meat, it means that no fewer than 595 million kilograms or 595,000 tons of meat will never be used for human consumption.\* At the same time, there are people in Europe who continue to live on or even below the poverty line, as evidenced by the growing 'success' of organisations that support needy people by donating food packages, among other things. Chevideco donates a considerable quantity of horse meat to these organisations each year. We do this because as a company we consider it our ethical duty to help people with fewer opportunities in life.

A horse owner who has invested a lot of money to give his horse the healthiest and happiest possible life for many years would also benefit if he were able to release this horse for slaughter. Instead of having to pay to have his horse collected, in this case the owner would be able to get some financial return from the abattoir. That money could then be invested in a new horse, which would continue to stimulate the life cycle.

\* In addition, 300 million kg of animal bones, fat, and other waste products that are not suitable for human consumption are destroyed which could have otherwise been used as animal feed and derived products

*TAGS: #foodwaste #GreenDeal #animalwelfare #sustainablemeat #sustainability  
#financialreturn #CO<sub>2</sub>emissions #hippophagy*

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## Horse meat and medication – introduction of a restriction period

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### **After 6 months, drug residues have fully disappeared**

Horses are also permanently excluded from slaughter for human consumption if they have been given certain drugs during their life. This currently applies to medication that can cause adverse effects or reactions in humans if they consume horse meat, as well as to medication that is not at all harmful to humans. For the first type of drugs, it makes perfect sense for the horse to be permanently excluded from human consumption, however, there should not be any reason for harmless drugs to result in exclusion.

Even if a horse has been given a certain drug only once (e.g. for pain relief), the animal will be excluded from slaughter forever, no matter how long ago the drug was administered. Sometimes, even the owner is not entirely aware of the consequences of this one-off administration of medication, as these only become apparent at the end of the horse's life. However, the horse's body has the ability to cleanse itself. All residues of medication disappear after a maximum of six months. That is why we advocate a restriction period of 6 months from when the drug was last administered. During this restriction period, the horse should not be given any more medication. By releasing the meat for human consumption in a safe manner, the owner will get a financial return, and unnecessary and undesirable food waste is avoided.

*TAGS: #medication #excludedhorses #healthymeat #financialreturn #foodwaste #sustainability*



**The struggle  
for animal  
welfare**

**creates a  
huge amount  
of food waste**

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## The concerns of animal rights activists stop once the media has gone away

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### **They always refuse our invitations to a dialogue**

Animal rights organisations and the horse meat industry could (or should) be allies, and work together towards achieving optimal animal welfare for horses at the end of their lives. However, invitations from the horse meat industry to collaborate in a proactive manner continue to fall on deaf ears. To us, this is incomprehensible. Could the real reason be that some of these organisations are more interested in the media attention that their guerrilla action to demand the closure of the abattoirs generates? These

events, aimed at stirring the public's emotions, guarantee extra funding for these NGOs and their continued existence. Closing abattoirs would not lead to any improvement in animal welfare – on the contrary – though they seem to completely ignore this fact. Unless, of course, their ultimate aim is to achieve a total ban on horse breeding for sport, recreation, and utility purposes. This would lead to various breeds of horses dying out and would be a huge setback for the many amateur and professional horse lovers in Belgium and around the world.

*TAGS: #animalwelfare #revenueofngos #industryinitiatives*



## Everything gets a second life

When a horse is slaughtered, almost nothing goes to waste. Every part of the horse gets a second life:

- Horse hides are strong and hard-wearing and need little care, which is why this natural product is also used for belts, bags, shoes, and furniture.
- Horse hair is used for stringed instruments, for braiding the tail or mane of other horses, and for mattresses which are not only comfortable but also promote good health due to their exceptional ability to breathe and their anti-allergic properties.
- Horse fat contains omega 1 and 3, glycerine, vitamins A and D, and anti-bacterial fatty acids. It is used as frying fat, but also as hoof grease, leather grease, and as a food supplement for cats and dogs.
- Horse milk – which has a chemical composition that closely resembles mother’s milk – is used for follow-up treatments during cancer therapies.
- Various parts of the horse – including the pericardium membrane – are used as medical devices or graft material in cardiovascular surgery.
- Animal feed made from horse meat is mainly aimed at animals with allergies but is enjoyed and approved by all cats and dogs.
- The organs of slaughtered horses are used by the scientific community to improve the knowledge of future veterinary surgeons about living horses and to increase understanding. This has a positive effect on animal welfare.
- Hooves are supplied to training centres for future blacksmiths.

*TAGS: #sustainability #animalwelfare*

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*Horse meat is sustainable meat*

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## **The older the horse, the better the meat**

Horses are not primarily reared for slaughter, and in general, naturally also enjoy a long life. Furthermore, horse meat becomes more tender and tastier the older the animal is. The average age of a horse at the time of slaughter is 13 years, but a horse can also easily live to 20 or even to over 30 years of age. It would be unaffordable to feed, care for, and provide stables for a horse over such a long period of time for the sake of its meat alone. Horses have lived a long and productive life and are healthy when they are slaughtered.

It is precisely because horses are not primarily reared for meat that horse meat is particularly sustainable. After all, horses have performed various roles during their life cycle, in sport, riding schools, or as draught animals. (...) Horses are mostly slaughtered at the end of their lives. That is the logic and beauty of nature.

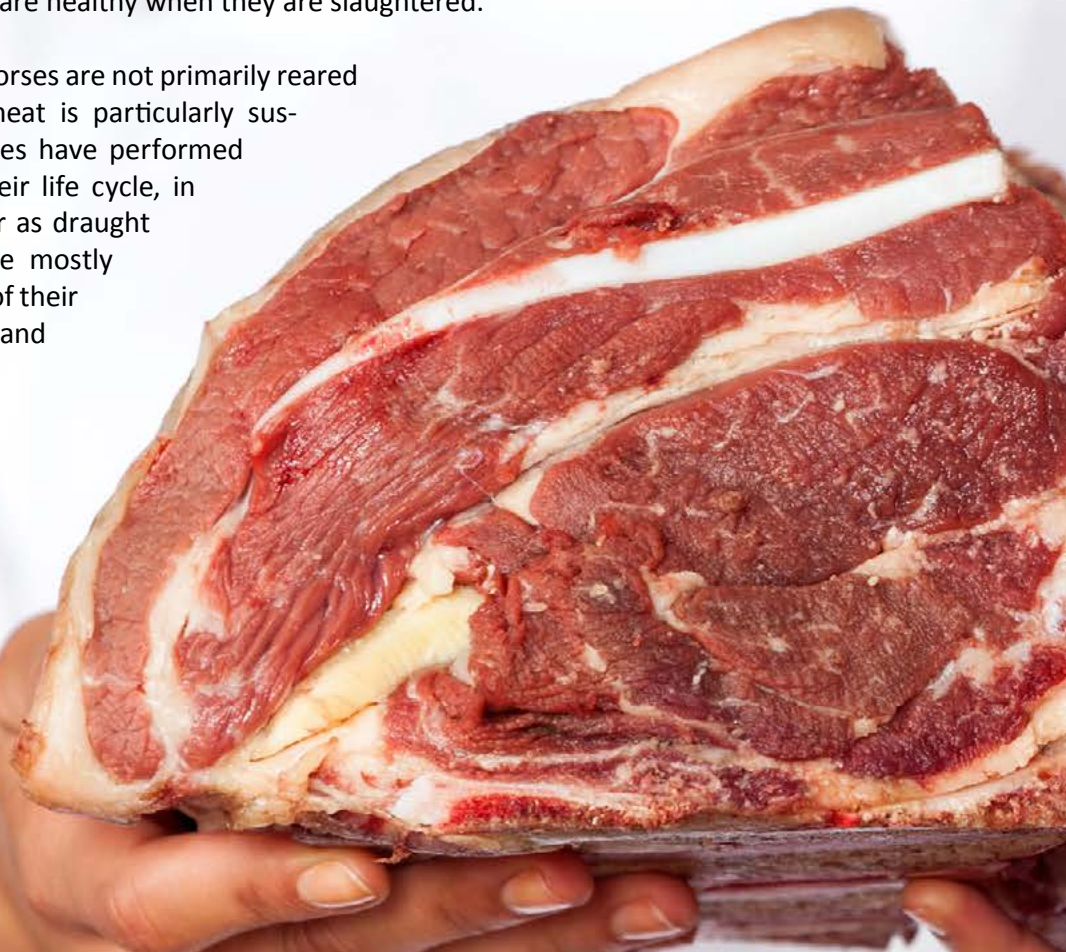
**TAGS:**

*#sustainablemeat*

*#sustainability*

*#foodwaste*

*#hippophagy*



## Are mealworms more sustainable than horse meat?

Europe recently approved the breeding of mealworms for human consumption. This is in line with the sustainable protein transition pursued by Europe, with a greater emphasis on proteins from alternative, plant-based, sources. Does this mean that using mealworms for human consumption is more sustainable than horse meat? This raises serious questions. The availability of plant-based proteins is currently still a niche area compared to the availability of animal proteins. The world's population, which is constantly growing, will also need sufficient food in the future, particularly when there is an ambition to completely eradicate famine. Plant-based proteins alone will not be sufficient to achieve this, so animal proteins will continue to be essential.

As mentioned earlier, horses are not primarily reared for their meat. The horse meat imported into Europe comes from countries which do not have a cultural tradition of eating horse meat. Nevertheless, more and more horses are also being raised there so that they can be used for sport, recreation, and utility during their lives. In any case, the meat is available, and it is an ideal source of animal protein for humans. Therefore, the fact that almost 600,000 tons of horse meat (see above) are deemed unsuitable for consumption and are destroyed or incinerated (resulting in considerable CO<sub>2</sub> emissions), is a huge waste of food. This defies all logic.

*TAGS: #foodwaste #sustainability #sustainablemeat #proteintransition #healthymeat #CO<sub>2</sub>emissions #hippophagy #financialreturn*



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## Horse meat is healthy meat

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### It is not cultured meat

Horses are not primarily reared for their meat. Since horses have such a long life, it would be much too expensive to raise a horse purely for its meat, without the horse working as a competition, recreational, or utility animal – it would simply be financially unviable. This means that horse meat is a genuine natural product and only healthy animals are used for human consumption.

*TAGS: #healthymeat #sustainablemeat #hippophagy*

#### Proven health claims

Horse meat has a number of undisputed health benefits:

- Source of high-quality protein (21 grams of protein for every 100 grams of meat).
- Source of vitamin B and zinc.
- Low in fat (2 to 4 per cent).
- Furthermore, 60 to 70 per cent of the fat in horse meat is unsaturated fat (omega 3 and omega 6).
- Contains negligible cholesterol.
- High in iron (4 to 5 mg per 100 grams).
- Rich in vitamins B12, B3, and B6.
- Extremely easy to digest.
- Also suitable for all diets.
- Even people with allergies can consume horse meat.

*TAGS: #healthymeat #proteintransition #sustainability #hippophagy*

### Ideal for modern consumers

Since horses are reared for reasons other than their meat, horse meat is a 'residual stream' that provides economical value, and in this way is not lost for consumption. In the countries of origin, horse meat is often not consumed locally or the market for selling horse meat is too small, whereas horses are exploited there too, just as in Europe. This means it would be irresponsible to not use this source of healthy protein.

*TAGS: #sustainablemeat #healthymeat #proteintransition #financialreturn #hippophagy*

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The 2013 horse meat scandal was actually a beef scandal

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## Horse meat was used to substitute more expensive beef

Between late 2012 and early 2013, a food scandal erupted in Europe. It was informally described in the media as a 'horse meat scandal'. However, beef processing companies were behind the meat fraud. They replaced some of the beef in ready-made meals such as lasagne with cheaper horse meat. The only thing is, they did not mention it on the label. After a thorough investigation, it turned out that the horse meat industry was not to blame. The horses had been legally slaughtered and legally processed, though the labelling was maliciously illegal. The products that were immediately removed from the shelves due to the scandal also turned out to be 100 percent suitable for human consumption.

*TAGS: #horsemeatscandal #healthymeat*

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Eating horse meat is the best way to preserve horse breeds

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## Slaughtering horses keeps the draught horse, and other breeds, alive

These days, certain breeds of horses are mainly reared to preserve their cultural and genetic heritage. A typical example is the draught horse, also known as the 'farm horse'. The arrival of machinery from the 19th century onwards meant that this breed of horse gradually lost its utilitarian function. Tractors replaced the horse on land, vans and lorries superseded horse-drawn carts, and canal boats with their own engine made draught horses on riverbanks redundant. These days, the practical usage of the draught horse is often purely limited to dragging away trees from forests that cannot be accessed by heavy machinery or where this machinery is undesirable because it compresses the soil. Draught horses are bred as show animals (mainly by amateur breeders) and are displayed at horse fairs and shows. However, the personality or build of a great many animals fail to live up to expectations. The majority of breeders send

these horses off to the abattoir, which enables them to recoup part of their investment. This much-needed money allows them to continue breeding horses. It is paradoxical, but the possibility to eat horse meat means that this breed of horse can be preserved. This also applies by extension to all breeds of horses.

*TAGS: #writtenoffhorses #financialreturn #hipophagy*

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Respectful Life – the horse meat industry strives for animal welfare

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## Respectful Life conducts proactive research

In 2016, FEBEV (the national Belgian federation of slaughterhouses) together with the Animals and Well-being research group from the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven) set up the 'Respectful Life' project. The aim of the research project is to identify objective and verifiable parameters for horse welfare, based on scientific principles. The researchers conducted various site visits to horse meat companies in Argentina, Uruguay, and Canada. They audited the treatment of the horses in depots, at cattle markets, during transport, and when they arrive at abattoirs. They also conducted a survey among abattoir staff and front-line workers. All the findings were then tested against the European standards and norms for animal welfare. The general conclusion was that no breaches of animal welfare were observed at any of the locations studied, however they have made recommendations. You can read the conclusions and recommendations of the researchers at KU Leuven at [www.respectfullife.com](http://www.respectfullife.com).

*TAGS: #animalwelfare #industryinitiatives #Respectfullife #foreign abattoirs*



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Why do so many people  
refuse to eat horse meat?

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## The influence of religion

The evolution of views about hippophagy (consumption of horse meat) has been greatly influenced over the ages by religious precepts. The Bible lays down in the book of Leviticus that people should only eat animals with split hooves and that chew the cud. Even though horses were not literally mentioned, as they do not have these characteristics, this precept can be interpreted as a ban on eating horse meat. Horses were first domesticated in Russia around 5,000 years ago. The people of Kazakhstan continue to breed and eat horses to this day. When hippophagy moved west and gained a ritual character during pre-Christian times, it was a thorn in the side for early Catholic converts. After the practice was deemed to be equivalent to heresy, it was forbidden.

Eating horse meat is also discouraged or banned by other religions. Jewish law expanded on the vision in Leviticus and stated that eating horse meat was forbidden as horses do not have split hooves. The slaughter of horses is not a common practice among Muslims. Opinions about eating horse meat vary, and the precept of 'makrouh', which is somewhere between 'halal' (permitted) and 'haram' (forbidden), 'discourages' the consumption of horse meat. Buddhists and Hindus frequently follow vegetarian guidelines and mainly avoid consuming meat from a non-violence perspective.

In the United States, eating horse meat is considered as beyond the pale for cultural reasons instead of religious reasons. Films such as 'The Black Stallion' and 'The Horse Whisperer' highlight the almost mythical status of the American horse.

*TAGS: #religion #hippophagy #foodwaste #sustainability #emotionalbond*

## Horses are becoming 'humanised'

The industrial revolution led to the impoverishment of part of the population and as a result horse meat once again became a source of food, mainly for the poorest people. Food shortages during the First and Second World Wars also led to horses being slaughtered for food. In recent decades, there has been an increasing pushback against eating horse meat. The way of seeing horses as working animals (a beast of burden or draught animal) is increasingly being replaced by a view that horses are domestic animals or even another member of the family. Horses no longer 'serve' people, but instead need to be fed and cared for. Since that 'mental distance' has reduced so much, it seems that many people find it impossible to consume horse meat.

*TAGS: #hippophagy #emotionalbond #foodwaste #sustainability*



## Conclusion

Horses are very cuddly animals, which means that people see the eating of horse meat as 'pitiful'. However, the horse has already led a long and fulfilling life. Now that more and more horses are being bred for competitions and hobbies, the 'horse meat ban' means that we are also letting increasing quantities of sustainable and healthy meat go to waste. We want to reverse this negative trend by telling the full story about horse meat.

After all, if horse meat were used for human consumption, this would be a win-win situation for the planet, for consumers and for horse lovers.

*TAGS: #hippophagy #emotionalbond #foodwaste #sustainability #sustainablemeat*







