

CHDC MEDIA SUMMARY

Who Are We?

Established in BC in 2004, the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition (CHDC), a registered non-profit organization, is a collective of people and groups working to ban the slaughter of equines for human consumption in Canada, as well as the export of live horses to other countries for the same purpose.

Our Board of Directors are across Canada, residing in BC, Alberta, Ontario and New Brunswick.

The CHDC communicates through our website: <https://defendhorsescanada.org/>,

CHDC Blog: <https://canadianhorsedefencecoalition.wordpress.com/>,

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CanadianHorseDefenceCoalition/>,

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/defendhorsescanada>, and Twitter: <https://twitter.com/defendhorsescan>

Our Mission

Our mission is to work collectively with individuals and groups to help protect equines in Canada from slaughter and the export of live equines for slaughter by raising public awareness through education, and helping to achieve the enactment of legislation that will ban these practices in Canada.



What are the Issues?

Horses, considered to be man's second best friend, are companion and sport animals and are not commonly raised for human consumption. The majority of horses sent to slaughter were once children's riding ponies, competitive sport horses, work horses, pleasure horses or companion animals. In 2018, approximately 31,000 horses were slaughtered in Canada. Every year, about half are imported from the US where no identification system is in place. This means horses given drugs harmful to humans, and banned for human consumption, are used for food for people. There are instances in Europe where banned substances have been found in horsemeat exported by Canada. The majority of Canadians believe that this industry must be abolished. A Nanos poll taken in June 2019 reveals that 69% of Canadians polled said they would like to stop the slaughtering of horses in Canada for human consumption.

Undercover investigations have provided compelling evidence of horses suffering injuries and maltreatment during transport to slaughter and at slaughter plants.

Thousands of horses destined for slaughter reside on feedlots in Alberta and neighbouring Montana. The very basic Canadian guidelines specified in The Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines are far from being met. Shelter, veterinary and hoof care are clearly lacking in these feedlots, and horses are fed to the point of obesity.

Horse slaughter is not a solution for unwanted horses. Healthy horses are sought by kill buyers, not old and sick ones. The horse slaughter process itself is not humane euthanasia. It is a predatory business that sustains a culture of cruelty to horses.



Canada's Horse Slaughter Industry at a Glance

Since 1989, over 2.2 million horses have perished in Canadian slaughter plants. The industry has been on a steady decline since its peak in 2008, after the US stopped slaughtering horses in 2007. In recent years the numbers have been down significantly (↓20% in 2016, ↓38% in 2017, and ↓8% in 2018). The drop in recent years is due to the tightening of European Union regulations. Any horse going to slaughter must now have an accompanying document including a declaration of any vaccines or medications administered in the previous 6 months. In 2017, an additional rule was implemented whereby Canadian establishments that export horse meat to the EU must ensure that horses imported into Canada are resident in Canada for six months before slaughter and export.

At one time, over 60% of horses slaughtered in Canada were imported from the US. That percentage has dropped in recent years to less than 50% due to the new EU regulations.

There are currently two federally licensed plants operating in Canada (one in Alberta, and one in Quebec). Both are owned and operated by one company, Bouvry Exports. At one time, there were six plants (2 in Alberta, one in Saskatchewan, one in Ontario, and 2 in Quebec).

In 2017, there were 4,846 draft horses air shipped from Canada to Japan for slaughter. The numbers for 2018 are currently under review. Horses destined for Japan reside on vast feedlots in western Canada, as well as in Montana where Bouvry Exports has land holdings.



Former NDP MP Alex Atamanenko previously introduced 3 bills to end horse slaughter in Canada that did not gain the needed support in a Conservative majority government. Under the current Liberal majority government, we must now re-establish legislation to end this industry in Canada.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The CHDC Sues the CFIA for Overcrowding of Horses Exported for Slaughter

In September 2018, the CHDC filed a lawsuit against the CFIA, stating that violations of the law are occurring, by allowing the overcrowding of horses and by allowing horses' heads to touch the tops of crates. Horses are shipped in small wooden crates, 3 or 4 per crate: <https://defendhorsescanada.org/chdc-sues-cfia-for-overcrowding-of-horses-exported-for-slaughter>. Representing the CHDC is Breder Law based out of Vancouver, BC.

The law in regard to the live export of horses for slaughter is clear. Sections 141(8) and 142(a) of the Health of Animals Regulations say that horses over 14 hands in height (the size of a large pony) must be segregated, and horses must be able to stand in a natural position. These provisions exist to ensure the humane transport of horses, yet the CFIA consistently violates the law by allowing the overcrowding of horses and by allowing horses' heads to touch the tops of crates, when live horses are shipped by air cargo to Japan for slaughter.

The lawsuit is ongoing and the CHDC continues to fundraise for it through its GoFundMe page: <https://www.gofundme.com/help-win-a-groundbreaking-legal-battle-for-horses>

Access to Information Reporting

The CHDC continues to expose the conditions horses must endure when transported by ground and air to slaughter. ATI findings can be found on the CHDC website: <https://defendhorsescanada.org/investigations>.

Feedlot Conditions

We report on the horrific ongoing conditions of feedlots and the sub-standard care provided to horses. In June 2019, the CHDC was part of an International Coalition of animal welfare groups that exposed the neglect and suffering happening on Canadian feedlots: <https://defendhorsescanada.org/dead-decaying-and-suffering-horses-found-in-feedlots>.

Release of Nanos Poll Findings

In June 2019, a Nanos Poll was conducted by Ottawa lobbying firm, The Parliamentary Group. Findings reveal that the majority of Canadians have a problem with the slaughter of Canadian horses for human consumption. Just over two-thirds of Canadians say they are uncomfortable or somewhat uncomfortable with the export of horse meat from Canada for human consumption. Nearly seven in ten Canadians say they would most support stopping the slaughtering of horses in Canada for human consumption rather than continue the policy. Canadians are over four times more likely to say they would have a more positive impression rather than a more negative impression of a politician that supported a ban in Canada on the slaughter of horses for human consumption. When asked about the continuation of this practice, 69% said they would like to stop the slaughtering of horses in Canada for human consumption.

Engaging the Public

The CHDC continues to inform the public and provide information on how to approach MPs to speak out against horse slaughter. We encourage Canadians to communicate with government and be the voice for horses: <https://defendhorsescanada.org/help-now/do-it-now>.

Media Inquiries

Please contact the CHDC's Executive Director, Sinikka Crosland at sinikka@defendhorsescanada.org.

