



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Raleigh District Office

6020 Six Forks Road  
Raleigh, NC. 27609  
Voice: 919-844-8400  
Fax: 1-844-839-6359

August 20, 2019

**EMAIL / COURIER**

Mr. Dave Klinker, Plant Manager  
Piedmont Custom Meats, Inc., Est. M7975  
9683 Kerr Chapel Road  
Gibsonville, NC 27249

**NOTICE OF SUSPENSION**

Dear Mr. Klinker,

This letter confirms the verbal notification given to your (b) (6) (b) (6) on August 20, 2019, at approximately 10:20am, by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) of the suspension of the assignment of inspectors for slaughter operations at Piedmont Custom Meats, LLC, Est. M7975, herein after referred to as "your establishment." This action was initiated in accordance with Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (9 CFR) 500.3, after FSIS determined that your establishment failed to slaughter and handle animals humanely.

**Background/Authority**

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) (Title 21 of the United States Code {21 U.S.C.} 603 et seq.) provides that for the purpose of preventing the inhumane slaughtering of livestock, the Secretary shall cause to be made, by inspectors appointed for that purpose, an examination and inspection of the methods by which cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equines are slaughtered and handled in connection with slaughter in the slaughtering establishments inspected under this Act. The Secretary may refuse to provide inspection to a new slaughtering establishment or may cause slaughtering to be temporarily suspended at a slaughtering establishment if the Secretary finds that any cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equines have been slaughtered or handled in connection with slaughter at such establishments by any method not in accordance with sections 1901 to 1906 of Title 7 until the establishment furnishes assurances, satisfactory to the Secretary, that all slaughtering and handling in connection with slaughter of livestock shall be in accordance with such a method.

The Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.) provides that Congress finds that the use of humane methods in the slaughter of livestock prevents needless suffering; results in safer and better working conditions for persons engaged in the slaughtering industry; brings about improvement of products and economies in slaughtering operations; and produces other benefits for producers, processors, and consumers which tend to expedite an orderly flow of livestock and

livestock products in interstate and foreign commerce. It is therefore declared to be the policy of the United States that the slaughtering of livestock and the handling of livestock in connection with slaughter shall be carried out only by humane methods.

### **Findings/Basis for Suspension**

At approximately 0915 hours, the establishment brought an agitated and vocalizing beef cow into the knock box and secured it in the head catch; however, they did not use hydraulic bar that is normally used to completely restrain the animal's head. An employee attempted to use a .25 caliber hand-held captive bolt stunning device (HHCB) to stun the animal, but the initial stun attempt was ineffective: the animal continued vocalizing and remained standing in the knock box, looking around and alert. The employee attempted a 2<sup>nd</sup> stun attempt with the HHCB but the HHCB did not fire. The employee began manipulating the HHCB, and another employee asked inspection program personnel (IPP) if the employee could use the back-up rifle to stun the animal. When IPP answered in the affirmative, the employee applied a stun with the .223 rifle, and this second stun attempt successfully rendered the animal unconscious.

On examination of the head, IPP observed that there were two holes in the skull: one hole (identified as the HHCB entry point) was located on the left side of the head just above the eye and the second hole (identified as the rifle bullet entry point) was located in the proper stunning location.

IPP placed US Rejected Tag #B41891691 on the knock box in accordance with 9 CFR 313.50(c), and at approx. 1020 hours, the IPP notified the establishment owner of the suspension of the assignment of inspection. This establishment has had a robust systematic approach to humane handling in the past; however, the establishment is currently under a Deferral for an egregious humane handling event which occurred on March 28, 2019.

This incident represents a violation of 9 CFR 313.15(a)(1) which states, among other things, that *"The captive bolt stunners shall be applied to the livestock in accordance with this section so as to produce immediate unconsciousness in the animals before they are shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast, or cut."* This incident is considered egregious because there was an ineffective stun which was not followed by an immediate and effective corrective action.

The suspension action will remain in effect until you provide the Raleigh District Office with adequate written assurances, including corrective actions and further planned preventive measures, to assure that livestock at your establishment are slaughtered humanely. In order to resume inspected operations, you must submit corrective actions to my attention at the District Office. These corrective actions should include at a minimum the following:

1. Identify the assessment process used to determine the nature and cause of the noncompliances.
2. Identify what the assessment revealed as the likely cause of the system failure.
3. Describe the specific actions that will be taken to eliminate the cause of the failures.

4. Describe the future monitoring activities you will use to ensure that changes are implemented and are effective.

You are reminded that, as an operator of a federally-inspected plant, you are expected to comply with FSIS regulations and to take appropriate corrective actions to prevent inhumane handling of livestock at your establishment. Please be advised that your failure to respond adequately to these issues may result in our initiating action to withdraw inspection from your establishment. Please also be advised that you have the right to appeal this matter.

In accordance with 9 CFR 500.5(a)(5), you may appeal this action by contacting:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
Attention: Michael Watts  
Executive Associate for Regulatory Operations  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Room 344-E, Whitten Building  
Washington, DC 20250

In addition, you may also request a hearing regarding this determination pursuant to FSIS' Rules of Practice (9 CFR 500.). The rules of Practice were published in the Federal Register, Vol. 64, No. 228, on November 29, 1999. As specified in Section 500.5(d), should you request a hearing, FSIS will file a complaint that will include a request for an expedited hearing. If you wish to request a hearing regarding this determination, you should contact:

Scott C. Safian, Director  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
Office of Investigation, Enforcement and Audit  
Enforcement and Litigation Division  
Stop Code 3753, PP3, Cubicle 8-235A  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
Voice: (202) 418-8872  
Fax: (202) 245-5097

It is our hope that this matter can be resolved quickly. If you have any questions, please call me at 919-208-2945 or Dr. Beth Cunningham, Deputy District Manager, at 919-208-2934. We urge your cooperation and voluntary compliance.

Sincerely,

TODD  
FUREY

Digitally signed by  
TODD FUREY  
Date: 2019.08.20  
12:22:55 -04'00'

Todd Furey  
District Manager  
Raleigh, NC

Cc:

P. Bronstein, AA/FO

H. Sidrak, DAA/FO

S. Safian, ELD/OIEA

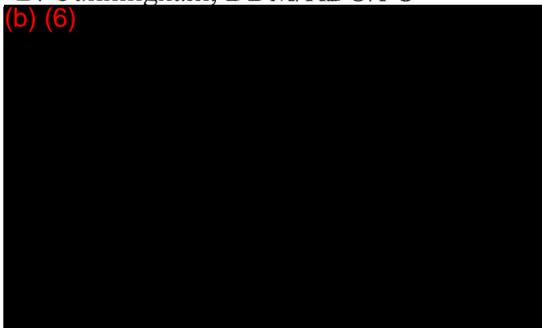
L. Hortert, RD/CID/OIEA

R. Murphy, DDM/RDO/FO

M. Roling, DDM/RDO/FO

B. Cunningham, DDM/RDO/FO

(b) (6)



Quarterly Enforcement Report  
Establishment File (Est. M7975)