



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of Feb. 23, 2009**

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# Horse Processing, Grain Dealing

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JEFFERSON CITY – The Senate Rules, Joint Rules, Ethics and Resolutions Committee this week approved a resolution I am sponsoring that calls on Congress to support the continuation of horse processing in the United States. The measure offers incentives to help create horse processing plants throughout the country and opposes any legislation introduced in Congress that would restrict horse processing.

I filed a similar resolution last year that was approved by the Senate but died in the House on the last day of session. This is not an easy topic to talk about, especially for folks who have never been around livestock, but it is an important issue that deserves attention.

In 2006, Congress forced horse processing plants in the United States to close, eliminating the export of processed equine meat. Although it's not a staple at dinner tables in our country, horse meat is very popular throughout Europe and Asia. The ban on processing in the U.S. has had a number of unintended consequences.

For one, the Horse Welfare Coalition estimates that 90,000 to 100,000 unwanted horses would be exposed to potential abandonment and neglect each year. Those unwanted horses compete for adoption with the 32,000 wild horses that U.S. taxpayers already are paying \$40 million to feed and shelter. The Congressional Research Service finds our nation's horse rescue and adoption facilities, which are overburdened and unregulated, could not handle the addition of thousands of additional horses each year that would result from a harvesting ban.

This week one of the members of my Senate staff traveled to Martinsburg to attend a public meeting about the investigation of an Audrain County grain dealer. The Attorney General's office has launched an investigation of T.J. Giesecker Farms and Trucking and T.J.

Giesecker Trucking. Both firms are located in Martinsburg and both are owned by Cathy Giesecker. The state agriculture department has seized the company's assets.

Some 250 farmers showed up at Wednesday's public meeting to find out whether or not they will get their money back. Most of those attending the meeting said they did business with Cathy Giesecker over the phone or with a handshake, which is pretty common in rural Missouri. People who live in small towns know each other and trust each other. A person's word is his bond, which is why this apparent betrayal hurts so much. Of course, this could not have happened at a worse time, when our economy is tanking and people are struggling just to make ends meet. The Attorney General says his office will do everything in its power to protect the farmers who have done business with the company and are owed money. Audrain County Prosecutor Jason Lamb is assisting the Attorney General's investigation.

Farmers who are owed money have until March 31 to file a claim with the Missouri Department of Agriculture. Agriculture Director Jon Hagler attended the meeting in Martinsburg and says his agency is continuing to assess the case in Audrain County and will hold public meetings to inform Missouri farmers in the coming weeks. Farmers and grain sellers that have sold grain to T.J. Giesecker Farms and Trucking and those who have not been paid for grain sold are asked to contact MDA's Grain Regulatory Services at (573) 751-4112 to file a claim, or by logging on to the agriculture department's website at [www.mda.mo.gov](http://www.mda.mo.gov).

Ag department staff will be at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Martinsburg from March 10-12 to accept grain claims from producers. You will need to bring supporting documents like contracts and scale tickets.

My office will continue to follow this investigation and I'll keep you posted as more information becomes available, but don't hesitate to call if you have any questions.

This week we welcomed a lot of visitors to our Capitol office, including Katie Walker of Hannibal, one of the Miss Missouri Outdoors State Queens, members of the Missouri Grocers Association, the Missouri Society of Anesthesiologists, Parents as Teachers, Truman State University nurses, the Missouri Athletic Trainers Association, the Missouri Podiatric Medical Association, representatives of farmers' markets, members of AFSCME, and a group of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from Holy Rosary School in Monroe City.

If you have any questions or comments about this or any other issue, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at [wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.