

PRESS RELEASE FEBEV - Gaia, again looking for sensation and gifts, let animal welfare go and misleads the consumer.

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Brussels, 24 June 2015 – As so often, GAIA started a new short-sighted campaign against the consumption of horse meat, while FEBEV is developing horse welfare guidelines (HoMeFe guidelines) to assure that the European animal welfare legislation is implemented in countries that export horse meat to Europe. FEBEV's goal is to reduce animal and horse suffering around the globe!

Once again, GAIA uses old, out of context footage to start a new campaign against horse meat. Nevertheless, GAIA (among other NGOs) is involved in the development of new animal welfare guidelines for the horse meat industry. The development of these guidelines is on schedule, and all the set deadlines are being respected. Mid-June 2015, FEBEV and the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture met to recognise the HoMeFe guidelines and to organise the inspections together. For this reason, FEBEV is very surprised by the action undertaken by GAIA. When negotiations aren't concluded yet, it's not right to move into action. For FEBEV, it is clear that GAIA doesn't want to negotiate and doesn't care about horse welfare, but only wants to raise donations by using emotional images, aiming for a world without meat. It's clear that FEBEV doesn't share this point of view. Meat is tasty and healthy, and certainly has its place in a balanced food pattern. As a federation, we consider animal welfare as very important!

The efforts of the sector

At all levels of production (slaughterhouses and their suppliers, processing industry), the professional associations and Governments have been working on transparency and the systematic guarantee of animal welfare. Evidence of this are the controls of many independent parties (E.U., Government, customers, international recognized audit agencies...) that the past few months, announced or not, have occurred. These checks have shown that the situation in Argentina corresponds to European standards. More even: multiple slaughterhouses on its own initiative in recent years placed cameras to ensure transparency.

The constructive efforts of GAIA to reduce animal suffering?

There we have to guess...

By the closure of the horse slaughterhouses in the US a lot of horses are no longer slaughtered and totally neglected. This is a significant increase of animal suffering.

Everyone agrees that the animal welfare standards in Europe are the most severe in the world, slaughterhouses exporting to the EU must satisfy to these rules. That there are occasional shortcomings, is also normal, we work with animals and humans. If necessary corrective actions are taken and lessons are drawn from this, this is sufficient. Close EU worthy slaughterhouses, limit the exports to the EU or make exports impossible, results into an untold increase in animals/horses suffering. That can't possibly be the issue, not for Febev and not for Gaia.

About Febev

FEBEV is the Federation of the Belgian Meat. FEBEV counts 160 members from the three regions and is the federal representative of the Belgian fresh meat sector. The FEBEV office is led by Managing Director Thierry Smagghe. For more information about this open letter: contact Thierry Smagghe (0473950795)

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