

# Legislative Report

Compiled by Harold Ault

## Pickup License Fees - SF 418

This year, the subject of the pickup registration (license) fee is back in the Iowa Legislature. The bill refers to motor trucks with an unladen weight of 7,500 pounds or less. This includes virtually every truck that is commonly called a pickup. Last year SF 2182 proposed essentially the same thing but it was not passed.

Some people have felt that it is unfair for a new car to have a registration fee of \$200-\$400 while a new pickup truck of the same value and weight is \$65. SF 418 proposes to raise the registration fee for motor trucks with an unladen weight of 7,500 pounds or less for 2009 and subsequent model years to be the same rate as a new car which is 1% of value as determined by the Department of Transportation plus 40 cents for each 100 pounds or fraction thereof of vehicle weight. This would change the registration (license) fee for most new pickups from \$65 per year to \$200-\$400 per year.

The current registration (license) fee for pickups is based on combined gross weight and not unladen weight of the truck. The combined gross weight is the combined weight of the truck and its load. The minimum registration fee is for 3 tons. The fee changes as the truck gets older. Again, this is the gross weight, which includes the weight of the pickup and its load and is for 3 tons. The initial registration fee is \$65 per year. It is reduced to \$55 when it is 10 model years old, \$45 when vehicle is 13 model years old, and \$35 when it is more than 15 model years old.

Pickups registered for 4 tons or more com-

bined gross weight, have a fixed flat rate that is the same no matter how old the truck is. For example the registration fee for 4 tons is \$80, 5 tons is \$90, and 6 tons is \$105. The motor truck rate goes up to \$1,695 for 40 tons, but most pickups are not rated to exceed 6 tons combined gross weight.

The current rate for cars does decline with age also. After 6 model years the percentage of value declines from 1% to .75%, after 7 model years to .5%, and after 9 model years to a flat rate of \$35.

This year, 2007, SF 418 did not come out of the Transportation Committee. There was an amendment offered which would have been considered if the bill had come up for debate. The amendment would have excluded "business trade truck" and "farm truck." The exclusions would not have applied to many pickup owners who use them to transport horses.

Since this is the first year of the 82nd Iowa General Assembly, SF 418 will be at the same point in the Senate Transportation Committee next year. If it does not pass next year, it will have to be reintroduced.

If you have an opinion the subject of raising pickup registration fees, you should contact your Representative and Senator. They can be found by visiting [www.legis.state.ia.us/Find-Leg/](http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Find-Leg/). The bill I have referenced is SF 418 but there can be other similar bills introduced in

the House or an attempt at the end of the session to attach it to another bill. Therefore, you should let your representative and senator know how you feel about raising the registration fee for pickups.

## Horse Slaughter in Texas

Recently, there have been reports that Texas is considering changing the law and that one of the two plants has relocated to Mexico. The other plant is slaughtering horses for use other than human consumption, such as "zoo food."

With all three US slaughter plants closed, the price of unwanted horses has dropped in half and at some auctions there are reports of some unwanted horses not receiving a bid.

Yesterday, May 2, 2008 the plant in DeKalb, Illinois has been reported to have reopened. It is not certain how long it will remain open.

If you have an opinion on any federal bills, you should contact your representative and senators. Everyone in Iowa is represented by two Senators and one Representative. The Senators are: Charles Grassley-202-224-3744 and Tom Harkin-202-224-3254. Who your representative is, depends on where you live in the state. There are five districts, with one representative for each district. The representatives are: Bruce Braley-1<sup>st</sup>, Dave Loebsack-2<sup>nd</sup>, Leonard Boswell-3<sup>rd</sup>, Tom Latham-4<sup>th</sup>, and Steve King-5<sup>th</sup>. Each one of the Representatives has a website that gives their contact information.

## Associated Press Reports

Excerpted from [www.TheHorse.com](http://www.TheHorse.com) Articles #9264 & #9291

### Court Blocks Horse Meat Inspections

March 29 2007

In March, a federal appeals court blocked the Agriculture Department from providing horse meat inspections for a fee.

The Humane Society of the United States had filed a lawsuit, creating a setback for the horse slaughter industry in the US.

In January, a federal appeals court upheld a 1949 Texas ban on the slaughter of horses for the purpose of selling the meat for human consumption overseas. The ruling forced two plants in Texas to scale back operations.

This new ruling essentially shut down operations at the remaining slaughter plant in Illinois.

Congress stripped funding for horse meat inspections in 2005. The USDA, however, authorized an "inspections for a fee" plan for slaughter plants' continued operation. Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly found the USDA did not follow federal procedures for setting up the inspection fee program.

### Slaughter: Cavel Horses Likely Transported to Canada

April 2, 2007

Now that a court ruling has indefinitely shut down the last three horse slaughter-houses in the United States, including one in DeKalb, IL, a state official stated that slaughter-bound horses are most likely on their way to Canada.

Horse enthusiasts had hoped that Cavel International, in Illinois, would allow the horses that had been headed to its plant to go to area barns, but the company returned six trailers of the animals to suppliers in Colorado, Tennessee, Iowa and South Dakota, said Colleen O'Keefe, the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Division manager of Food Safety and Animal Protection.

"These are basically unwanted horses," O'Keefe said. "These are horses that have never hardly seen a person and are not Flicka or that type of thing."

### Bill of Interest Introduced

#### SF 29 RECREATIONAL & CULTURAL MATTERS (Hatch, et al)

**Recreational trails:** Removes recreational trails from the definition of "private development purposes" if the trails connect either two existing recreational trails or a recreational trail with a cultural and entertainment district. Requires the trail to follow an existing right-of-way. Appropriates \$100,000 to market trails. Requires the DED to administer a recreational trail connectivity program and fund, and to make grants for the program. Allows the State Treasurer to issue bonds to fund the program. Limits the aggregate of the bonds to \$34 million. Makes the bonds exempt from the state income tax. Appropriates \$2.7 million annually for the program. The bill has other provisions related to Tax Credits, Cultural Districts, Workforce Training & Main Street (Economic Growth)

