



Fermeture des abattoirs américains : la presse internationale questionne Interbev Equins

Articles parus dans *Forbes*, *China Post*, et plusieurs quotidiens locaux anglo-saxons (*Lincoln Courier*, *Houston Chronicle*, *NWTimes*, *The Southern*, *seMissourian*, *Chicago Tribune*, etc.) les 13-14-15 juin 2007

Countries where horse meat consumed follow US slaughterhouse's legal Battle

PARIS, Wednesday, June 13, 2007

In countries where horse meat is consumed, those involved in the industry are following the legal effort by Cavel International Inc. to remain open in the United States, despite a new state law that bans the slaughter of horses for human consumption.

In France, horse meat is sold in supermarkets alongside beef, pork and lamb and is not particularly expensive. Paris has shops that specialize in it, some of which have images of golden horses' heads on their exterior.

Timothe Masson, a representative from [Interbev Equins](#), an organization of horse meat sector industries in France, said 81 percent of horse meat consumed in France was imported in 2005. About 35 percent came from the United States.

"We're looking to other countries such as Canada, Argentina and Brazil to make up for the loss of supply," he said.

Masson said he wondered what would become of the horses previously bought by American slaughterhouses.

"Will they be abandoned in the fields? It is very expensive to keep a horse alive you know," he said.

In Belgium, many adults remember eating horse meat as a regular staple at home during their youth. It is still popular around the capital Brussels, a region that used to be known for its sturdy local carthorses, which were turned into steaks after their ploughing days were over.

Belgians also turn horse meat into stews cooked in beer or vinegar with onions and carrots, and an array of sausages and smoked hams.

De Kuiper restaurant in Vilvoorde just north of Brussels has long been a classic for connoisseurs of horse meat. Amid the wooden paneling and aging pictures of burly draughthorses, it has served horse meat since 1859.

But chef and owner Alfons Gulickx said he is feeling the pinch from the U.S. market drying up. He buys much of his horse meat from South America, but he said prices are rising and supplies are dwindling.

"Everything is getting more expensive and I need my kilos every day," he said. He still sells his horse steaks broiled in their own fat for approximately €15 (US\$20), but said he might have to raise prices soon. At his restaurant, he still has horse meat lovers every shift.

"Little wonder, you only have to see how healthy it is," he said. "If you want to eat healthily, you will end up with horse meat. It is rich in iron, glucose and has the right fats."

Japanese diners also eat horse meat. Norio Yoshihara is CEO of Newbridge Inc., a trading company that sells U.S. horse meat to about 200 restaurants in Tokyo.

Yoshihara said he recently started importing horse meat from Mexico and will be looking into Australia and New Zealand as legal challenges restrict the flow of meat from the U.S.

Yoshihara said animal rights groups seem to focus their efforts on "cute animals, and now they say tunas are too pretty and whales are too intelligent to consume. If we keep going down this list, Japanese people will have less and less food to eat."

"American people tend to think that their standards are global standards," he said. "I do find it a bit offensive to be told by the United States (not to eat horse meat). We can also say that it's cruel to eat pigs and cows."

Associated Press writers John Leicester and Marco Chown Oved in Paris, Kana Inagaki in Tokyo and Raf Casert in Brussels contributed to this report.



France's horsemeat lovers fear US ban

Angelique Chrisafis in Paris - Friday
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On the marble slab of his butcher's shop in central Paris, Jean-Pierre Houssin is rearranging his horsemeat. He has horse sausage, Normandy horse joints for roasting, and filet steaks, but his biggest seller is minced horsemeat, to be eaten raw as steak tartare. "It's very healthy - it's high in iron, less fatty than other meats and low in cholesterol. I eat it regularly," he says.

Outside, three golden horse heads and a cutting by a food critic entitled "Why I eat horse" signpost the popular shop.

After years of decline, France's taste for horsemeat is showing signs of a revival. Brigitte Bardot, the film star-turned animal activist, has devoted 2007 to halting the consumption of "the noble beast", but she faces a difficult task - a marketing drive has increased sales.

But in the US a campaign by another cinema icon, Bo Derek, is threatening French supplies of the meat. The US is one of the biggest suppliers of horsemeat to France, but the state of Illinois has ordered the country's last working horse slaughterhouse to stop operations.

After a campaign by Derek and other lobbyists, the Illinois governor, Rod Blagojevich, announced last month that it was "past time to stop slaughtering horses in Illinois".

Groups such as the Humane Society of the US say that the country has no tradition of killing horses for meat, and should not be doing so to satisfy foreign consumers. American horsemeat, processed legally by the plant, has been sold mostly to France, Belgium and Japan, but in America it is considered taboo.

The Belgian-owned Illinois slaughterhouse has appealed against the decision. But there is a trend in the US for plants to close. Two other horse abattoirs in Texas were shut down this year.

In France, the news has caused concern. "It's serious, the US is a big part of our supply," says Timothé Masson from [Interbev Equins](#), an organisation of French horsemeat industries. Sales of horsemeat in France rose by 2.1% in 2005-2006, the first upturn in years. Tastings, supermarket campaigns and marketing drives have increased consumption of what was once a cheap, working-class food in Paris and the mining areas of north-east France.

Although only a handful of restaurants still serve horse in the French capital, Mr Masson's group is working to convince more chefs. It is also targeting the public with monthly recipe suggestions, such as sliced horse with tabbouleh.

Around 80% of the horsemeat in France is imported, with more than a third from the US. The French horsemeat industry will now look more to Latin America and Canada as suppliers. Europe's horsemeat market is substantial: France consumes 26,000 tonnes a year, but Italy, where horse sausage and cured meat is popular, eats three times that amount.

At the De Kuiper restaurant in Vilvoorde, north of Brussels, the chef, Alfons Gulickx, is concerned about the US supply drying up. He buys horsemeat from South America, but says prices are rising and supplies dwindling. His horse steaks, broiled in their own fat, sell for €15 (£10), but he feels he may have to increase his prices. Horse is still a popular dish, he says.

"If you want to eat healthily, you will end up with horsemeat."

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