

Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act

Senate

Bill Name:

Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act (S. 1214) (<http://www.congressweb.com/awi/bills/detail/id/18283>)

Sponsor:

Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ)

(http://www.congressweb.com/awi/legislators/info/mbr_id/301)

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)

(http://www.congressweb.com/awi/legislators/info/mbr_id/423)

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME)

(http://www.congressweb.com/awi/legislators/info/mbr_id/216)

Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)

(http://www.congressweb.com/awi/legislators/info/mbr_id/220)

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(<http://www.congressweb.com/AWI/86>)

House of Representatives

Bill Name:

Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act (H.R. 1942) (<http://www.congressweb.com/awi/bills/detail/id/18107>)

Sponsor:

Representative Frank Guinta (R-NH)

(http://www.congressweb.com/awi/legislators/info/mbr_id/299)

Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)

(http://www.congressweb.com/awi/legislators/info/mbr_id/167)

Representative Vern Buchanan (R-FL)

(http://www.congressweb.com/awi/legislators/info/mbr_id/121)

Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM)

(http://www.congressweb.com/awi/legislators/info/mbr_id/317)

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Horsemeat Poses Serious Risks to Human Health

The Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act would prohibit the slaughter of horses in the United States for human consumption, as well as the export of live horses for the same purpose.

"The permissive allowance of such horsemeat used for human consumption poses a serious public health risk."¹

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration currently bans the presence of 379 common equine drugs in animals slaughtered for human consumption. However, there is no procedure in place to ensure that American horses, sold to slaughterhouses and killed for human consumption, are free of these FDA-banned substances.

There is currently no means of identifying whether a horse sent to slaughter has received dangerous, prohibited substances. When a horse is sold, especially through an auction, there is no required transfer of information regarding the substances a horse received during his or her lifetime.



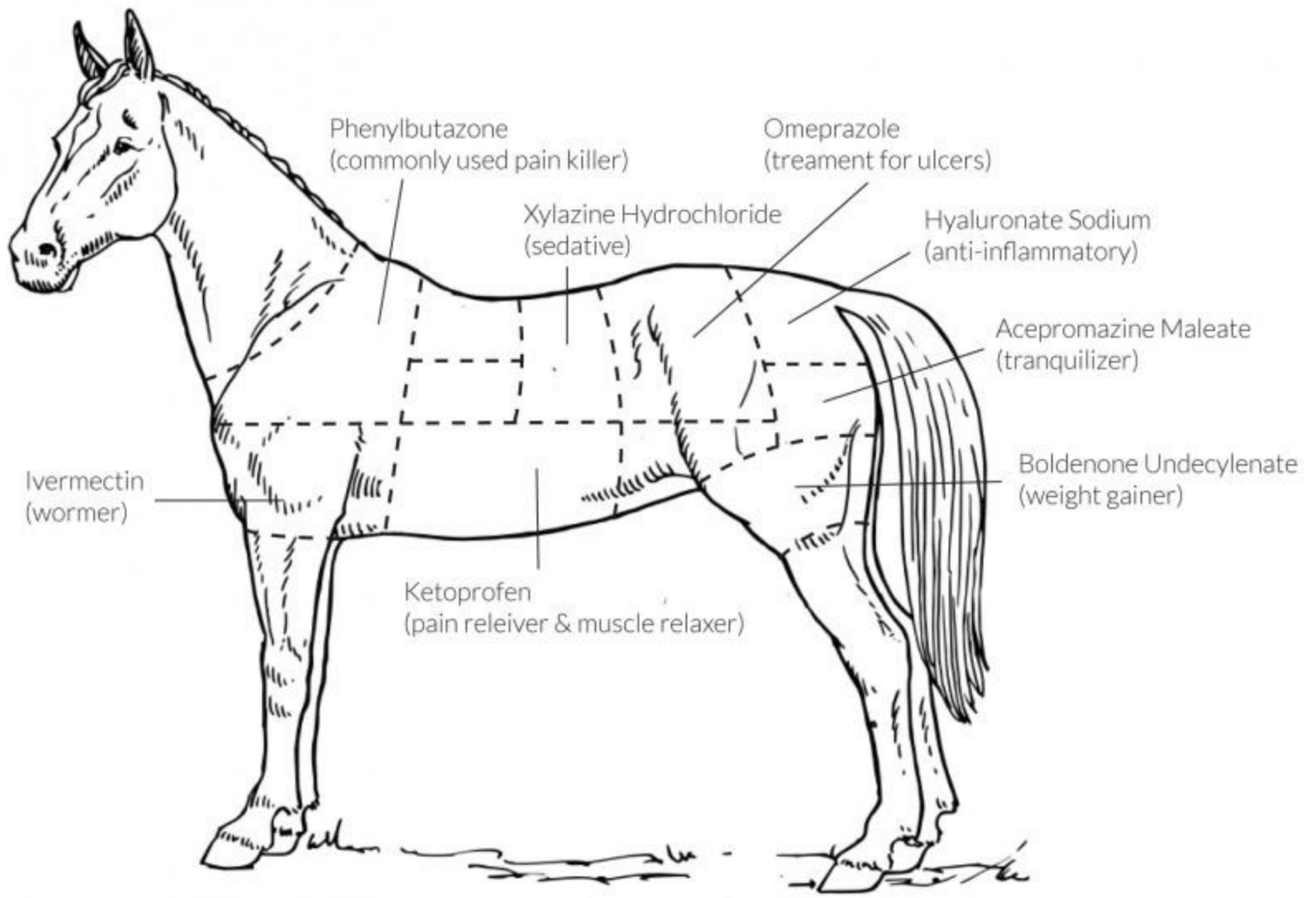
Therefore, there is no mechanism in place to ensure horses frequently bought at auction by killer buyers have not been given dangerous substances before they become part of the food chain.

Horses are routinely given substances that are dangerous to humans. Most American horse owners do not imagine that their horses may someday be slaughtered for human consumption, and almost universally give their horses medications, antibiotics, ointments, wormers, and other substances labeled "*not for animals intended for human consumption.*" These substances may remain in the body for long periods of time.

Phenylbutazone (bute) can be lethal if ingested by people. A study published in May 2010 in the journal *Food and Chemical Toxicology* found that substances routinely given to American horses cause dangerous adverse effects in humans. The most serious effect of phenylbutazone is bone-marrow toxicity, leading to agranulocytosis (failure to produce white blood cells, causing chronic infections) and aplastic anemia (insufficient production of red and white blood cells and platelets). Similar blood conditions such as leucopenia, hemolytic anemia, pancytopenia, and thrombocytopenia may also occur in people who consume bute. The National Toxicology Program has determined that bute is a carcinogen. For these reasons, the FDA bans this substance for human consumption.

FDA-prohibited drugs are universally used at racetracks. The February 28, 2010 *Paulick Report* published a study revealing that more than 9 out of 10 racehorses are commonly administered bute before they race. Racehorses are frequently shipped to Mexico and Canada to be slaughtered for human consumption when their performance flags, often within days or weeks of receiving their last dose of bute. Any consumer of this meat, which can be ground together with beef and offered to consumers without proper identification, could be unwittingly ingesting banned substances, with potentially lethal results.

The European Union has a policy prohibiting importation of the meat of any horse who has ever received bute. Nitrofurazone, the most common wound ointment given to American horses, is also prohibited for use on any horse whose meat is shipped to the European community. The United States needs to close this loophole that currently puts consumers at risk, and ensure that meat from American horses is not jeopardizing the health and lives of consumers.



POISON: It's what's for dinner when horsemeat is on the menu

Those promoting horsemeat consumption claim horsemeat is leaner (and therefore, supposedly, healthier) than beef. What they fail to point out is that, unlike cattle, horses are not raised for meat, and are given hundreds of legal and illegal drugs rendering their meat unsafe for human consumption in the United States and abroad. However, because of confusing and conflicting U.S. and foreign laws, horsemeat slips through the regulatory cracks and is consumed overseas by unsuspecting diners. The diagram shows just a few of the banned and dangerous drugs that consistently end up in horsemeat and on people's plates.

¹Dodman, N., et al. 2010. Association of phenylbutazone usage with horses bought for slaughter: A public health risk. *Food Chem Toxicol.* 48(5):1270-4. doi: 10.1016/j.fct.2010.02.021

Find out more about horse slaughter (<https://awionline.org/content/horse-slaughter>) .