



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

November 9, 2024

Office of Field  
Operations  
Des Moines  
District Office

ELECTRONIC MAIL on November 9, 2024

Neal Smith  
Federal Building  
210 Walnut Street  
Room 985  
Des Moines, IA  
50309-2123

Michael Flanigan, Owner  
Northwoods Locker LLC  
267 100th Ave.  
Clayton, Wisconsin 54004  
(b) (6)@yahoo.com  
715-948-2554

### NOTICE OF SUSPENSION

Voice  
515.727.8960  
Fax 515.727.8991

Attention: Michael Flanigan, Owner

This letter serves as official notification by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of our decision to withhold the federal marks of inspection and suspend the assignment of Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) for all slaughter operations at Est. 34687, Northwoods Locker LLC., located at 267 100th Ave. Clayton, Wisconsin 54004. This letter follows verbal notification of the suspension action, provided by (b) (6) (b) (6) Public Health Veterinarian (PHV), to Micheal Flanigan, Owner at approximately 1000 on November 8, 2024.

The decision to institute this enforcement action is in accordance with Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Rules of Practice 500.3(b), based on the determination that your establishment did not handle or slaughter animals humanely. The observed egregious inhumane handling incident demonstrates failure to comply with the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) (21 U.S.C. 603), the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA) (7 U.S.C 1901 et seq.) and regulatory requirements (9 CFR Part 313), specifically 313.16(a)(1).

#### **Background**

The FMIA (21 USC 601 *et seq.*) provides it is essential to the public interest that the health and welfare of consumers be protected, by assuring meat products distributed to them are wholesome, not adulterated, and properly marked, and labeled. The Act gives FSIS the authority, as designated by the Secretary of Agriculture, to prescribe rules and regulations describing sanitation requirements for inspected establishments and provide FSIS program personnel the authority to refuse to allow meat/meat food products to be marked, labeled, stamped, or tagged as *inspected and passed*, to prevent the entry of adulterated products into commerce. Furthermore, the FMIA provides FSIS the authority to appoint inspectors to examine and inspect the method by which livestock are slaughtered and handled at slaughtering establishments.

The HMSA provides that Congress finds that the use of humane methods in the slaughter of livestock prevents needless suffering; results in safer and better working conditions for persons engaged in the slaughtering industry; brings about improvement of products and economies in slaughtering operations; and produces other benefits for producers, processors, and consumers which tend to expedite an orderly flow of livestock and livestock products in interstate and foreign commerce. It is therefore declared to be the policy of the United States that the slaughtering of livestock and the handling of livestock in connection with slaughter shall be carried out only by humane methods.

Under the authority of the Acts, FSIS has prescribed rules and regulations required for establishments slaughtering and handling livestock, as required by 9 CFR Part 313. FSIS has also developed the Rules of Practice regarding administrative enforcement, 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, and for filing a complaint to withdraw a grant of inspection. Specifically, 9 CFR 500.3(b) states that FSIS may impose a suspension without providing prior notification due to handling or slaughtering of animals inhumanely.

### **Findings / Basis for Action**

On November 8, 2024, at approximately 1000 hours, IPP, was performing Humane Handling Category VIII (Stunning Effectiveness) and observed the following noncompliance. IPP observed an establishment employee using a .22 magnum with a full metal jacket bullet to stun a heritage breed sow. IPP stepped outside. One shot was fired and IPP heard a squeal, then a second shot with another squeal, and then the third shot with another squeal. IPP stepped inside and noticed the sow was still standing and conscious. The establishment employee grabbed the electrical stunner and proceeded to perform a head and heart stun of the sow rendering it unconscious. IPP informed Mr. Mike Flanigan, a regulatory control action would be taken and IPP would be contacting the district office for further direction. This was the last animal of the day to be slaughtered for the day.

During post-mortem inspection, IPP inspected the skinned-out head. One of the holes was about 1.5 inches above the right eye with a second hole 1.5 inches from the first hole toward the midline of the skull. The employee stated that one of the shots was from behind the ear. There was fragments of bone and a hole above the occipital bone.

This is a noncompliance with 9 CFR 313.16(a)(1).

You do not currently maintain a written humane handling program for consideration.

### **Conclusion**

Provisions of the FMIA outline FSIS' ability to refuse to render inspection and indefinitely withdraw inspection from an establishment, provided the establishment is afforded the right to an administrative hearing, when conditions exist where the slaughter and/or handling of livestock was

not by a method in accordance with the Act(s). Evidence demonstrates your failure to meet regulatory requirements addressed in 9 CFR 313.16(a)(1), constituting a violation of the humane slaughter requirements and supporting the conclusion that your handling of livestock violated the provisions of the FMIA and HMSA.

Based on the above findings, the Des Moines District Office has made a decision to suspend the assignment of inspectors for your slaughter operations, as per the Rules of Practice regulation 9 CFR Part 500.3(b).

The suspension of the assignment of inspectors will remain in effect until such time as you provide to this office adequate written corrective actions and preventive measures to address the noncompliance detailed in this NOS, to assure that the handling and/or slaughter of animals will be done humanely and in accordance with the FMIA, HMSA, and the regulations promulgated therein.

Your written response should include:

1. An initial assessment of the incident, including determination of the cause.
2. Immediate corrective actions taken.
3. Measures to prevent reoccurrence.
4. Any training of employees, materials used, and associated records.
5. Type of monitoring activity(s) to be conducted and associated monitoring records.

A determination of further administrative action will be made upon receipt and review of your submitted corrective actions and preventative measures. You are reminded that, as an operator of a federally inspected establishment, you are expected to comply with FSIS regulations and to take appropriate corrective actions to prevent the production of adulterated products at your establishment. Please be advised that your failure to respond adequately to these issues may result in our initiating action to withdraw inspection from your establishment.

### **Appeal and Hearing Rights**

You have the right to appeal this matter and can do so by contacting:

Robert Q. Bane  
Executive Associate for Regulatory Operations  
Office of Field Operations  
4700 S. Thompson, Bldg. B, Ste. 201  
Springdale, AR 72764  
Mobile: (b) (6)  
[robert.bane@usda.gov](mailto:robert.bane@usda.gov)

Pursuant to 9 CFR 500.5(d), you may also request a hearing regarding this determination. Should you request a hearing, FSIS will file a complaint that will include a request for an expedited hearing. If you wish to request a hearing regarding this determination, please contact:

Michael Flanigan, Owner  
Northwoods Locker, LLC., Est. 34687

Notice of Suspension  
November 9, 2024

Scott C. Safian, Director  
Enforcement Operations Staff (EOS)  
Office of Investigation, Enforcement and Audit (OIEA)  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Stop Code 3753, SB - Room 2148  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250  
Telephone: (202) 418-8872  
Facsimile: (202) 245-5097  
E-mail: [AEBCorrespondence@usda.gov](mailto:AEBCorrespondence@usda.gov)

If you have questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact the Des Moines District Office at 515-727-8960 or District Veterinary Medical Specialist (b) (6) at (b) (6) (b) (6)

Sincerely,

AUBREY  
WILLIAMS

Digitally signed by  
AUBREY WILLIAMS  
Date: 2024.11.09  
09:18:12 -0600

(for)

Mr. Jeffery Jacobsen  
District Manager  
USDA FSIS OFO  
Des Moines District