

## Governor's Signature Bans Horse Slaughter

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. Governor Rod Blagojevich signed House Bill 1711 on Thursday prohibiting the slaughter of horses in Illinois for human consumption; effectively closing the Cavel Plant in DeKalb, Illinois.

The proposal, which won the Senate's approval on a vote 39-16 after passing the House of Representatives 74-41, would stop the DeKalb plant from continuing to ship horse meat overseas. Human consumption is banned in the U.S.

The bill was sponsored by State Representative Robert Molaro and State Senator John Cullerton, both Chicago Democrats. In a statement issued by the Governor's office, Molaro said, "I am grateful to my colleagues and the Governor for joining with me in ending this shameless slaughter of these beautiful animals for the sole purpose of ensuring fine dining in European restaurants."

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association both opposed the bill that easily passed the House and Senate and obtained quick approval from the Governor. Bruce Little, DVM, Executive Vice-President of AVMA testified in the House of Representatives and Dr. John O'Keefe testified in the Senate and voiced concern that horses formerly bound for slaughter in the United States would be shipped to Mexico or Canada for slaughter; or worse, abandoned.

"The concern in the veterinary community is that an unwanted horse could now be put in a pasture, without care, or turned loose in the woods," said Bonnie Beaver, a veterinarian and professor at Texas A&M University. "We estimated that the horse rescue community has space for about 6,000 horses nationally. There were about 60,000 to 120,000 head of horse being slaughtered per year. So now where are those horses going to go?"

You may download a copy of the ISVMA position on [Humane Care and Treatment of Horses](#) to better understand the position ISVMA represented on this legislation.

## Voluntary Sales Tax Compliance Ending

The deadline to participate in the voluntary sales tax compliance agreement with the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) is May 31, 2007. The number of agreements filed as of last week was much lower than anticipated by the IDOR and ISVMA.

Those practices that have filed agreements are now able to implement the necessary administrative changes in their practice to remain compliant. If they follow the rule agreed to by the IDOR and ISVMA, they should be able to avoid future adverse audit situations. Additionally, they benefit from having closed all open audit periods - in other words, they get a fresh start.

If a practice chooses not to file the voluntary sales tax compliance agreement they run the very real risk of the IDOR conducting an audit in the practice. If taxes are owed, there will be no waiver of penalties.

ISVMA strongly encourages you to examine your records to make sure that taxes have been paid on all tangible personal property that has been transferred to your clients. In many cases, practices have been surprised to find that their suppliers were not collecting SOT on certain items and the practice was failing to collect and pay the tax.

If a practice is located in an area with a local option tax, they will owe the difference between what they paid their suppliers and what taxes would be generated had they applied the local tax.

If you need assistance completing your compliance agreement please contact the ISVMA audit consultants at [JD Michael & Associates](#) (217) 527-1700. Mike Scaduto, Joe Bartletti or John Franklin are available to assist you.

## **ISVMA Takes a Stand on Mandatory Spay & Neuter Amendment**

Last week, House Bill 822 was amended in the Senate with language requiring alteration of animals that are adopted from animal shelters. ISVMA had not been consulted prior to the amendment being filed, nor were we aware that the issue was even being considered.

The amendment was being pushed primarily by the ASPCA, and other animal welfare advocates spoke out in support of the initiative. ISVMA was called to a meeting in the Senate sponsor's office to discuss the amendment when we voiced concern about the timing, lack of communication and some of the language in the bill.

ISVMA expressed opposition to any state law or regulation that would compel a medical procedure unless it was very clear that the supervising veterinarian always maintains discretion to make a medical decision that was in the best interest of the animal. We believe strongly that surgery is not a humane form of euthanasia and that the supervising veterinarian must have the clear authority to withhold such surgery where it may risk the health of an animal.

Moreover, ISVMA expressed opposition to the process that was used by the proponents to advance their issue. The legislative session is entering its last days and committee work on substantive bills is almost complete. The ASPCA introduced their amendment without consulting ISVMA and gave the association members no time to consider the proposal and provide input on language that would be agreeable.

Finally, the ISVMA supported a resolution last year that established a Legislative Task Force to review and make recommendations for a complete re-write of the Animal Control Act. We have been frustrated that the Task Force has not yet met; however, we still support the goals established. It is our strong belief that the entire Animal Control Act and the Animal Welfare Act need to be reviewed and rewritten in order to be more consistent, enforceable and to establish appropriate regulatory oversight and powers.

The ISVMA was successful in having the late amendment to House Bill 822 withdrawn and we look forward to addressing the issues in an open and comprehensive manner.

## **ISVMA Passes Bill to Allow Underage Workers in Veterinary Practices**

The ISVMA filed House Bill 3165 in the House of Representatives earlier this year to clarify a section of the Illinois Child Labor Law that restricts children under the age of 16 from obtaining work permits in environments in which their health is put at risk.

Current law prohibits a minor under 16 years of age from being employed, permitted, or allowed to work in occupations that involve the handling or storage of blood, blood products, fluids, or body tissues. ISVMA proposed amending the law to limit the prohibition to human blood, human blood products, human body fluids, or human body tissues.

During the past year, several Illinois veterinary practices have been fined or issued cease and desist orders for having minors under the age of 16 working in their practices. Many young people who are exploring the possibility of a future in professional veterinary medicine would have been shut out of opportunities to work in local veterinary practices if the Illinois Department of Labor were allowed to continue their sudden enforcement of this obscure statutory provision.

House Bill 3165 was sponsored by Representative Ed Sullivan in the House of Representatives (where it passed on a vote of 116-0) and Senator Michael Frerichs in the Senate (where it passed 52-0-2).

Once again, the Illinois veterinary profession displayed its legislative strength by passing a bill unanimously. The Director of the Illinois Department of Labor had testified in opposition to the bill - although her testimony was neither very compelling nor well informed.

The bill must now be signed by the Governor to become law.

### About the Photo in This Issue...

Once again, I have ranged out of my area of interest and expertise. On a recent trip to Colorado, I did photograph some beautiful and endangered bird species. I also had opportunities to photograph what I affectionately refer to as "incidental mammals" - including the Elk in this photo. Because my knowledge of mammalian species is limited, I have copied the following from Wikipedia:

"The Elk, or Wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*), is the second largest species of deer in the world, after the moose (*Alces alces*), which is, confusingly, often also called Elk in Europe. Elk are one of the largest mammals to inhabit their ecosystems and have been recorded as weighing up to 590 kg (1,300 lb).[2] Until recently, the elk and the European red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) were considered to be the same species, however DNA evidence indicates that they are in fact different. The evidence has also shown that the sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) of Asia is even more closely related to the elk than the red deer.

Elk are found in western North America and east Asia. They have been transplanted to other areas in North America, to replenish previous populations that were hunted to extinction. They have also adapted well to other countries including New Zealand and Argentina, where they are oftentimes raised on farms and their products are sold to various markets. Elk antlers and velvet is used by Asians in holistic medicines. In some parts of the world where elk have been transplanted, they are considered to be an invasive species, posing a threat to endemic species and ecosystems.

All elk subspecies have unique mating rituals during the rut, with males engaging in posturing, antler wrestling and especially "bugling", a loud series of screams designed to help attract females and to establish dominance over other males. The strongest male elk may have a harem of 20 or more females. Female elk produce one calf per year during adulthood and form large herds during the winter to protect their young and each other from predators. All elk have a strong front leg kick which can injure or kill many would be predators. Most elk subspecies migrate, following food supplies based on weather conditions.

Elk suffer from a number of health issues, some of which have posed a risk to domesticated livestock and humans. Some cultures revere the elk as a spiritual force and products from the hunting and harvesting of elk have included basic staples ranging from food and shelter to decorative items.

I photographed this pair of Elk at Rocky Mountain National Park in June 2007. They were among approximately 700 Elk I saw during in the park that day.

### Contact Us

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