

# Respectful Life reacts to NGO footage and takes its own measures for animal welfare in Canada, Uruguay and Argentina

**Respectful Life regrets NGO not considering further structural solutions to improve animal welfare**

**Brussels, 11 June 2019 – Respectful Life would like to react to the footage broadcast by the NGO in collaboration with various other European NGOs to denounce the situation in horse slaughterhouses in Canada, Uruguay and Argentina. Respectful Life is a joint initiative from stakeholders that are concerned by the well-being of horses. In this report, NGOs target the Respectful Life project, which is a scientific project intended to improve animal welfare in the horse meat sector. Respectful Life takes this published footage very seriously and condemns all forms of animal suffering.**

*"We have just seen the footage that was released to the media. We take these images seriously and will study them carefully in collaboration with the research team of the Belgian university KU Leuven." says Michael Gore on behalf of Respectful Life. "It is also essential to clarify that 'Respectful Life' is a research project and therefore does not conduct audits, something which has been misleadingly implied by the NGOs. This means that the researchers' conclusions and recommendations are used to implement structural solutions for animal welfare in a sustainable way. This project is an absolute first: it was launched on the initiative of the sector."*

Researchers at KU Leuven have been travelling to the concerned countries since 2015. Year after year, their findings indicate an improvement in animal welfare conditions. These conclusions are in stark contrast to the images broadcast by the NGOs. Respectful Life will examine the information provided by both parties.

The "Respectful Life" project was launched in response to the animal welfare situation in the countries concerned: the imported meat complies with European Union standards. Through this project, the sector aims to raise standards with one overarching objective: to provide solutions for the improvement of animal welfare, using Belgian expertise.

Respectful Life regrets that the NGO is committed to denouncing problematic situations without considering possible solutions. Respectful Life is open to all NGOs wishing to participate in improving animal welfare and is looking for structural solutions in collaboration with the horse meat sector.

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The published footage is an additional reason to strengthen KU Leuven's scientific research as part of the "Respectful Life" project, in order to propose structural solutions. The sector also points out that an import ban or a ban on the slaughter of horses are not solutions. This refers to a precedent in the United States where the ban on horse slaughter has been implemented and has led to serious abuses: neglected and abused animals, excessive population density and long-distance transport to Mexico, for example. The slaughter ban in the United States is also the result of actions undertaken by NGOs similar to those hereby denounced

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