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## Dutch Court Sends Meat Trader to Jail in European Horse Meat Scandal

BY **DAN FLYNN** | APRIL 8, 2015

A Dutch meat trader is the first person sentenced to jail for the role he played in Europe's horse meat scandal.

Willy Selten, 45, will be jailed for 2.5 years after being convicted of selling 300 tons of horse meat labeled as beef. He was convicted on the details — forging invoices and labels, faking declarations, and using the phony paper to sell horse meat as beef.



Willy Selten

Europe's horse meat scandal broke wide open in January 2013 when the extent of the food fraud scheme was discovered by Irish food safety authorities. Overnight, investigators were **testing** in virtually every country for horse DNA potentially showing up where it shouldn't be.

As horse meat was found in everything from frozen burgers to packaged lasagna, recalls of 50,000 tons of meat products were soon underway throughout Europe.

The Dutch court in Den Bosh became the first to sentence someone involved in the horse meat scandal to prison time. Last month, a [Southwark Crown Court judge](#) let slaughterhouse owner Peter Boddy and manager David Moss off with fines and suspended sentences.

The Dutch court heard testimony from food safety authorities that 167 samples were taken from Selten's meat supplies during February 2013, and 35 were returned with positive results for horse DNA. At least 336 tons of horse meat was sold by the trader in 2011 and 2012. His two businesses later went bankrupt and were sold to foreign companies in 2013.

Selten's attorneys said their client has not decided whether or not he will file an appeal. Selten admitted there were mistakes in his bookkeeping, but said that he was not a "big horse meat swindler," just careless.

While the prosecution sought more prison time, the judge considered Selten's bankruptcy and civil damage claims of €11 million (about \$12 million). The judge also said Selten "contributed to a negative image for the Dutch meat industry ... ."

France also has the potential for prosecutions. Officials there took 21 people into custody in December 2013 after seizing consignments of horse meat.

Meanwhile, some in the U.K. are questioning whether British Prime Minister David Cameron is making good on his 2013 promise to fully prosecute this "very shocking" crime.

Barry Gardiner, a Labour Party member of Parliament and "shadow minister" for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, was particularly critical of Cameron's perceived inaction in handling the scandal.

"The extraordinary thing is that because of its clout, industry has been able to commit what appears to be a criminal offense — selling the public horse meat falsely labeled as beef — and just say they are sorry and didn't know," Gardiner said.

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