

AQHA POSITION STATEMENT ON LEGISLATION CONCERNING HORSE PROCESSING

“First and foremost, the American Quarter Horse Association unequivocally supports the humane treatment of horses and vigorous enforcement of reasonable state and federal laws intended for that purpose.

It is this fervent dedication to the welfare of the horse that drives AQHA to address the difficult issues related to humane care, transportation and disposition of all breeds of horses.

Therefore, AQHA supports and joins with the Unwanted Horse Coalition whose mission is to reduce the number of unwanted horses and to improve their welfare through education, and the efforts of organizations committed to the health, safety, and responsible care and disposition of these horses.

End-of-life issues for horses are personal and should remain the right of the individual horse owner.

AQHA opposes abolishing the option of horse processing until there are other provisions to take care of the more than 100,000 horses that meet that end each year. Consistent with positions established by the American Association of Equine Practitioners and American Veterinary Medical Association, AQHA supports the humane, USDA supervised end-of-life process as a much better option than starvation, neglect or inhumane treatment inside or outside of the United States.

To date, no proposed state or federal law has addressed funding of care for unwanted horses, long-term placement of affected horses or established guidelines for standards of care at retirement and rescue facilities. Failing to address these core issues adversely affects the welfare of horses.

Additionally, horses as livestock are personal property protected under the United States Constitution. Any law that would result in “taking” of personal property without just compensation or valid purpose is a violation of an individual’s constitutional rights. Furthermore, it is a violation of the Commerce Clause to unreasonably restrict interstate trade of property.

Therefore, AQHA continues to oppose the provisions of state or federal legislation intended to: (a) prohibit the humane end-of-life processing of horses; and (b) prohibit the humane transport of horses that may be destined to processing plants.”