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The Stouffer Report: *Ban Hurts Horses and Rural Missouri*

Once upon a time, horses carried the workload on rural Missouri farms. Today's new technology allows Missouri farmers, like the hard workers in my district, to feed the world much more efficiently.

Modern farming practices can make us forget the techniques of the past, including how important horses are to the history of farming.







As a horse owner myself, I know they are still important today.

Horses have transitioned from farm implement movers and corners to an important part of family activities. We have domesticated these animals for rodeos, races, showing, jumping and the list goes on. Even though they have been domesticated, horses still hold a place in our state's agricultural arena.

Unfortunately, some folks have lost sight of this connection and have leaned on do-gooder legislators who do not understand the industry to make decisions for animals' "well-being," without realizing the devastating consequences. Instead of humanely putting down a horse when it has reached the end of its life, some let the animal go on to suffer a miserable death. [House Bill 1747](#) has been introduced this year. Last year, [Senate Concurrent Resolution 8](#) urged Congress to support the continuation of horse processing in the United States.

Proponents of horse slaughter bans argue for humane treatment of horses. For the most part, there is no one more interested in treating animals well than the animal owners themselves. Take farmers and ranchers for example. Providing necessities for livestock and horses is their main priority, and doing so — raising animals in a safe and nurturing environment — is even good for their bottom line. Of course, as with any industry, there are bad actors who should be punished according to the laws of the land.

Many folks in our area ask why the support of humane treatment of horses is coming from groups outside of agriculture, such as the Humane Society of the United States.

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Two years after the ban was passed, several unintended consequences are now harming the equine industry.

The American Veterinary Medicine Association reports approximately 100,000 horses become unwanted each year. Many of these horses are abandoned and become nuisances for landowners and a threat to themselves and other livestock.

Back at home, some horse owners are finding out they can't afford to take care of their horses once they are no longer viable animals and need to be put down. According to the American Association of Equine Practitioners, euthanasia by a vet, plus the costs of carcass disposal adds up to \$400.

We need to step up and take responsibility for our state's horse owners. It is time that the Legislature do the right thing and set an example for other states to follow.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.



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