

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick

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For the week of
Dec. 31, 2006

Q. Dear Twig: Not that I want to do it myself, but what's the deal about people eating horse meat?

A.: The United States has three **slaughterhouses** that take in horses (many but not all of them old, sick or surplus), kill them, and cut them up for meat. Companies based in other countries actually own all three of these places. "Horse meat isn't eaten in the U.S.," according to the Humane Society of the United States. "It is exported to serve **specialty markets** overseas."

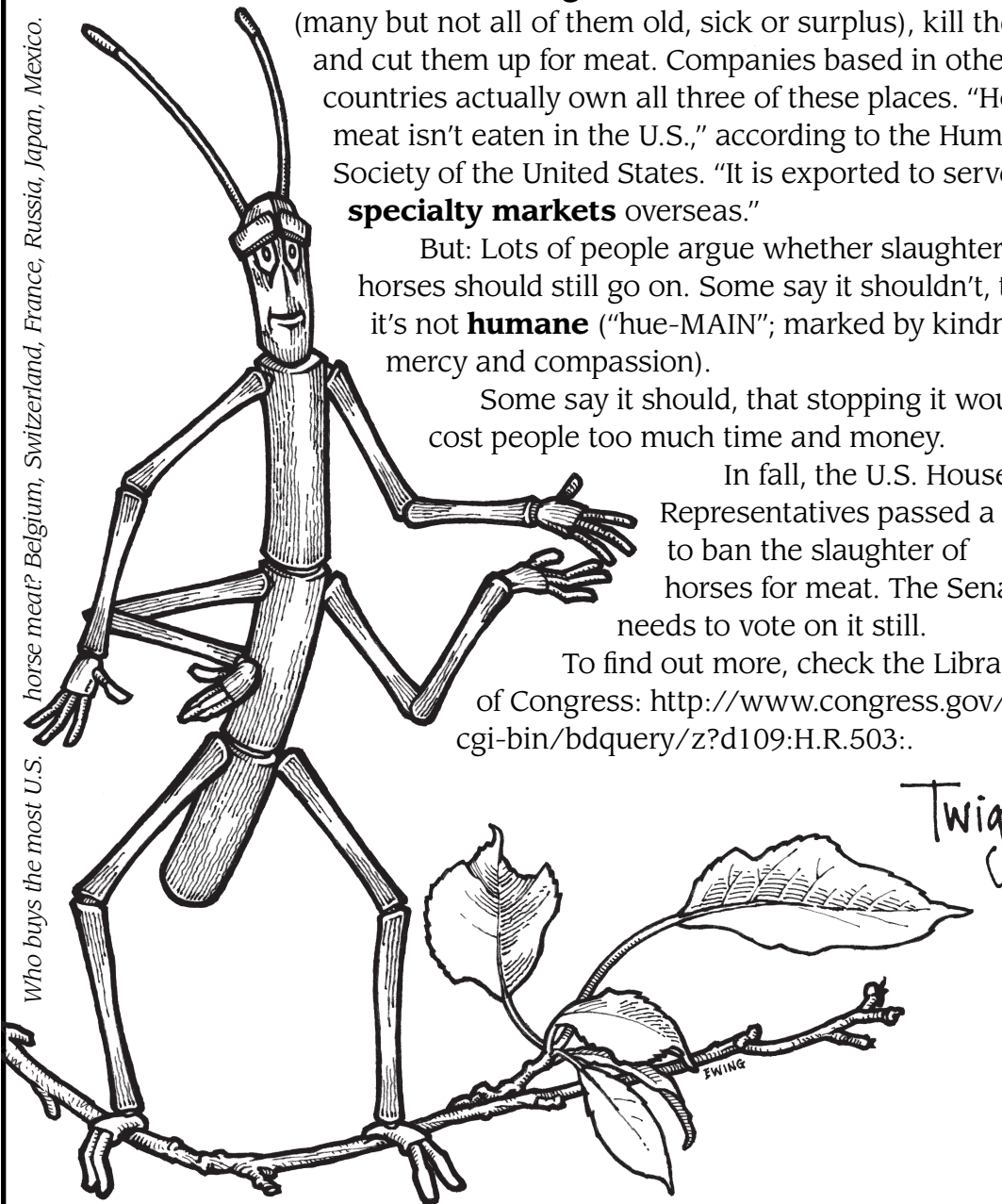
But: Lots of people argue whether slaughtering horses should still go on. Some say it shouldn't, that it's not **humane** ("hue-MAIN"; marked by kindness, mercy and compassion).

Some say it should, that stopping it would cost people too much time and money.

In fall, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to ban the slaughter of horses for meat. The Senate needs to vote on it still.

To find out more, check the Library of Congress: <http://www.congress.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d109:H.R.503>.

Who buys the most U.S. horse meat? Belgium, Switzerland, France, Russia, Japan, Mexico.



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).

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Notes: Sources included the Library of Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Humane Society of the United States. Thanks to Davey W. for this week's question as well as for the question for the column before this one, dated Sept. 17. (Find it at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~news/story.php?id=3805>.) "Smart Stuff" hasn't run since then due to Twig being off work a big chunk of time. (Long story.) But: He's back. Send complaints about his absence, gratitude for his absence and/or questions for future columns to his keyboard-banging primate pal, Kurt Knebusch, knebusch.1@osu.edu.

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