

FOUR

*the back end
of the beast*



At the beginning of 20 million horses

the twentieth century,

provided personal transportation and the motive power for farms and for moving freight and goods in communities across America. In the streets of New York City just as the era of the automobile was beginning, horses left in their wake something like 3.25 million

pounds of manure, on a daily basis.¹ Those who owned the horses benefited from their work, but the public was left with the odoriferous tailings. New York City's yearly cost of dealing with the unsanitary mess, including the disposal of about 15,000 dead horses, was in the millions of dollars.²

In addition to the direct economic costs associated with the use of one form of energy or another, there are always other costs or consequences for which the biosphere and society in general ultimately bear the burden.

Costa da Morte

On November 13, 2002, during a raging storm off the northwestern Galician coast of Spain, the tanker *Prestige*, carrying 77,000 tons of industrial-grade fuel oil, suffered a catastrophic breakdown. With its immense steel hull damaged severely, in heavy seas and gale force winds, it began to leak its petroleum cargo. Distress signals went out. The captain ordered the engine shut down and the ship went adrift. Spanish authorities refused to allow the tanker to be towed into safer waters. Six days after the initial SOS was reported, as tugs dragged the leaking *Prestige* out to sea, it broke in half 140 miles offshore and sank 11,000 feet to the ocean bottom.

Soon after the *Prestige* began spilling its cargo, thousands of people, many of them volunteers from all over Spain and other parts of Europe, were on the Galician coast struggling to contain the oil

OIL TANKER PRESTIGE SINKING OFF THE NORTH COAST OF SPAIN



Associated Press Wirephoto