

## The last U.S. slaughterhouse is ordered to close

**Cavel International has shut down, but the legal battle continues.**

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On Thursday a federal judge refused a request from DeKalb, Ill.-based Cavel International--the nation's last operating horse slaughterhouse--to remain open, but the legal dispute still isn't over.

Under a June 15 court order, Cavel was set to close on Friday, and now that a federal judge has refused the company's request to stay open longer, the plant has shut down horse slaughter operations.

"Obviously we're disappointed with the ruling," said Cavel attorney Phil Calabrese, adding that the company can still file an appeal.

In late May, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed a law banning the import, export, possession and slaughter of horses intended for human consumption, which forced Cavel to close. But the company immediately challenged the state law in federal court and was granted a temporary order in early June that prevented officials from enforcing the ban. The order was extended once, which allowed Cavel to continue operations, but on Thursday Cavel was ordered to shut down by a federal judge.

The federal judge wrote that he "no longer believes that plaintiffs have shown a strong or even negligible likelihood of succeeding on the merits of the action pending before this court." But the judge hasn't ruled on Cavel's original challenge of the state ban. He said he will not do so until a related matter—whether the Humane Society of the United States can be a party in the case—goes through the courts.

"Our primary reaction is we'll wait and see what the next step is," said Ann Spillane, chief of staff for the state attorney general. "There are obviously further legal proceedings that are going to happen."

The Cavel plant has operated in DeKalb for about 20 years, slaughtering about 1,000 horses a week, according to plant officials.