

Situation-Based Humane Handling Training

Module Two – Stunning and Post-Stunning Situations

Objectives: When presented with specific situations at livestock slaughter establishments, participants will be able to:

- Verify humane handling-related regulatory compliance,
- Identify humane handling-related regulatory noncompliance,
- Determine whether a noncompliance is egregious, and
- Select appropriate actions to be taken.

Instructions: Each situation is to be read and discussed as a group with facilitation provided by the PHV, or designee. After discussing each situation, participants should have a thorough understanding of the proper response. A minimum score of 70% must be achieved on the final exam for course credit.

Situations

- 1) Inspectors at the cattle head inspection station notice that some heads have 2 or 3 “stun wounds”. They notify offline Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) of the multiple knock holes. The offline inspector immediately proceeds to the stunning area and observes that establishment personnel consistently produce insensibility with one stun attempt of the pneumatic captive bolt gun. The establishment has a good history of properly stunning animals and sometimes the employee doing the stunning administers additional “security” stuns on insensible cattle to ensure animals remain insensible.
 - Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
 - Is it an egregious situation?
 - What action should be taken by inspection personnel?
- 2) A head fork (or wand) placed behind the ears is used to electrically stun a market hog. The hog becomes stiff, goes down, and appears properly stunned. By the time it is hoisted on the line rhythmic breathing has returned, the eyes begin to blink normally, and the front feet begin paddling motions. A plant employee sticks the animal’s neck and it responds with vocalization, struggling, and trying to lift its head while looking around until it expires from blood loss about 30 seconds later.
 - Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
 - If so, is it an egregious situation?
 - What action, if any, should be taken by inspection personnel?

- 3) An attempt is made to stun a nonambulatory disabled sow in the antemortem pens with a hand-held captive bolt gun but the animal moved its head at the last moment and the attempt failed, missing the head completely. The animal did not appear excited as a result of the missed attempt and the operator immediately applied another stun attempt from a pre-loaded backup hand-held captive bolt device which was successful in properly stunning the sow. The establishment has a good history of properly stunning nonambulatory disabled animals.
- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
 - If so, is it an egregious situation?
 - What action should be taken by inspection personnel?
- 4) A heifer has been stunned and hung on the line in the “stack”. The animal’s head and eyes give the appearance of being properly stunned (e.g., no blinking, no righting reflex, no rhythmic breathing, loose floppy tongue) but the legs are kicking violently. An establishment employee designated to watch the stack notices the kicking animal and immediately delivers another stunning attempt to the heifer with a hand-held captive bolt gun. The kicking continues despite the additional stun.
- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
 - If so, is it an egregious situation?
 - What action should be taken by inspection personnel?
- 5) A group of market hogs are hung on the line after carbon dioxide stunning. Prior to the stick, one hog begins to show signs of a potential return to sensibility with rhythmic breathing and spontaneous blinking. Establishment employees notice this and immediately stun the animal with a hand-held captive bolt gun kept at that location specifically for that purpose. Rhythmic breathing and blinking discontinue and the animal appears properly stunned
- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
 - Is it an egregious situation?
 - What action should be taken by inspection personnel?
- 6) A small caliber rifle is discharged into the center of the forehead of a mature bull with a heavy winter coat. The bull vocalizes and remains standing but does not try to move away from the establishment employee who fired the rifle. The employee reloads the rifle and repeats the procedure with the same result and the animal is now very agitated and bleeding from the head. A third stun attempt has the same ineffective result and a fourth stun attempt finally renders the bull insensible.
- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?

- If so, is it an egregious situation?
 - What action should be taken by inspection personnel?
- 7) A small caliber rifle is discharged into the center of the forehead of a mature bull with a heavy winter coat. The bull vocalizes and remains standing but does not try to move away from the establishment employee who fired the rifle. The employee immediately picks up a loaded higher caliber rifle from its holding rack next to the stunning box and discharges it. This second stun attempt renders the bull insensible as determined by its falling to the floor and its wide open blank eyes. To assure the bull is insensible, the employee reaches down and lightly taps one eye; there is no response to the tap. The establishment has a good history of consistently rendering animals, including bulls, insensible with a single stun.
- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
 - If so, is it an egregious situation?
 - What action should be taken by inspection personnel?
- 8) A small heifer is in a large restrainer with plenty of room to move around and the operator is attempting to “chase” the animal’s head to deliver the stun attempt with a pneumatic captive bolt stunning device. The operator completely misses the first attempt and, as the animal continues to move around to avoid the stunner, the second attempt strikes the animal’s head off-center above the eye. The animal vocalizes loudly as a result but still does not go down. After two more unsuccessful attempts and several minutes, the animal is properly stunned.
- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
 - Is it an egregious situation?
 - What action should be taken by inspection personnel?
- 9) At a particular goat slaughter establishment that performs ritual slaughter, the religious authority has stipulated that the animals be stunned with a hand-held captive-bolt stun device after the ritual cut. While observing slaughter at this establishment, the Consumer Safety Inspector (CSI) observes a goat being ritually cut and then stunned with a hand-held captive-bolt device. The animal is laid on the floor prior to shackling where it promptly raises its head and rolls up to a sitting position with its front legs tucked in. The establishment employee in the area is in the process of shackling and hoisting another animal and does not notice the animal in the sitting position until the inspector brings it to his attention. After several minutes, the employee effectively stuns the animal with a hand-held captive bolt device.

- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
- Is it an egregious situation?
- What action should be taken by inspection personnel?

10) An establishment uses a head-thorax (chest) electrical stunning device with two separate wands. An establishment employee places one wand in the hollow immediately behind one ear and the second wand on the middle of the thorax and then energizes the electrical stunner. The animal exhibits rigor, i.e., muscles become stiff with head lifted slightly, when the stunner is energized. When the wands are removed the pig drops but within a few seconds stands up fully conscious. The establishment employee does not know what to do and applies the device again with the same results. After an additional attempt with the same results, IPP notify establishment management of the incident and an establishment supervisor replaces the stunning device (wand and unit) and effectively stuns the animal on the fourth attempt.

- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
- Is it an egregious situation?
- What action should be taken by inspection personnel?

11) A steer has been stunned with a pneumatic captive-bolt stunner and hung on the line in the “stack”. The animal’s head and eyes give the appearance of a properly stunned animal (i.e., no blinking, head hanging straight and floppy, and a loose floppy tongue). However, when the stick is administered the head is raised abruptly to the right and holds in that position for 3 – 4 seconds before dropping back into its original position.

- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
- If so, is it an egregious situation?
- What action should be taken by inspection personnel?

12) A steer is ritually slaughtered and, after the ritual cut and bleed out period, is hung on the overhead rail for dressing. An establishment employee, noticing the animal’s sides moving in a rhythmic manner, lightly taps one eye which elicits a slow eye blink. He immediately picks up a hand-held captive bolt gun from a stand in the hoisting area and applies it to ensure the animal remains insensible throughout the dressing procedure. The employee reports it to management, who then investigate for possible causes and corrective actions as part of its systematic approach to humane handling and slaughter.

- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
- Is it an egregious situation?

- What action should be taken by inspection personnel?

13) A steer has been stunned with a pneumatic captive bolt and hung on the line. While in the stack prior to sticking, the animal is vocalizing, observed to be blinking its eyes, swallowing, and attempting to raise its head up towards and in line with its spine (i.e., a righting reflex). Establishment employees do not notice this animal until IPP attract their attention and have them render the steer insensible.

- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
- If so, is it an egregious situation?
- What action should be taken by inspection personnel?

14) A small corral is loaded with multiple hogs for the purpose of stunning prior to slaughter. The first animal is stunned with scissor-type electrodes across the head and immediately goes down appearing to be insensible. Within a few seconds after release from the head scissors, the animal begins strong reflex kicking in the hind legs repeatedly striking a nearby hog which cannot get away due to the crowded condition. The hog vocalizes loudly as a result of being kicked and becomes increasingly agitated because of the kicking of the stunned animal but does not appear to be hurt.

- Does this scenario represent noncompliance?
- Is it an egregious situation?
- What action should be taken by inspection personnel?