

Future of Horse Slaughter in Okla. Still Unclear

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Though the Legislature passed a bill this year authorizing the slaughter of horses, it remains unclear whether a facility will open in Oklahoma once the law takes effect Nov. 1.

Gov. Mary Fallin signed into law the bill sponsored by Rep. Skye McNeil of Bristow and Sen. Eddie Fields of Wynona. Fields said he's not aware of any efforts to build a facility in Oklahoma, while McNeil said she's no longer involved in the issue.

"My goal is not necessarily to bring one," McNeil said. "I am not out promoting it. Once I passed the bill, I was done."

The commercial consumption of horse meat is banned in the United States, but some foreign countries permit it. Supporters say the measure was needed because horses are being shipped out of the country and slaughtered in an inhumane manner.

Before the law passed, Ahsan Amil of Oklahoma Meat Company applied for a federal inspection with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Amil told the [Tulsa World](#) [1] that he's no longer pursuing the permit.

Horse slaughter plants are planned in New Mexico, Iowa, Missouri and Tennessee. The plants in New Mexico and Iowa have been approved.

In New Mexico, the Humane Society of the United States filed suit over that state's law allowing horse slaughter. Last week, a federal judge approved an injunction that temporarily halts the opening of any plants.

"We've won a temporary but life-saving reprieve for horses, and it's good news indeed that the kill boxes in New Mexico and Iowa will be empty of horses in the weeks ahead," said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of the Humane Society. "We'll continue to make arguments when our case resumes in a month that these plants cannot legally operate because of inadequate environmental review."

A. Blair Dunn, who represents Valley Meat Co. in New Mexico, said there's a major issue of horses being abandoned and neglected throughout the country. But Dunn said he understands the emotional side of the issue.

"(Opponents) don't agree with the underlying issue of processing of horses," he said. "They are using this as an excuse to slow things down in order to get Congress to do something because they are unsatisfied with the current law."

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