



Horse Transport and Processing Position Statement
Adopted by VVMA Executive Board
1/20/2021

The VVMA concurs with the policy statement on transportation and processing of horses endorsed by the AVMA and developed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), which reads as follows:

“The AAEP advocates the humane treatment of all horses and believes the equine industry and horse owners have a responsibility to provide humane care throughout the life of the horse. However, a small percentage of horses are ultimately unwanted because they are no longer serviceable, are infirm, dangerous, or their owners are no longer able to care for them.

The AAEP recognizes that the processing of unwanted horses is currently a necessary aspect of the equine industry, and provides a humane alternative to allowing the horse to continue a life of discomfort and pain, and possibly inadequate care or abandonment. The AAEP encourages, fosters and provides education regarding responsible ownership and management that will reduce the number of unwanted horses. In addition, the AAEP supports and commends the efforts of equine retirement facilities and adoption groups.”

Regarding the care of horses destined for processing, the VVMA’s position is that these horses should be:

- Treated humanely and with dignity in order to minimize stress and avoid injury (g);
- Transported to any facility including a processing plant according to the guidelines approved by the United States Department of Agriculture in 2002;
- Humanely slaughtered in accordance with the guidelines established by the American Veterinary Medical Association.
- Euthanized on-site prior to transport when available or otherwise minimize distance of transport prior to slaughter

The VVMA further supports the concluding statement, “...the AAEP recognizes that the human consumption of horsemeat is a cultural and personal issue and does not fall within the purview of the association, whose mission is the care of the health and welfare of the horse throughout its life.”

For more information, please see the AVMA policy statement on Transportation and Processing of Horses (may require separate login): (<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/avma->

[policies/transportation-and-processing-horses](#)) and FAQ on unwanted horses and horse slaughter: <https://www.avma.org/about/unwanted-horses-and-horse-slaughter.aspx/unwanted-horses-and-horse-slaughter-faq>. Also see AAEP policy (may require AAEP login) on Transportation and Processing of Horses: <https://aaep.org/position-transportation-and-processing-horses>

Adopted by VVMA Executive Board
January 20, 2021