



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

Office of Field  
Operations

Atlanta District Office

100 Alabama St., SW.  
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Atlanta, GA. 30303  
Phone: 404-562-5900  
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800-282-7005

**Certified mail**

June 6, 2022

(b) (6)

White Oak Pastures, Est. M34729  
22775B US Highway 27  
Bluffton, GA 39824

**NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE**

Dear (b) (6)

On June 1, 2022, the Food Safety, and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued a Notice of Suspension (NOS) withholding the marks of inspection and suspending the assignment of slaughter inspection program personnel for livestock slaughter at White Oak Pastures, Est. M34729. Located at 22775 US Highway 27, Bluffton, GA 39824. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313 and your failure to effectively implement the corrective action/preventive measures proffered to place White Oak Pastures, Est. M34729, into Deferral on May 19, 2022.

On June 2, 2022, at approximately 7:50pm, you submitted written corrective actions and preventive measures to meet the requirements of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. Based on your assessment, you determined that placement of the stunning points was correct, but the angle of the stuns was incorrect due to the free movement of the goats' heads. Your corrective actions included: requiring both stunners to complete online training course on the proper and effective stunning techniques for multiple animals; restricting the head movement of the goats during stunning; the use of an open bar, metal gate system that attaches to the wall to restrain the goats; using the back pole method for stunning animals; and monitoring 100% of goats slaughtered for the next six months.

On June 3, 2022, at approximately 11:25am, FSIS determined that the proffered corrective actions and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to properly address the inhumane handling incident and further clarification was requested. Specifically, FSIS requested clarification regarding what species of animals you will use the back pole method of stunning; providing a link to the online training course viewed by the stunners as part of their training/retraining;

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providing a copy of the record documenting training/retraining of the stunners; which species of animals will be restrained in the open bar, metal gate system that attaches to the wall; when the metal gate system will be installed; clarifying what will be monitored during slaughter of goats; will the monitoring frequency of 100% be used only on goats or for all small ruminants; providing a copy of the record that will be used to record and document monitoring; and removal of references to Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) as part of your proffered corrective actions.

On June 3, 2022, at approximately 4:00pm, you submitted your second response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions. Your response include: the pole method of stunning would be used on goats, lambs and sheep (small ruminants); links to the online training course used to train/retrain your stunners; copies of two "Certificates of Bolt Certification" for the stunners who completed the online training; the open bar metal gate system will be used to restrain small ruminants during stunning; the open bar metal gate is on site and can be easily attached when small ruminants are slaughtered; monitoring will include stunners name, species of small ruminants, stunning device used, verification of sensibility, stun effectiveness, re-stun (if needed) and vocalization (yes or no); a copy of the record that will be used to document monitoring of small ruminants; and the removal of references to IPP as part of your assessment process.

The link provided on June 3, 2022, as part of your corrective action, did not work. On June 4, 2022, at approximately 8:30am, FSIS left voicemail messages for two of your supervisors requesting that they provide a usable link to the training videos so that FSIS could view the training material.

On June 4, 2022, at approximately 9:20am one supervisor returned the call to FSIS and stated that he would send new links to the training material so the videos could be viewed. On June 4, 2022, at approximately 10:00am, FSIS received new working links to the training videos.

On June 4, 2022, at approximately 12:15pm, your plant manager was verbally notified by FSIS that the corrective actions and preventive measures met the requirements to place White Oak Pastures, Est. M34729, in Abeyance and that a Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance (NOSHA) and Verification Plan (VP) would be issued. You are hereby being provided written notification of the Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance.

Please be further advised that the suspension of inspection at your establishment will remain in abeyance pending verification by FSIS that your proposed corrective actions and preventive measures have been implemented and are effective in ensuring future regulatory compliance and preventing the inhumane treatment of animals. Agency personnel will begin immediate verification of your corrective actions and preventive measures.



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A copy of the FSIS Verification Plan is attached to assist you in understanding the nature and importance of the agency's verification activities. The FSIS Verification Plan is designed to verify that your establishment fully implements the revisions to its humane handling of animals and other corrective actions stated in your responses, and that these revisions and corrective actions are effective in ensuring future regulatory compliance. The FSIS Verification Plan identifies your proposed corrective actions, the regulatory requirement(s), and the PHIS Task under which FSIS officials will verify the implementation and effectiveness of your proposed action plan.

Please be reminded that as a federally inspected establishment, you are expected to comply with FSIS regulations and to take appropriate actions to prevent the inhumane handling of animals. It is important for you to understand that FSIS has the responsibility to initiate action if your establishment fails to operate in accordance with the regulations, or conditions occur that do not comply with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. Please be advised that failure to comply with these regulatory requirements or failure to effectively implement your proposed corrective actions and preventive measures could result in the immediate suspension of inspection at your establishment or other appropriate action.

If you have any questions, please contact the Atlanta District Office at 404-562-5900.

Sincerely,



Dr. Phyllis Adams  
District Manager

cc: Philip Bronstein, AA/OFO  
Hany Sidrak, DAA/OFO  
Melissa Moore, EARO/OFO  
Scott Safian, EOS/OIEA  
Larry Hortert, RD/CID/OIEA

(b) (6)

Barney Welch, DDM/OFO  
Ghias Mughal, DDM/OFO  
Tracy Bryant, DDM/OFO

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**White Oak Pastures  
Establishment M34729  
Verification Plan**

Week ending: \_\_\_\_\_

This Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Verification Plan is designed to verify that the establishment fully implements the corrective actions and preventive measures proffered in response to the Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance (NOSHA) issued on June 6, 2022, and the Notice of Intended Enforcement (NOIE) issued on May 16, 2022.

The Verification Plan will be utilized by inspection personnel and the Atlanta District Office to evaluate the effectiveness of the corrective actions in assuring future regulatory compliance. This FSIS Verification Plan identifies the corrective actions, the relevant regulatory requirements, and the PHIS Task under which FSIS officials will verify the implementation and effectiveness of the proposed action plan. These tasks can be performed as an unscheduled task if the task is not scheduled on the Daily Procedure Schedule. After completion, inspection personnel will send this report on a Bi-weekly basis to the District Case Specialist and the District Veterinary Medical Office for review. Complete this report once every two (2) weeks.

**Handling of Livestock**

<b><u>Issue/Action</u></b>	<b><u>Regulation</u></b>	<b><u>PHIS Code</u></b>
1. Verify by direct observation that the establishment attaches the open bar metal gate system to the wall in the stunning area to restrain sheep, lamb & goats (small ruminants) to allow for easy access to the small ruminant for control of the head and placement of the stun. (Every day small ruminants are slaughtered)	9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16	HH Task – PHIS HATS Category VIII or IX.

**Finding:**

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2. Verify by Direct Observation &/or Record Review that the establishment monitors & records monitoring results of stunning effectiveness for 100% of the small ruminants slaughtered on the document titled "Small Ruminant Stunning Monitoring Log". This document includes the date, number of animals slaughtered, the stunner's name, type of animal (sheep, lamb or goat) device used, stunner verified sensibility, stun effective, security stun, re-stun & vocalization. (Every day small ruminants are slaughtered).	9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16	HH Task – PHIS HATS Category VIII or IX.
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**Finding:**

3. Verify by Direct observation that the establishment uses the back pole method of stunning to stun small ruminants. (Every day small ruminants are slaughtered)	9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16	HH Task – PHIS HATS Category VIII or IX..
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**Finding:**



## VERIFICATION PLAN

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4. Currently, there are two plant employees designated as trained and certified to stun livestock. If the establishment designates different employees to stun livestock verify by Record Review that the employees are trained and certified to stun livestock. (When different employees are assigned to stun livestock)	9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16	HH Task – PHIS HATS Category VIII or IX.
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**Finding:**

5. Verify by Direct Observation &/or Record Review that a .22 magnum rifle is used as the primary stunning method to stun all bulls & that a 20 gauge shotgun (with slugs) is present on the kill floor to use as a secondary stunning method to stun all bulls if needed. (Every day bulls are slaughtered).	9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16	HH Task – PHIS HATS Category VIII or IX.
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**Finding:**

6. Verify by Direct Observation &/or Record Review that the establishment monitors & records monitoring results of stunning effectiveness for 100% of the bulls slaughtered on the document titled "Daily Stun Effectiveness Report". This document includes the date, start time, end time,	9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16	HH Task – PHIS HATS Category VIII or IX.
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## VERIFICATION PLAN

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number of animals killed, the stunners name, type of animal (bull, steer, heifer, or cow) device used, stunner verified sensitivity, stun effective, security stun, re-stun & vocalization. (Every day bulls are slaughtered).		
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### Finding:

7. Verify by Direct Observation &/or Record Review that daily monitoring of stunning effectiveness is documented on the document titled "Daily Stun Effectiveness Report".  Frequency of plant monitoring: The plant will monitor and record stunning effectiveness for 4 bovine, excluding bulls, each day of slaughter during the Deferral Period at a frequency of 2 bovine (steer, heifer, or cow) before lunch and 2 bovine (steer, heifer, or cow) after lunch. (Each day of bovine slaughter).	9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16	HH Task – PHIS HATS Category VIII or IX.
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### Finding:

## VERIFICATION PLAN

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8. Verify by Direct Observation &/or Record Review that a security stun is performed on each bovine slaughtered. The document titled "Daily Stun Effectiveness Report" will be used to document performance of a security stun. (Each day of bovine slaughter).	9 CFR 313.15 or 313.16	HH Task – PHIS HATS Category VIII or IX.
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**Finding:**

## COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Two Week Period Ending -**

**Comments:**

**Continue Verification Process:** Yes/No

**No Further Action/ Close with a Letter of Warning:**

**Yes/No Signature of IPP:**