



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Office of Field  
Operations

Springdale District

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February 9, 2021  
(verbal: February 8, 2021)

Via Email: [jake@valleyoakssteakcompany.com](mailto:jake@valleyoakssteakcompany.com)  
FedEx Tracking # 772853146123

Mr. Jake Huddleston, Plant Manager  
Valley Oaks Meats, LLC, Est. M2936+P2936+V2936  
110 N. 12th Street  
Blue Springs, MO 64015

**NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE**

Dear Mr. Huddleston,

On February 5, 2021, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) notified you of the suspension of the assignment of inspection personnel at your facility. This Notice of Suspension (NOS) was based on the Rules of Practice specified in Title 9 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 500.3(b) due to your establishment's failure to prevent inhumane handling and slaughtering of livestock at your facility as required by 9 CFR 313.15(a)(1) and 313.15(a)(3).

On February 5, 2021, you provided a written response (Action Plan) to the NOS via email, beginning a dialogue with FSIS that concluded with your final Action Plan submission on February 8, 2021. FSIS analyzed the corrective and preventive measures provided in your Action Plan and subsequent revisions and determined they represented compliance or the intent to comply with all applicable regulations. Therefore, FSIS will hold the suspension in abeyance pending verification by FSIS personnel that your Action Plan is effectively implemented. You were verbally notified of the suspension being held in abeyance on February 8, 2021, and this letter serves as formal, written notification of the same.

An abeyance is a moratorium on the effect of a suspension. Once a suspension is imposed, the Agency may put it into abeyance if the establishment undertakes corrective and preventive actions that the Agency finds will ensure that the conditions that were the basis for the suspension will be eliminated, and the Action Plan is effectively implemented. During the abeyance period, FSIS personnel will evaluate your corrective and preventive actions to ensure their effectiveness.

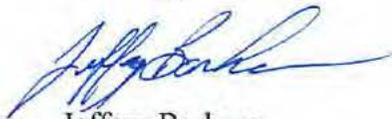
A copy of the FSIS Verification Plan is being shared with you to assist in understanding the nature and importance of the Agency's verification activities. This FSIS Verification Plan is designed to verify that your establishment fully implements the Action Plan identified in your proposal and subsequent clarifications, and that measures proffered are effective in assuring ongoing regulatory compliance. It identifies the regulatory noncompliance, your actions, and FSIS verification procedures.

**Mr. Jake Huddleston, Plant Manager**  
**Valley Oaks Meats, LLC, Est. M2936+P2936+V2936**  
**Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance**  
**February 9, 2021**  
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Please be advised that your failure to comply with statutory and regulatory requirements, to implement the corrective actions identified in the Action Plan, and/or failure to notify this office in writing of any changes to the Action Plan may result in us initiating further regulatory action as deemed necessary at the time. **During this period of abeyance, any changes made to the Action Plan need to be submitted to this office for review and comment prior to you putting the changes into place.** FSIS inspection program personnel will notify the Frontline Supervisor and District Office immediately when modifications are made to the Action Plan and your establishment fails to notify this office.

If you have any questions, please contact this office.

Sincerely,



Jeffery Barham  
District Manager

cc: Ms. Geraldine French, EARO  
Dr. Evan Sumner, DDM  
Dr. Don Dowdle, DDM  
Dr. Daran (Curtis) Stovall, DDM



FO/Quarterly Reports

**FSIS Verification Plan**

**Valley Oaks Meats, LLC (Est. M2936+P2936+V2936)**

	<i>Background that led to enforcement action (Bkgd)</i>
	<i>Related Regulations (Reg)</i>
	<i>Establishment Action Plan (AP)</i>
	<i>Related Establishment Records (Rec)</i>
	<i>FSIS Verification Activity (VA)</i>
	<i>Frequency of Verification Activity (Freq)</i>
	<i>Related PHIS Task (PHIS)</i>

	<i>Bkgd</i>	Per NR XOB1414025405N/1, at approx. 9:25 a.m. on 2/5/2021 IPP observed an employee attempt to stun a hog with a captive bolt device. IPP could see the animal was still standing with blood coming from its snout. The employee attempted to stun the hog a again; but, IPP observed that the hog remained standing, was fully alert, and had blood coming from its snout and behind its ear. Another employee retrieved a .40 caliber pistol, which the first employee used to effectively stun the hog. IPP tagged the knock box with U.S. Reject Tag B22311474.
	<i>Reg</i>	9 CFR 313.15(a)(1) and 313.15(a)(3)
<i>VP1</i>	<i>AP</i>	Management or designee will perform and document a daily direct observation of trained, assigned employees performing the stunning operation during the period of abeyance, monitoring 10% of animals slaughtered per day (minimum: 1 animal per day). All skulls from direct observations will be examined by following the strike path by pithing the entrance wound to determine the bolt direction of travel and stun placement. Examinations will be documented.
	<i>Rec</i>	Valley Oaks Meats Knock Operator Monitoring Sheet
	<i>VA</i>	Observe the designee performing the daily direct observation and skull examination to verify that these activities are conducted in accordance with the establishment's procedures. Review the associated records for completeness and to ensure that humane handling practices are maintained..
	<i>Freq</i>	Once per week
	<i>PHIS</i>	Livestock Humane Handling
	<i>Bkgd</i>	Per NR XOB1414025405N/1, at approx. 9:25 a.m. on 2/5/2021 IPP observed an employee attempt to stun a hog with a captive bolt device. IPP could see the animal was still standing with blood coming from its snout. The employee attempted to stun the hog a again; but, IPP observed that the hog remained standing, was fully alert, and had blood coming from its snout and behind its ear. Another employee retrieved a .40 caliber pistol, which the first employee used to effectively stun the hog. IPP tagged the knock box with U.S. Reject Tag B22311474.
<i>VP2</i>	<i>Reg</i>	9 CFR 313.15(a)(1) and 313.15(a)(3)
	<i>AP</i>	A laminated example of proper placement will be placed next to the knock box for operator reference.
	<i>Rec</i>	Laminated example of proper placement
	<i>VA</i>	Observe that the laminated example of proper placement is posted next to the knock box.
	<i>Freq</i>	Once per week
	<i>PHIS</i>	Livestock Humane Handling

VP3	<i>Bkgd</i>	Per NR XOB1414025405N/1, at approx. 9:25 a.m. on 2/5/2021 IPP observed an employee attempt to stun a hog with a captive bolt device. IPP could see the animal was still standing with blood coming from its snout. The employee attempted to stun the hog a again; but, IPP observed that the hog remained standing, was fully alert, and had blood coming from its snout and behind its ear. Another employee retrieved a .40 caliber pistol, which the first employee used to effectively stun the hog. IPP tagged the knock box with U.S. Reject Tag B22311474.
	<i>Reg</i>	9 CFR 313.15(a)(1) and 313.15(a)(3)
	<i>AP</i>	On 2/5/2021, the establishment conducted retraining on proper stunning for humane slaughter with all potential stun operators. Operators have been trained with reference material from Temple Grandin. Topics covered: reasoning and function of humane handling of livestock, assessing each animals' skull with landmarks to identify where the shot placement should be to render the animal unconscious instantaneously, correct operation of the captive bolt stunner to ensure a complete and effective discharge, and correct daily maintenance of captive bolt stunner.
	<i>Rec</i>	Training records
	<i>VA</i>	Verify establishment training records. For any new stun operators, verify that training is conducted and documented. If possible, observe training.
	<i>Freq</i>	Once at beginning; again for any new stun operator (document in VP once/week)
	<i>PHIS</i>	Livestock Humane Handling
VP4	<i>Bkgd</i>	Per NR XOB1414025405N/1, at approx. 9:25 a.m. on 2/5/2021 IPP observed an employee attempt to stun a hog with a captive bolt device. IPP could see the animal was still standing with blood coming from its snout. The employee attempted to stun the hog a again; but, IPP observed that the hog remained standing, was fully alert, and had blood coming from its snout and behind its ear. Another employee retrieved a .40 caliber pistol, which the first employee used to effectively stun the hog. IPP tagged the knock box with U.S. Reject Tag B22311474.
	<i>Reg</i>	9 CFR 313.15(a)(1) and 313.15(a)(3)
	<i>AP</i>	Both functions (landmark identification and correct stunner operation) must be performed in an acceptable manner for the knock success to be marked as acceptable on the monitoring form. Any unacceptable result documented on the monitoring forms will result in immediate corrective action, retraining and continued evaluation of the operator. If unacceptable results cannot be corrected, the operator will be removed from the stun operator position.
	<i>Rec</i>	Corrective action records
	<i>VA</i>	For any audits identified as unacceptable, verify that the unacceptable result is recorded and that corrective actions are completed as specified, including removal of the operator if unacceptable results cannot be corrected. If possible, observe retraining.
	<i>Freq</i>	Each "unacceptable" occurrence (document in VP once/week)
	<i>PHIS</i>	Livestock Humane Handling