



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-02240**

BY: **MR. HOLLAND (AJAX)**

DATE: **APRIL 19, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **MR. BILL BLAIR**

Response by the Minister of Health

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

horsemeat

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is tasked with safeguarding the Canadian food supply, which enhances the health of Canadians and international consumers. This responsibility is shared with all those in the food production sector.

The Government of Canada recognizes the possibility that horses presented for slaughter may have been administered drugs that are prohibited from use in horses destined for food. As a result, the Meat Hygiene Manual of Procedures stipulates that documentation providing a previous six-month drug history is required for all horses processed in Canada for human consumption. This requirement applies to both domestic and imported horses. This six-month period meets requirements recommended by the majority of countries where horse meat consumption is common practice and exceeds the recommended withdrawal period for all Canadian veterinary drugs. Documentation for all horses, regardless of origin, is verified at the slaughter plant by plant operators and is systematically reviewed by the CFIA.

The documentation system is one tool among several that are used to provide safe equine meat in Canada. Slaughter facilities must still comply with Canadian laws, and the CFIA inspects those facilities, in pre- and post-slaughter inspections. Also, the CFIA does strategic residue sampling of meat based on inspection findings.

Additionally, the CFIA conducts a drug residue program, designed in accordance with international principles, to monitor the presence of veterinary drug residues in foods. Testing is conducted at the slaughter plant and, in the case of exported meat, at ports of entry into importing countries. If drug residues are found in excess of the maximum residue limits, affected product will be subjected to a food safety evaluation and recalled if it is deemed hazardous.

In the case of drugs where the maximum residue limit is zero, such as phenylbutazone, if any trace of the drug is detected during testing, a risk assessment would be conducted by either the CFIA or Health Canada and corrective action would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The low rate of detections of unacceptable residues in Canadian horsemeat, and the absence of reported cases of human illness resulting from the consumption of Canadian horsemeat, indicates that Canadian horsemeat is safe for human consumption.

At this time, any Canadian exporter who has successfully negotiated a commercial contract with a country and who can comply with that country's import conditions can export horses to that country. The current export certificates do not specify slaughter as an end purpose of export of horses to any country.

Enter the response here