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Dear U.S. Representative,

The Safeguard American Food Exports Act of 2019 (H.R. 961) would permanently ban domestic horse processing for human consumption as well as the interstate transportation of horses for the purpose of being processed abroad. For the following reasons, R-CALF USA urges you to oppose the SAFE Act.

Horses are integral to America's cattle farming and ranching enterprises and R-CALF USA is the largest producer-only trade association representing independent U.S. cattle farmers and ranchers. R-CALF USA has nearly 5,300 dues-paying members in 42 states, most of which are cow/calf and yearling producers; many of whom use horses in their day-to-day operations.

Unfortunately, a horse's useful life is finite, and America's ranchers must have a humane means of removing horses from their operations when they can no longer contribute to their operations. Today's economics do not allow for the ongoing feeding and grazing of no-longer-useful horses as such feedstuffs must be dedicated to profit-generating livestock.

Today, America's ranchers no longer have the option of disposing of no-longer-useful horses by offering them to a United States-controlled processing facility where the horses would be dispatched under the humane guidance of United States' inspectors. Presently, they are limited to offering their no-longer-useful horses to exporters, which continues to be economical but without the assurance of humane controls because the processing is not conducted under U.S. supervision.

The SAFE Act would prohibit even today's less desirable means of disposing of no-longer-useful horses, but at least it is economical as it does not force cattle farmers and ranchers to incur what can be considerable costs to dispose of such animals on their own.

Therefore, the SAFE Act will eliminate the last remaining option available to today's farmers and ranchers to economically dispose of no-longer-useful horses. The SAFE Act will cause them to incur more costs in an industry already suffering from an economic cost-price squeeze. Meaning it will likely worsen the current exodus of United States cattle farmers and ranchers, many of whom are already experiencing more costs than the depressed U.S. cattle market can absorb.

In addition, the SAFE Act would impose an inappropriate restriction on an individual's right to dispose of his or her personal property in a manner that results in a beneficial use.

The U.S. cattle farming and ranching industry must have an orderly and humane means of disposing of no-longer-useful horses and because the SAFE Act eliminates all available means, we respectfully request that you oppose the SAFE Act (H.R. 961).

Sincerely,

Bill Bullard, CEO