

“Two Views on Horse Slaughter”

Development of this case and associated materials was funded by a Higher Education Challenge Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (program award #2010-38411-21368). Unless indicated otherwise, this material is © 2017 Candace Croney, Alan Beck, Raymond Anthony, Ray Stricklin, Janice Siegford, Janice Swanson, and Gary Varner. College faculty or other teachers have permission to link to this document or reproduce it for non-commercial distribution only, and this copyright statement must be kept intact.

Horse Slaughter View #1

Sam is a passionate, influential member of a national animal rights activist group. He is currently writing a bill for a representative that would outlaw horse slaughter in the United States. Sam believes that (1) horses are companion animals and thus should not be eaten and (2) that horses endure great suffering during transport to and at slaughter houses. Sam is also working on a second bill that would make international export of horses illegal as well; however, he knows that this second bill is less likely to be passed than the first. In the event that the first bill gets passed and the second bill does not, Sam knows that there will likely be an increase in horses exported for slaughter and that these horses are likely to suffer greatly during transport. However, Sam believes this is a necessary evil: he hopes that the increase in the horses' suffering will eventually put pressure on the legislature to make the exportation of horses for slaughter illegal as well.

Horse Slaughter View #2

Senator Gail Woffard is deliberating on whether to support Federal House Bill 500, which will make horse slaughter illegal. She has viewed numerous reports on abuse at the horse slaughter plants. Moreover, she knows that most citizens view horses as companion animals and abhor the idea of slaughter. However, Senator Woffard worries that the bill, if passed, will only increase horse suffering. She worries that the horse industry, including horse rescue groups, will not be able to absorb the increased number of unwanted horses. Unwanted horses will be neglected and abused and the export of horses will increase. However, the animal rights advocacy group that is pushing for the bill has the support of many of her constituents. She ultimately decides that she should represent her constituents by supporting Federal House Bill 500. Did Senator Woffard make the right decision?

Information for Instructors Using “Two Views on Horse Slaughter”

Suggestions for use:

1. These “two views” could be used after presenting Module 1, Lecture 2, “A Framework for Deliberation,” perhaps in the two-stage way described in point #3 below.
2. These “two views on horse slaughter” could be used in various ways in the middle of presenting the “ethics assessment process” from Module 1, Lecture 3, “Facilitating Moral Reasoning” from the accompanying materials. For instance, you could have students read and briefly discuss the “two views” after the slide with a photo of horses.
3. A general suggestion for using these two cases: Split the discussion into two phases.
 - a. The first can be “cold”—i.e. with no background at all on the horse slaughter issue (although you could present one of the lectures from Module 1 of the accompanying materials as suggested above).
 - b. After a brief, initial discussion of the two views, have the students read some of the materials listed below under “resources” before your next class meeting.
 - c. At the next meeting, hold a follow-up discussion. During it, point out to the students (or ask them to point out) any ways in which the follow-up discussion differs from the initial one, i.e. did the discussion change based on the information in the readings?

Some supplementary resources:

Grandin T, McGee K, Lanier J. “Prevalence of Severe Welfare Problems in Horses that Arrive at Slaughter Plants.” *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 214.10 (1999): 151-3.

Lenz, Tom R. “The Unwanted Horse in the United States: An Overview of the Issue.” *Journal of Equine Veterinary Science* 29.5 (2009): 253-58.

“They Eat Horses, Don’t They?” *Chowhound*, November 17, 2006: <http://www.chow.com/food-news/53692/they-eat-horses-dont-they/>.