

The Stunning Process

How effective is the stunning process with horses?

Cruelties are inherent in animal slaughter.

North American equine slaughter plants use either the stunning method detailed below, or a bullet to the head. Bouvry Exports in Fort Macleod, Alberta, utilizes a .22, without pre-stunning, as documented by Animals' Angels inspectors on July 31, 2003.

A report prepared by the European organization describes the killing of bison by this method:

"The bison were moved to the 'stunning' box by the use of an electric goad. The shooting was done with the use of a .22 rifle and we observed three individual bison being shot. The first was shot three times in the box and after the bison was tilted out of the box the shooter noticed the animal was still alive and he shot him again. The second two were shot three times each before the shooter was happy that they were dead."

Although the skull of a horse is not as thick as that of a bison, it should be noted that horses have long and highly mobile necks, allowing for much freedom of movement in the confines of the killing box.

Further, when live horses are exported out of Canada for slaughter, it should be noted they are no longer within our control. These animals then become subject to foreign laws and regulations (or lack thereof).

The following excerpt from a 2001 Washington Post article describes the slaughter of cattle.

The Washington Post "Modern Meat: A Brutal Harvest", 4/10/01

It takes 25 minutes to turn a live steer into steak at the modern slaughterhouse where Ramon Moreno works. For 20 years, his post was "second-legger", a job that entails cutting hocks off carcasses as they whirl past at a rate of 309 an hour. The cattle were supposed to be dead before they got to Moreno. But too often they weren't.

"They blink. They make noises," he said softly. "The head moves, the eyes are wide and looking around."

Still Moreno would cut. On bad days, he says, dozens of animals reached his station clearly alive and conscious. Some would survive as far as the tail cutter, the belly ripper, the hide puller. "They die," said Moreno, "piece by piece."

Under a 23-year-old federal law [which exempts the slaughter of birds], slaughtered cattle and hogs first must be "stunned" — rendered insensible to pain — with a blow to the head or an electric shock. But at overtaxed plants, the law is sometimes broken, with cruel consequences for animals as well as workers. Enforcement records, interviews, videos and worker affidavits describe repeated violations of the Humane Slaughter Act at dozens of slaughterhouses, ranging from the smallest, custom butcheries to modern, automated establishments such as the sprawling IBP Inc. plant here where Moreno works.

"In plants all over the United States, this happens on a daily basis," said Lester Friedlander, a veterinarian and formerly chief government inspector at a Pennsylvania hamburger plant.

"I've seen it happen. And I've talked to other veterinarians. They feel it's out of control."

Video Evidence

Here is a [link](#) to Last Chance for Animals' Special Investigation videos.

WARNING: GRAPHIC CONTENT NOT SUITABLE FOR ALL VIEWERS. PLEASE PROCEED WITH CAUTION

The important boxes to click on are:

1. Slaughterhouse/Corrals (shows poor shape of horses' hooves, as well as a dead horse in the snow), and
2. Butchering/Transport (footage from inside the slaughterhouse).

This video footage was taken in 2003 and reportedly at a Canadian slaughterhouse.