For immediate release:

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Representative Sue Wallis' response to the letter titled "official complaint and request for investigation" signed by known participant of disreputable activist group

A colleague was kind enough to forward to me the following letter which is a classic example of the underhanded and devious tactics of animal rights activists self proclaiming themselves to be horse experts and "advocates." Rather than engage in honest debate over the issues, they pick out a single person, myself in this instance, someone who is trying to make a difference, and they conduct an all out character assassination attempt based on lies, tortured manipulation of the truth, and innuendo.

For the past several years I have been personally and viciously targeted by rabid, and unprincipled radical groups because of my work to benefit animal agriculture in this country, and in particular because of our effort to restore the decimated horse industry. During this time I have been pummeled by obscene and threatening messages-those that are merely obscene and disrespectful I discard without reading or listening, those that threaten harm are turned over to the FBI for investigation. Occasionally I am contacted by someone who has been filled full of misinformation and outright lies who is legitimately concerned and we are able to have a respectful discussion about the issues.

About the only charge that has any validity in this entire attack by vicious so-called "horse advocates" is the one that I will proudly defend...and that is that I am working diligently to restore humane and regulated processing of horses in the United States.

Horses are livestock, and as such are private property, and it is a moral and ethical imperative that horse owners have the right to sell or use their property for any purpose. We all agree that animals deserve to be well cared for from birth to death. Livestock processing is highly regulated to ensure animal well being and only veterinarian approved methods of killing are used which result in instantaneous insensibility. Once death has occurred there is no legitimate animal welfare issue. Then the issue becomes whether the owner wants or needs to put the carcass to good and proper use that allows some return on their investment, or whether they choose to dispose of the carcass in some other way.

We are working to restore humane and regulated processing of horses in the United States because we believe that to be in the best interest of the equine industry, and the best way to ensure the well-being of horses. Since the closing of the U.S. horse processing facilities through state action in 2007 in Texas and Illinois the upsurge of horse suffering has been horrific. Unusable horses that are not big enough, healthy enough, and quite frankly close enough to the border to be worth the trucking to Canada or Mexico are literally worthless. They cannot be sold. They cannot be given away because all of the horse rescues are full and overwhelmed. Desperate owners are without options and for far too many of them the solution is to turn them out to starve. Documented reports of starved and abandoned horses has risen more than 400% every single year since 2007.

It is far better to have a quick, painless dispatch in a processing plant and wholesome product put to good use than to suffer a prolonged death of starvation and thirst, likely to have your guts ripped out by
coyotes while you are still alive because you are too weak to get up. We agree with Dr. Temple Grandin who says, "Mother Nature is cruel. As human beings we don't have to be."

I have no personal financial interest in any of the actions which I have sponsored to promote and benefit the horse industry. We do not raise horses, or profit in any way from the horse industry. The last horse we sold was more than 10 years ago. I am not compensated for any of my work on behalf of the horse industry, in fact, quite the reverse is true, in the last three years I have contributed my personal time, talent, and fortune to the cause with a documented value of well over $60,000 of my personal fortune-not because of any personal benefit, but because it is the right thing to do for the horses and horse people of this country.

Our totally grass roots network of horse owners, horse industry professionals, and other like-minded people and organizations came into existence more than two years ago when it became apparent that no one was addressing the two huge issues that were and are deeply impacting the equine economy-that is the need for a humane and regulated horse processing option, and control of the over population of wild and feral horses on not only federal lands, but state, tribal, and private lands, as well.

There are three distinct and separate entities which I am involved with, all of whom are in good standing with the Wyoming Secretary of State:

1. **United Organizations of the Horse** - is a mutual benefit nonprofit organization registered in Wyoming which is organized primarily for political action. I serve as the unpaid Executive Director.

2. **United Horsemen** - is an IRS 501c3 nonprofit charitable and educational organization whose mission is devoted to the well being of horses and horse people. I serve as the unpaid Vice President of this organization. To date the 501c3 United Horsemen has not received more than the threshold of $25,000 which would require IRS 990 filing. We have filed 990-N.

3. **Unified Equine, LLC** - is a brand new limited liability company that has just been established. The entity has been registered in Wyoming, and a highly qualified business development team has begun work with the assistance of the Wyoming Business Council. This is a privately held company that is being established to build a multi-species processing facility under Wyoming State Meat Inspection (which meets or exceeds all USDA standards) capable of processing cattle, bison, and horses. This project will bring enormous economic benefits to the State of Wyoming, the livestock industry, and the community by creating more than 80 good paying jobs in a depressed rural economy. This project is in the feasibility, business development, and permitting stage. A site has been selected and is under evaluation. I serve as the unpaid Executive Officer for this project during this initial formation stage. Our attorney is working on the necessary paperwork to allow our investors to participate. No securities of any kind have been sold at this point. When the necessary legal requirements are in place a limited number of private investors will be involved. If the venture is successful I may receive benefit in the future.

In regards to the ongoing fundraiser to benefit United Horsemen, the 501c3 nonprofit, we began selling raffle tickets at the 2009 National Finals Rodeo. 100% of the proceeds from this fundraiser benefit nonprofit purposes of United Horsemen. That fundraiser will ended on December 31st and the winner was announced at the Summit of the Horse the first week of January. This raffle has been conducted under Wyoming law which specifically exempts raffles conducted for charitable purposes.
The attempt to construe something unethical or devious in my work in regards to food freedom is so ridiculous as to be laughable, and in fact, the author of this letter and the group that she belongs to show nothing but their ignorance in even bringing it up. First, the FDA has absolutely no jurisdiction over meat which is now, and always has been regulated by the USDA. Second, there are long standing laws and regulations in place in regards to all livestock, including horses that regulate the use of veterinary drugs in animals bound for processing. These common sense procedures include mandatory withdrawal periods, conclusive testing prior to processing, and carcass testing for drug residue afterward. There have been zero incidences of drug residue of horse carcasses in the European Union (EU) inspected and audited horse processing plants in Canada and Mexico, nor were there any recorded drug residue problems stemming from the U.S. plants prior to 2007. This is, quite frankly, a non-issue which animal activists are trying to gin up into a problem where no problem exists, and proper controls are in place.

Finally, the insinuation that I have violated ethics rules by sponsoring and voting for an effort to allow Wyoming citizens to buy safe homemade and home grown products at farmers markets because my brother sells a few jars of jam-and that this is somehow related to my work for the horse industry—is quite frankly the most nonsensical component of this entire letter. If that rises to the level of an ethics violation then every teacher in the Wyoming Legislature should be prevented from voting on education bills, every doctor should be recused from voting on health department bills, every attorney should be declaring a conflict of interest on any bills related to the judiciary system.

The Wyoming Legislature is a part-time citizen legislature, we meet for 60 days in the two year biennium, and every legislator has a separate career and occupation. The only time we need to declare a conflict of interest is if the bill in question would benefit a very narrow group that a legislator belongs to and would financially benefit from, on the other hand, if the class of beneficiaries is large and wide spread then there is no requirement to declare a conflict. A bill that benefits all teachers in the state is a perfectly permissible bill for a teacher to vote on (in fact, that is what a teacher’s constituents elect them to do), a bill that benefits every firefighter in the state is perfectly legitimate for a firefighter to vote on, and a bill that benefits every horse owner in the state is a perfectly legitimate bill for a rancher like myself to vote on. If, in the hypothetical case that a piece of legislation was before us that would only benefit ranchers that are in a very narrow category...say a bill that would only benefit those ranchers who raise grass fat beef...then I and any of my fellow legislators in a similar situation would discuss the potential conflict with Legislative leadership and if necessary the Rules Committee to see if the measure requires the declaring of a conflict.

Finally, as a legislator my sources of income are annually disclosed on a Wyoming Ethics Disclosure Form filed with the Wyoming Secretary of State. Currently the sole income my husband and I receive stems from his veterans pension, my limited pay as a Wyoming legislator, and our participation in the family cattle ranch.

It is too bad that the entities in question cannot see the benefit of sitting down at a table, such as the upcoming Summit of the Horse, to discuss rationally and respectfully the serious problems and controversies swirling around the horse industry, and to work together to come to a rational conclusion. Sadly, we are forced far too often to spend precious resources and time to defend ourselves against this kind of blatant, unnecessary, and unproductive attack. Were they truly concerned about any of these issues, all they had to do was write to me personally, and I would have responded.

While these unscrupulous attacks are unrelenting and completely unfounded, there is one thing that continues to uphold not only myself, but every other dedicated and determined proponent of doing the right things for horses, and for horse people—and that is the fact that for every one of these onslaughts
we receive at least ten messages from people who thank God that somebody is finally doing something; from those whose livelihood and ability to raise their families in a horseback culture have been severely impacted or eliminated; from those who understand the reality of animal agriculture and the equine industry; and who are willing to stand up, speak out, and be heard.

All that being said I welcome the opportunity to address head-on these serious allegations. The truth will speak for itself.

Representative Sue Wallis
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Wyoming House of Representatives