



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

1400 Independence  
Avenue, SW.  
Washington, D.C.  
20250

August 21, 2020

**TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Erin Thompson  
Animal Welfare Institute  
900 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
(b) (6)@awi.org

RE: 2020-FSIS-00005-F  
*Human Methods of Slaughter*  
*July 1 – September 30, 2019*

Dear Ms. Thompson:

This is the final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated October 1, 2019, to the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), in which you requested access to a copy of noncompliance records and memorandums of interview related to Humane Methods of Slaughter, from July 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019. We received your request in our office on October 1, 2019.

The FSIS FOIA staff works with subject matter experts across the agency to locate responsive documents. For this request, we conducted a records search in the Office of Planning, Analysis and Risk Management. FSIS' search began on October 1, 2019. Our search includes responsive records in FSIS' control on that date.

We have located 210 pages that are responsive to your request. After a thorough review, we have determined that portions of these documents are exempt from disclosure under (b)(4) and (b)(6) of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended. Accordingly, this request is granted in part.

Exemption 4 of the FOIA protects "trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person [that is] privileged or confidential." 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4). The exemption covers two distinct categories of information in federal agency records, (1) trade secrets, and (2) information that is (a) commercial or financial, and (b) obtained from a person, and (c) privileged or confidential. In this instance, the agency is withholding processing procedures used for humane methods of slaughter. The information was submitted to USDA by processing plants inspected by FSIS. We have determined that these records contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private by the business submitters. Therefore, the information is considered confidential.

Portions of the responsive records are exempt from disclosure under FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). Exemption 6 protects information that would constitute an unwarranted invasion of an individual's personal privacy. The types of information withheld under Exemption 6 include the names, addresses, or cell phone numbers of

employees of Establishments and third parties, including, but not limited to interviewees or customers.

You may appeal this determination within 90 days from the date of this letter. Your appeal should include copies of your original request and this response, as well as a discussion of the reasons supporting your appeal. The envelope should be plainly marked to indicate that it contains a FOIA appeal. If you decide to appeal this determination, please send your appeal to:

Paul Kiecker  
Administrator  
Department of Agriculture  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Room 1170, South Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3700

Please be advised that your FOIA request, including your identity and the information made available, is releasable to the public under any subsequent FOIA requests. However, FSIS does not release your personal privacy information, such as home addresses, telephone numbers, or Social Security Numbers, all of which are protected from disclosure under FOIA Exemption 6.

If you have any questions about the way this request was handled, please contact Tiffanie Newman at 202-708-8172 or via email at [Tiffanie.Newman@usda.gov](mailto:Tiffanie.Newman@usda.gov). You may seek dispute resolution services from me, the FSIS FOIA Public Liaison and FOIA Director at 202-690-2760 or via email at 202-690-2760 or via email at [Arianne.Perkins@usda.gov](mailto:Arianne.Perkins@usda.gov). If you have general questions about FSIS' FOIA procedures or regulations, please feel free to reach out to me as well.

Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone at 202-741-5770; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

Thank you for your interest in FSIS programs and policies.

Sincerely,

**ARIANNE PERKINS**

Digitally signed by ARIANNE PERKINS

Date: 2020.08.21 11:16:41 -04'00'

Arianne M. Perkins  
Director, Freedom of Information Act Staff  
Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education

Enclosure