



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

May 10, 2022

Office of Field
Operations
Denver District Office

**SENT VIA FEDEX &
ELECTRONIC MAIL**

1 Denver Federal
Center, Bldg. 45
P.O. Box 25387
Denver, CO 80225

Tylee Williams, Owner
Star Valley Meat Block
Establishment 47200 M/V
50 Westwood Lane
Thayne, WY 83127
starvalleymeatblock@gmail.com

Voice (303) 236-9800
Fax (303) 236-9794

DENIAL OF VOLUNTARY SERVICES

Dear Ms. Williams,

This letter confirms the verbal notification provided to your establishment, Star Valley Meat Block, 47200 M/V, located in Thayne, WY, on May 10, 2022, by the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), Denver District, of the denial of voluntary inspection service of exotic animals at your establishment. (b) (6), verbally notified you of the denial of services. This action was initiated in accordance with Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 352.6(a)(5).

Background Authority

The Agricultural Marketing Act (AMA) Title 7 of the United States Code (7 USC) Part 1622(h) provides that the Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to provide voluntary reimbursable inspection services to establishments which apply for and request such services. Further, the AMA 7 USC Part 1622(i) provides that the Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to determine the needs and develop methods of operating facilities for the proper handling of agricultural products, including livestock and poultry. The regulations issued under the AMA, including 9 CFR Part 352, provides FSIS the authority to deny and withdraw voluntary reimbursable inspection services for exotic animals.

9 CFR Part 352.10 states, in part, "*Humane handling of an exotic animal during antemortem inspection shall be in accordance with the provisions contained in 9 CFR 313.2*" and in Part 352.10(a)(5), "*Stunning to render the animal unconscious shall be in accordance with 9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16.*" 9 CFR Part 352.6(a)(5) states FSIS may deny or withdraw inspection services to an establishment, "*for the use of operating procedures which are not in accordance with the regulations of this part.*"

Finding/Basis for Action

On Tuesday, May 10, 2022, FSIS Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) documented in a Memorandum of Interview (MOI) the following event at Est. M47200:

"On May 10, 2022 at approximately 8:45 AM I directly observed the establishment attempt to stun a yak at Star Valley Meat Block, Establishment #V47200. The initial stun attempt,

applied with a 9mm handgun to the forehead, was ineffective as the male yak fell to his knees, but continued to have head raised with eyes tracking and rhythmic breathing. There was no vocalization. The establishment stun operator immediately applied a second stun attempt with the same 9mm handgun. This resulted in no change to the condition of the yak, but he regained his footing. A third attempt was applied with the same 9mm handgun, and the yak remained standing with eyes tracking. The stun operator then applied a fourth stun attempt to the poll using the same 9 mm, which immediately rendered the animal unconscious. The animal remained unconscious throughout the shackling, hoisting, and bleeding process.

The establishment has a backup stunning device readily available (a .22 handgun), however it was not utilized.

USDA U.S. Reject tag #B36820136 was applied to the stun box and the Denver District Office was contacted through supervisory channels. Upon review of the dressed head, I observed three stun holes had penetrated the skull – two were placed on the forehead left of midline, one was through the nasal bones below a horizontal line between the eyes. The evidence of the poll stun was trimmed but likely penetrated directly through the foramen magnum.

The establishment does not have a robust humane handling program.”

Summary

Based on the findings listed above FSIS has concluded that the denial of voluntary services is warranted for failure to meet regulatory requirements in accordance with 9 CFR 352.10.

The denial of voluntary services will remain in effect until such time as you provide the Denver District Office adequate written corrective actions and preventative measures to ensure that exotic species at your establishment are handled and slaughtered humanely, and in accordance with 9 CFR 352.10 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.

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

In addition, you may also request a hearing regarding this determination pursuant to the USDA Rules of Practice 7 CFR 1.131(b)(1) by contacting:

Scott C. Safian
Director, Enforcement Operations Staff
Office of Investigation, Enforcement and Audit
Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Stop Code 3753, SB – Room 2148
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250
Office: (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: 2022.05.10 15:22:18
-06'00'

Dr. Robert Reeder
District Manager
USDA FSIS OFO
Denver District Office
Robert.Reeder@usda.gov

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

(b) (6)

S. Baucher, RD/OIEA