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Mexico, Decreasing The Spread of Toxic Meat Through Horse Slaughter

Ending the Export of Toxic Horse Meat

Mexico is located in Middle America bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, between Belize and the U.S and next to the North Pacific Ocean. The U.S is to the north and Guatemala to the south. With 758,400 square miles of land and an approximate population of 127.5 million, most of the population lay in the capital, Mexico City, with numbers of 8.9 million. A family in ideal conditions averages at four people per household. The housing ranges from apartments to a million dollar modern home. Americans tend to over-exaggerate the Mexican cuisine, though their diet does contain corn and beans, they are very popular in Mexican cuisine along with chilies, stews and soups, enchiladas, and simple tacos are some variety of food. They obtain like mentioned before food from stores. Though these stores are not as well regulated as in more modern countries including the United States and Europe, these stores are clean and well-kept in intention for human safety.

The job market isn't much different from the United States. The average man can have a job ranging from a mechanic to a CEO, to a doctor. The variety of jobs in Mexico are no different from other countries. There are more run-ins with drug cartels with drug-related violence who make billions through the smuggling export of any types of drugs. Rural schools are underfunded and have a shortage of buildings, teachers, and textbooks. Urban public schools are better, but the standard of education is still relatively low. Private schools, however, have a high standard of bilingual education that is usually well-suited to for children to do well in life. Public schools in Mexico are free of charge and secular, as religious instruction is banned in public education. The Mexican government provides free textbooks for primary school children but once they reach high school, parents need to buy textbooks for their children. Healthcare in Mexico ranges depending on the social class. A typical doctor's visit is an average of 300-500 pesos (Around \$20 USD). Though many families do not struggle with not having electricity, telephones, or access to the outside world, there are still dangers throughout the streets. Many innocents get caught in the crossfire of Mexican drug cartels, which dominates the country due to the unrelenting amount of business they receive from inside their borders, and out.

Many people worldwide see horses as intelligent animals, as a way to get work done, or just companions, there are many others who consider horse meat to be a source of protein. Mexico is the second largest supplier of horse meat, only outnumbered by the numbers of horses that China exhibits. Horse meat consumption is illegal in some countries, most notably in the United States, though it is a very common product in many other parts of the world and sometimes used as a primary part in a household's diet. Commonly eaten in parts of Italy, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, horse meat is considered to be very healthy due to it containing a lower fat content, sodium content, and has less cholesterol when compared to the typical beef product. The prices at the slaughterhouses are going up, and the overall consumption of horse meat protein is going down. With horse slaughter being illegal in America, there are hundreds of thousands of horses being sent over the border into Mexico to be slaughtered. Where there is horse meat, there is a powerful drug called phenylbutazone enters with it. Commonly called "Bute" for short, horses are administered this drug as a great anti-inflammatory painkiller. Researchers recently did an experiment, they took 433 samples of meat being sold as beef, and finding that forty of those samples were actually horse meat, and twenty-nine of them contained a banned growth-enhancing drug called clenbuterol. This drug was banned due to the overuse in horse racing, used to treat difficulties breathing. It is one of the most commonly prescribed medicines in the horse industry

due to it being used with success for decades. It is particularly used in the treatment of pain from lameness. There is research that points to these substances being a factor in gastric-intestinal ulcers, kidney damage, a formation of blood clots, and even liver damage (Bute and Horses). U.S. horse meat is unfit for human consumption because of the uncontrolled administration of hundreds of dangerous drugs and other substances to horses before slaughter. “Two-thirds of horses sent to slaughter are quarter horses, and many are castoffs from the rodeo or racing industries. The Thoroughbred-racing industry sends an estimated 10,000 horses to slaughter annually” (Over Breeding and Slaughter). Though, even with this information widely known, there are still horses who have been deemed as ‘clean’ being slaughtered. Horses are not raised as slaughter animals, were cattle, pigs, and other animals are. Horses are medicated and vaccinated, they are not meant for slaughter, so they are not injected with chemicals and toxins that will harm humans by consuming their meat. Therefore, even as they are said to be clean, they are in fact not. According to the Animal Welfare Institute, 102,554 horses were shipped from the U.S. to Mexico for slaughter (Global Horse Slaughter). Of those horses, a great percent is bound to be ex-racehorses or pets who have been abandoned, and a great percentage of those horses are bound to be vaccinated.

Where the slaughterhouses are concerned, horses are poorly transported thousands of miles to their death. They are crammed into trailers, double, maybe even triple, the capacity. Upon arrival in the slaughterhouse, many claim they check over the horses. As they inspect the horses, the injured are euthanized and disposed of. However, there is a video document showing a slaughterhouse hauling two horse corpse inside to be slaughtered, even though it is highly against regulations. These conditions of which horses are transported make a mockery out of humanity. From kill pens, horses are beaten to be crammed into trailers to save on transport costs. Although, these horses are in a tense situation and may react violently. There are some uncommon cases where horses are transported with metal shoes on, making it even more brutal by causing deeper gashes and additional force to help break limbs. Not even to mention the fact of how long that horse may have been suffering from ill-fitting shoes, or overgrown hooves. These horses are transported extremely dehydrated in dry and temperate conditions but are also starved. Once the horses reach their destination, their last ride that leads to their demise. On arrival, there are horses who have several broken bones, and many deceased in the trailer either from being too weak from neglectful conditions, or they fell and were trampled to death due to over-crowded trailers. But how? Many slaughterhouses throughout Mexico, not specifically horse slaughterhouses, though those of which dedicated to slaughtering animals too, have reportedly, and repeatedly broken the law. The chutes are not cleaned after each animal, allowing the bacteria from one animal to be spread to another. The animals are stressed due to the smell of fear and the blood of their own kind laid out before them. This increases the stress of the animal, who is now forced to succumb to a slow and torturous death. Mexican slaughterhouse workers are not officially trained in their field of work, and this causes them to miss their target when they are using a gun to kill the animal in a quick way. Without proper training, they miss their target and leave the horses to being completely aware of their surrounding, some are paralyzed, some are not. It depends on the methods used, but as these horses are hung from their back feet, and their throats slit to drain the blood, they are conscious and aware of what is going on.

Firstly, Instead of the Mexican officials enforcing the laws set forth to slaughter, what happens is the complete opposite. The presence of federal-local police who sometimes, instead of asking for documentation and health guidance, ask for a financial share to allow access to trucks. There is little to no animal inspection by the SAGARPA (Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación), or monitoring of transport by the Federal Highway Police or the Ministry of Communications and Transport (Change). The only requirements for horses being shipped across the border are if they are older than six months, not a stallion, and free of ticks. None of those requirements take into account diseases, disorders, or infections that can take place within a horses skin. If a horse is rejected, they are sent back to the kill pen for the kill buyer to pick up again. Since they are of no value to

the Kill Buyer, they are hauled back to his feedlot and put in a reject pen. These horses receive no veterinarian attention and are to die in the pen, then buried on the premises. The buyer may try to reship the horse again due to some vets being more lenient, there have been horses seen being shipped and rejected up to five times. As of January 2015, the European Union has banned horse meat processed in Mexico due to the unreliability of the origin of the horses who have been processed. There had been an issue with the lack of traceability of the horses slaughtered for meat for export. Mexican horses had consistently had been looked over for medical treatment records, due to the fact they are not needed by authority. The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) had complications due to no official controls upon horses to verify the authenticity and reliability of owners' stating the horses' medication history and non-use of substances prohibited to human consumption. By enforcing the law on slaughterhouses and stopping the cruel environment these horses are forced to live in, there is a way to change it. There is a way to ensure that horses who are sentenced to slaughter are going humanly, the way they should have been, and have been claimed to be going for many years. Enforcing the way these horses are initially transported will increase the quality of horse, and decrease the amount of deceased or injured horses upon arrival at the slaughterhouses. Through the increased monitoring of the Mexican patrol, the federal police will enforce the law by demanding accurate documentation of the horses aboard with proper health guidance and checks. Without proper documentation and identity, these horses should be condemned. In addition to the horses being condemned, an investigation shall be opened and those responsible and fined heavily. If the horses have ensured validation linking their traceability of origin, they would be approved. Now, these horses need somewhere to go. In spite of the slaughterhouses getting away with animals abuse and breaking laws, a horse rescue property shall be formed. Condemned horses will spend time on this property, recuperate and then be returned to the proper owners. If these owners shall deny ownership, they will be evaluated to determine if they are liable for adoption in the country, or a foreign country. Through many anti-slaughter groups and reforms, this can be made possible. With a set amount of income coming from the State to amount to the numbers of horses. Donations of the horses through organizations, and/or sponsorships of large companies, like large industries will be set in place. These horses will be put up for adoption if they pass their evaluations. Those who have been greatly neglected and have a low chance of survival will be euthanized and buried in a humane way. From there, those horses may have to learn to trust humans again due to their unfortunate turn of events with humanity, volunteers will be in place around this horse sanctuary to take care of and train horses to be liable for adoption. The adoption fee will cover a percentage of the costs that the said horse has been given in change for medical supplies, feed, and facility costs. The new owner will pay for the transport costs.

Giving horses a sanctuary will result in a complaint from slaughterhouses due to their decreased import of horses. These slaughterhouses will be closed for a short period of time to be evaluated themselves, and inspection. If there are any alterations needed to be placed within the building, they must be done in a certain amount of set time. From there, the facility will cover the complete renovation costs. There will be random inspections set, and those who violate set precautions will be prosecuted and fined. The horses whom the facility receives will be properly disposed of. This will increase the price of horse meat by the pound tremendously, and by creating a clean and healthy product, those who have banned horse meat on foreign countries may considering reopening their doors on horse meat imports with proof of postmortem inspections of the meat, giving Mexico more business through their exports.

The facilities will have to follow safety procedures in place for the mental stability of the animals, and precautions to the concern of the meat. Whilst the implications are set now, and in slaughterhouses today, they are not followed. Cutting back the amount of horse meat that is slaughtered will decrease the amount that is mislabeled and sold in a mix, or separately, as beef. This will result due to the heavily restricted actions of slaughterhouses, making the Mexican horse meat export become more pristine, clean, and cut

back on meat that is infected with chemicals or medicines not intended for human consumption. While this improves facilities within Mexico, this boasts the morals of those who have contradicted the way these slaughterhouses have been allowed to run, creating some sort of peace in a country that is surrounded by violence. When these conditions for horses are improved, there will be less and fewer horses sent for slaughter. When the United States banned horse slaughter, it was thought that there would be an influx of neglect cases due to the no longer option for an easy disposal. Because people are aware that there is this procedure in place, there has been a large decrease in the numbers of neglect, horses bred solely for slaughter, and better quality of horses. Allowing these Mexican facilities to continue like they are will allow the amount of horse abuse and spread of toxic meat to continue in full force. By placing these laws and enforcing those already in place, the world of Mexican horse slaughter will greatly improve.

However, this is not the only way of improving the quality of Mexican horse meat. Mentioned earlier was the fact that horses are not raised to be slaughtered. The cost of raising horses is much more expensive compared to other animals and that is the typical excuse for not raising horses for meat commercially. The heavier draft type breeds hold more fat and more meat, and therefore they are more sought out for slaughter. The act of raising horses for meat is not very common, but it is done in some parts of France and Italy. By raising Mexican horses meant specifically for slaughter provides the immediate clean bill of health due to the traceability of the horses. A horse's gestation period is 11-12 months where a cow is only around 9 months. Looking at that, it does not seem like a large number but in production, that can cause a lack of horses to slaughter. Adding another six to eighteen months onto that year for the horse to grow large enough to either slaughter or reproduce makes for a very large wait. This process can take several years to grow and become profitable and therefore is not as likely as my first solution. By having a herd of 50, in one year, you would have one-hundred horses. In that same year, the new generation is growing, you will have a new fifty horses. In three years after the original fifty horses, you now have two hundred and fifty head. It would take three years or more to grow a herd into three times its profit.

So, therefore, by enforcing and being able to verify a horse's medical background, Mexico can profit from their new and improved horse meat production. From new foreign clients to raised quality prices, the profit from the meat makes it worth the effort put into the border control on horses allowed for slaughter. From the kill pens inside the U.S. to the plate of someone else, the horses deserve more than the barbarian ways of the present slaughter process. Quality over quantity is a common phrase within the United States, by taking that phrase and applying it to the Mexican horse slaughterhouses, will make Mexico a better profit than the current quantity over quality they are designed for today.

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