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## VVMA Policy Statement

### Horse Transportation and Processing

June 18, 2008

The VVMA concurs with the policy statement on transportation and processing of horses endorsed by the AVMA and developed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), which reads as follows:

"The AAEP advocates the humane treatment of all horses and believes the equine industry and horse owners have a responsibility to provide humane care throughout the life of the horse. However, a small percentage of horses are ultimately unwanted because they are no longer serviceable, are infirm, dangerous, or their owners are no longer able to care for them.

The AAEP recognizes that the processing of unwanted horses is currently a necessary aspect of the equine industry, and provides a humane alternative to allowing the horse to continue a life of discomfort and pain, and possibly inadequate care or abandonment. The AAEP encourages, fosters and provides education regarding responsible ownership and management that will reduce the number of unwanted horses. In addition, the AAEP supports and commends the efforts of equine retirement facilities and adoption groups."

Regarding the care of horses destined for processing, the VVMA's position is that these horses should be:

- Treated humanely and with dignity;
- Transported to any facility including a processing plant according to the guidelines approved by the United States Department of Agriculture in 2002;
- Euthanized in a humane manner in accordance with the guidelines established by the American Veterinary Medical Association.
- Euthanized on-site prior to transport when available or otherwise minimize distance of transport prior to euthanasia.

The VVMA further supports the concluding statement, "...the AAEP recognizes that the human consumption of horsemeat is a cultural and personal issue and does not fall within the purview of the association, whose mission is the care of the health and welfare of the horse throughout its life."

**Adopted by the VVMA Executive Committee 6/18/08**