

CHEYENNE HERALD

THE LOCAL ADVOCACY JOURNAL

April 27, 2010 – Issue No. 193 – Next Issue, May 11, 2010

established January 30, 2002

A horse slaughterhouse and horse meat cannery in Cheyenne?

I'm glad I'm not the Casper Star. I'm even more pleased that I'm not the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle. Because when they do a story of great importance like the horse slaughterhouse plans of Sue Wallis, they have to pussyfoot around the truth and the reporter's personal distaste and present the story like there is some kind of balance of opinion about being the only state in the United States with a horse kill factory and like they're indifferent to it.

I don't answer to anyone and I can call 'em like I see 'em and I think this is the most revolting, most embarrassing, most ridiculous, most unattainable, most unnecessary and most stupid idea that's come down the pike in a long while. I'm not an animal rights activist. I'm a human being who thinks killing the fittest horses to produce horse meat for prisons, orphanages and schools is unconscionable.

Do you still want to know where I stand on this despicable plan of Sue Wallis and Jim Schwartz?

Read on.

You probably thought horse slaughterhouses were against the law in the United States. They are. You may have read that the last one was closed in Illinois in 2007. It was. And, eating horse meat?

The American people don't think highly of eating horses. "Hippophagy" is the human consumption of horse flesh and Americans just won't do it. Just won't.

Why?

Because horses, like dogs and cats, are companion animals. They are not bred and raised to become meat to eat. They are not, as a few may believe, livestock. They are shot up with drugs that can kill. Horses were romanticized in the Old West and, as has been asked elsewhere, do you ever remember seeing a cowboy eat his horse? Even starving in a blizzard himself, when his mount was down and dead, the cowboy just would not devour his companion. But Sue Wallis would.

So, why is a female Wyoming legislator hell bent on making Cheyenne the home of a horse slaughterhouse and once again making horse meat available for human consumption? Saying because she's a dope would be too easy. But, she is. She has been a largely ineffective legislator. Sue Wallis was first elected in 2006 and is into her second, and hopefully, final term. Most bills she files don't make it

through introduction. But, for some unfathomable reason, HB122 in this last session did and the Governor, more focused on his wife's appointment than his own legacy, signed the damned thing. By that, I mean, he wasn't paying attention - not that he favors a horse slaughterhouse here. Let's hope he doesn't.

Legislators could not have known what they were approving. They just couldn't have. Even I don't think they're that incredibly stupid. Of course, it was presented as a horse "rescue" bill rather than what it is, a horse "slaughter" - a horse "kill" - measure. It is not possible, in my opinion, that a majority of legislators on both ends of the hall understood that the bill would allow slaughter and provision of horse meat for consumption in Wyoming "institutions" - prisons, the state hospital, reform schools, public schools, etc.

There is a reason the United States has banned the slaughter of horses. It is a cringe-inducing endeavor.

Read my lips, Sue Wallis.

No new slaughterhouses.

She and the Wyoming Livestock Board's Jim Schwartz tried to keep their scheme quiet. But, as I used to put at the top of the front page of my publication, "Anything two people know is not a secret."

And, this stunt ain't a secret anymore.

Sue Wallis is founding member and CEO of what she presented as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), The United Organizations of the Horse (UOH) and Jim Schwartz is CEO of the Wyoming Livestock Board and, according to the UOH website, a contributing donor to, supporter of, that organization.

Now, he is trying to distance himself from the announced purpose and meanness of UOH. "Of the horse?" If a slaughterhouse were opened in Cheyenne, the plan is to sell horse meat and also "can" it. A person, by name, has already been lined up to head that cannery. Such a business enterprise that has investors would have to be profitable. If there were inadequate horses of the type they desire from Wyoming, because it's illegal to transport horses over state lines for slaughter and wild horses adopted out by the BLM come with a written guarantee that ownership will not change hands, UOH would have to expand kill parameters and more and more good, healthy, adoptable horses would face the kill floor.

And you don't even want to know how horses are killed at slaughter. Suffice it to say, horses are not the passive animal that cattle are and, a direct, single hit from the bolt gun is often impossible.

There is major disagreement about what is the best definition of a horse. Most, except for those certifiably insane perhaps, have adopted "companion animal" - like a dog or cat. But, Wyoming State Statutes has this definition:

W.S. 23-1-102(a)(xvi) "Livestock" means horses, mules and asses, rabbit, llamas, cattle, swine, sheep, goats, poultry, or other animal generally used for food or in the production of food or fiber, and guard animals actively engaged in the protection of livestock. Bison are considered livestock unless otherwise designated by the Wyoming livestock board and the commission;

Read that closely, neighbors. Horses are "generally used for food?" Where? Not only are horses considered "livestock" under Wyoming statutes, so are German Shepherds, Miniature Collies and other "guard animals" that are "engaged in the protection of livestock." When will Ms. Wallis propose a slaughterhouse for dogs? Maybe she can put it in Recluse.

Don't laugh. It's not funny. She's capable of anything. She favors no inspection of home produced products - no rules. Anything goes with the sale of those items to the unsuspecting public.

The Casper Star article on Sunday, April 25, 2010 revealed how poorly thought-out and how preposterous the whole notion of killing horses for human consumption is. UOH called the kill floor a "triage operation." Kind of a MASH probably.

Does Wallis really think people are that stupid? A triage operation? You can just visualize the large white bandages on the heads of horses brought to the cannery. People who want to relinquish their horse(s) are supposed to be able to donate their horse to the kill facility and claim a "tax deduction." Wait until the IRS sees those first deductions. This "charity," this "nonprofit," will be used only to provide an income for Sue Wallis and friends.

Where will the other money come from? Investors? Oh, yeah, support this hugely unpopular venture and wait for the publicity to come at you. Will you invest? Do you want your name associated with this goofiness? Do you? I sure don't.

That first IRS tax audit will go something like this: "It says here that you donated Sea Biscuit to some wacky woman in Wyoming and the horse was valued at \$1.8 million. Is that what you're claiming? It is? Please put your hands behind your back."

Ms. Barron's article also said that "officials" who find starving horses can turn them over to the UOH "if they can provide clear titles." What the hell is Wallis talking about? She is certifiably daffy. Are horses "titled" through the County?

Wallis pointed out that "federal law allows horse meat to be shipped anywhere for animal food, but not across state lines for human consumption." Yes, but federal law does not allow horse slaughterhouses. How does she propose to convert the horse meat into dog food? Alive?

Wallis also told Barron that her kill plant will always be a "small operation" and the operation "may be able to recover part of its costs if the horses are sent to slaughter."

No, her goal is to provide an income for certain people. However small, it probably beats what one gets for writing hokey poetry. But, it ain't gonna happen, Sue Wallis. It ain't gonna happen. And the support claimed from Jim Schwartz on your UOH website will end or he may also have to look for a new income.

A U.S. Circuit Judge in Illinois put it well in the ruling to close that last horse slaughterhouse, "Even if no horses live longer as a result of the new law, a state is permitted, within reason, to express disgust at what people do with the dead, whether dead human beings or dead animals."

And, I, Dave Featherly, along with 80 to 90 percent of the Wyoming people, hereby register my disgust with the plans of Sue Wallis and Jim Schwartz that involve killing horses and forcing those confined in state institutions and Wyoming's school children to eat horse flesh.

Note: This story was brought to me about a week ago and, once stories were published in the two daily papers, I considered giving it less focus. But I concluded the more focus the better and I will have more on this story in the next issue. For national readers reading the Cheyenne Herald's words for the first time - it is not a newspaper. I am not fair and balanced. I am an advocate and my advocacy here is to comply with federal law and not allow a horse slaughterhouse to operate in Wyoming. For any purpose. At any time.

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