



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

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**Memorandum of Information**

Date: September 29, 2021

To: William Griffin  
District Manager, Alameda District

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From:

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**Subject:**

Assessment of video posted on YouTube that features several locations at Est. 6137 M/P, Foster Farms, Livingston, CA.

**Background:**

On September 28, 2021, the organization Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) uploaded a video to their public YouTube account titled "Inside Foster Farms Slaughterhouse" which contained covert footage of the live hang area and bleeding area at Establishment P6137, Foster Farms, Plant 2, located in Livingston, CA. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWdJst8f7Sk>  
The video contains scenes of chickens being cut and bleeding for slaughter, so viewing is limited to persons 18 years and older.

Multiple camera views are linked in the video, and the video is edited to speed up in sections. There are text overlays in scenes. The images inside the live hang shackling room are moderately dark and unclear due to the dimmed red lights in that room. The images of the bleeding line are mostly bright and sharp. Fixed images in the video feature photographs of paperwork from Foster Farms training, a job notice, and a Foster Farms animal handling statement. A section of the conveyor belt going into the live hang room is shown briefly.

One vantage point of the video includes a view of the live hang shackling area from above and features the floor where deceased or weak chickens are placed by employees, employee actions, live young chickens, motionless chickens and the condemned barrel (Dead-On-Arrival – DOAs) behind a plastic curtain. Another camera view is of the automatic knife on one of the slaughter lines (2 lines per plant) that includes electrically stunned chickens entering the metal guides advancing into the rotary knife blade. An additional view is of the backup cutter employees stationed past the automatic knife who apply a cut to the throat jugular vein to birds that missed the entry to the automatic knife or do not appear to be bleeding sufficiently after the automatic cut.

The video is 7 minutes, 58 seconds long. The filming is not continuous and is highly edited with sections speeded up and the different camera views linked together through the duration.

YouTube Marker	Observations
0:09/7:58	Text: In the Plant 2 hanging room of Foster Farms in Livingston, California, workers hand birds onto a high-speed slaughter line moving at 140 shackles per minute. They work in the dark under immense pressure.
0:41	Text: Scared birds are thrown against the shackles. Action: An employee is forcefully throwing a chicken from the floor onto the hanging table.
0:52-0:58	Text: Condemned birds who may be conscious are thrown to the floor. Action: An employee shackling birds roughly tosses birds off the hang line conveyor belt to the floor.
0:58	Text: This is how Foster Farms sorts birds for slaughter.
1:02	Text: Escaped and condemned. Condemned birds: sick, injured and dead. Scene: Numerous chickens on the floor, some motionless, some moving.
1:31-1:43	Text: 280 birds are taken into “hanging” every minute. Scene: Take-in conveyor or conveyor at live hang. (well lit)
2:25	Text: The environment conditions workers to become cruel to the birds. Scene: Employee is tossing birds from floor onto shackling conveyor belt and some hit the shackles.
2:35	Text: No sensibility test is done before throwing birds away. Action: Employee is tossing birds on floor over the low panel into a DOA barrel without checking if each bird is deceased or dislocating the neck of each bird to euthanize it.
3:44	Text: Humane violations and slaughter of condemned birds occur here even when the USDA is present. Scene: Video highlights a bird on the floor that is alive but struggling to stand. A USDA inspector walks past the DOA barrel, which is on the other side of the partition (Inspector doesn’t see birds on floor from this vantage)
4:47	Scene: Live bird in DOA barrel.
5:40	Text: After hanging, birds are submerged in the electrified “stun bath” Scene: Still photo of the entrance of the stunning trough with no birds on the line
5:42	Text: Here, they emerge from the stun bath into the “blood tunnel” Scene: Overhead view of the shackled birds on the line emerging from the stunner bath and into the guides of the automatic killer.
5:46	Text: but some birds hold their head above water and are not stunned Scene: Highlighted view of one bird that is holding its head up and does not appear stunned.
5:52	Scene: Direct overhead view of the automatic killer machine where an employee is installing a blade. Line is empty and clean and not moving.
5:56	Scene: Point of view advancing through the guides of the automatic killer, line is empty.

5:58	Text: In the blood tunnel, a Cantrell “killer” slices their throat. Scene: Empty line focused on the guides and blade of the automatic killer
6:01	Text: The un-stunned bird holds their head up to avoid the blade. Scene: Highlighted view of the un-stunned bird bypassing the knife
6:10	Text: Workers are instructed to cut open these terrified birds. Scene: Highlighted view of the backup cutter employee applying a jugular cut to bleed bird that was missed by the automatic knife.
6:32	Text: When the line stops, birds are stuck wherever they are. Scene: Highlighted view of line stopped and bird entering the automatic knife apparatus before it is cut.
6:42	Text: This is a crime, but violations here are normally kept secret.
6:46-7:23	Scene: Bird hung by neck advances past the backup cutter employee. The employee removes an additional chicken that appears to be hung by its neck and makes a cut on its neck.
7:30-7:32	Scene: Photos of FF Additional Pay sign, handwritten notes about employee performance,

### Findings:

No GCP regulatory noncompliance was filmed: 9 CFR 381.65(b) *Poultry must be slaughtered in accordance with good commercial practices in a manner that will result in thorough bleeding of the carcasses and ensure that breathing has stopped prior to scalding. Blood from the killing operation must be confined to a relatively small area.* The videos did not feature a view of the scald tank entrance to see if any birds were still breathing or still bleeding.

Poor practices/possible bird “mistreatment” that would warrant a GCP-task linked MOI of the findings.

- Employee roughly throwing birds from floor onto shackle table, sometimes hitting the shackles.
- Employee not euthanizing each bird before tossing it into the DOA barrel.
- Live bird in DOA barrel.
- At least one bird hung by neck in shackle, appears to be two.

### Notes:

It is normal for smaller birds to miss the electrified water bath for stunning. In the scenes depicting this, the backup cutter employees applied a jugular cut to these birds. There is no regulation for stunning poultry prior to slaughter.

Respectfully,

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Alameda District Office – FSIS Office of Field Operations