



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Office of Field  
Operations  
Denver District Office

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Denver, CO 80225

Voice (303) 236-9800  
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December 2, 2021

**SENT VIA FEDEX &  
ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Jon Transue, Plant Manager  
Puget Sound Processing LLC, M45858  
18241 Pendleton Street SW  
Rochester, WA 98579  
[jont@heritagemeatswa.com](mailto:jont@heritagemeatswa.com)

## **NOTICE OF SUSPENSION**

Dear Mr. Transue,

This letter confirms the verbal notification provided to your establishment, Puget Sound Processing LLC, M45858, located in Rochester, WA, on December 2, 2021, by the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), Denver District, of the suspension of the assignment of inspectors and the withholding of the marks of inspection at your establishment for slaughter operations. Dr. Jessica VanHook, Deputy District Manager, verbally notified you of the suspension. This action was initiated in accordance with Title 21 of the United States Code (USC), Section 603(b) and Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 500.3(b) (Rules of Practice).

### **Background Authority**

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), 21 USC Section 603(b), provides for the purpose of preventing the inhumane slaughtering of livestock. The FMIA gives FSIS the authority, as designated by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, to prescribe rules and regulations describing examinations and inspections of the method by which cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, and other equines are slaughtered in the establishments inspected under the FMIA. The FMIA also provides FSIS Program personnel the authority to suspend operations at a slaughtering establishment if FSIS 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 the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA) of August 27, 1958 (72 Statute 862; Title 7 USC, Sections 1901-1906), until the establishment furnishes FSIS with satisfactory assurances that all slaughtering and handling in connection with the slaughter of livestock shall be in accordance with such methods.

Under the authorities of these Acts, FSIS has prescribed rules and regulations required for the humane slaughtering of livestock, contained in Title 9 CFR Part 313. FSIS has also developed Rules of Practice regarding enforcement prescribed in 9 CFR Part 500.

The Rules of Practice describe the types of enforcement actions that FSIS may take and include procedures for taking a withholding action and or suspension, with or without prior notification, as well as the procedures for filing a complaint to withdraw a Grant of Federal Inspection.

### **Finding/Basis for Action**

On Thursday, December 2, 2021, the FSIS Consumer Safety Inspector (CSI) documented in a noncompliance record the following event at Est. M45858:

*“At approximately 8:26 am on 12-2-2021 at Puget Sound Processing establishment 45858, while observing HATS Category VIII, a sow was stunned with a hand-held captive bolt (HHCB) device. The first stun attempt was unsuccessful at rendering the animal insensible. The CSI observed the sow vocalizing with controlled eye movement and continuing to stand within the stun box. The second through the eighth stun applications, alternating between the backup HHCB device and the primary HHCB device, both being reloaded multiple times, had the same ineffective response from the animal. The CSI observed the sow remain standing and moving in the stun box voluntarily and showing controlled eye movement and remaining conscious. On the ninth stun attempt with the HHCB device, the CSI observed the animal drop insensible in the stun box and a tenth stun was then applied as a security stun to ensure the animal would remain unconscious. The CSI then placed US reject tag no. B18908574 to the stun box. The establishment manager was verbally notified of the noncompliance and regulatory control action.*

*The Denver District Management Team was contacted through supervisory channels.”*

### **Summary**

The decision to suspend the assignment of inspectors at your establishment is based on this noncompliance with 9 CFR 313.15(a)(1). This is an inhumane noncompliance whereby multiple attempts were required to render a sow unconscious.

The suspension of the assignment of inspectors will remain in effect until such time as you provide the Denver District Office adequate written corrective actions and preventative measures to ensure that livestock at your establishment are handled and slaughtered humanely, and in accordance with the FMIA, the HMSA, and 9 CFR 313 regulations.

These should include:

- A written description of the incident.
- The root cause of the incident
- Your immediate corrective actions.
- Your specific corrective actions to prevent reoccurrence of the noncompliance.
- Any training or retraining of employees you plan to provide, including materials you’re planning to use.
- Any monitoring procedures, including any documentation records.

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

Paul Wolseley  
Executive Associate for Regulatory Operations  
Office of Field Operations  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Room 1329, South Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
Tel: 202-708-9506  
[Paul.Wolseley@usda.gov](mailto:Paul.Wolseley@usda.gov)

In accordance with 9 CFR Part 500.5(d), you may request a hearing concerning this action by contacting:

Scott C. Safian  
Enforcement and Litigation Division  
Office of Investigation, Enforcement and Audit  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
Stop Code 3753, PP3, Cubicle 9-235-A  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
Voice: (202) 418-8872  
Fax: (202) 245-5097

If you have any questions regarding this matter, you may contact the Denver District Office at (303)236-9800.

Sincerely,

ROBERT  
REEDER

Digitally signed by  
ROBERT REEDER  
Date: 2021.12.02  
12:44:51 -07'00'

Dr. Robert Reeder  
District Manager  
USDA FSIS OFO  
Denver District Office  
[Robert.Reeder@usda.gov](mailto:Robert.Reeder@usda.gov)

cc: FO/QER  
Est. File  
J. Monteverde, DDM  
D. James, DDM  
J. VanHook, DDM

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S. Baucher, RD/OIEA