



April 18, 2025

Georgia Premium Meats

M1052

1699 Hwy 27N

Colquitt, Georgia 39837

(b) (6) [REDACTED]@gmail.com

229-359-0719

ELECTRONIC MAIL on April 18, 2025

FEDEX TRACKING NUMBER

Attention: James Stephen Jackson, Owner

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE

On April 16, 2025, 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 Georgia Premium Meats, Est. M1052, located at 1699 Hwy 27N, Colquitt, Georgia 39837. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313.

On April 16, 2025, you submitted written corrective actions and preventive measures to meet the requirements of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. In your response you stated: An employee placed three rams in the kill box to minimize movement. The rams were shot with a single individual shot each. The employee laid the gun down and proceeded to cut the animals' throats. When the inspector and vet reentered the area, one of the rams was standing with its' throat cut. The vet asked the employee if he planned to shoot the animal again. The employee shot the animal two more times to verify it was unconscious. The contributing issue is believed to be the ram was an older sickly animal with a thick skull.

Your corrective actions and preventive measures included: Retrained employees in proper shot placement. Retrained employees on equipment calibration/inspection. Retrained employees on small ruminant restraint. Retrained employees in verifying effectiveness and signs of an unconscious animal. Retrained employees to use a larger caliber firearm with an older, bigger animal.

On April 17, 2025, FSIS determined that your proffered corrective actions and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to address the inhumane handling incident and clarification was requested. Specifically, FSIS requested you to: Identify the root cause of the incident to ensure it is being addressed, describe what equipment would be calibrated, how often the equipment be calibrated/inspected, what is the shot placement that will be used for the rams versus what was used the day of the incident, and what is the different caliber of weapon that will be used?

On April 17, 2025, you identified the root cause of the incident as improper shot placement between the eyes and inadequate caliber of firearm used. The employee and his assistant were trained on identifying signs of consciousness as in vocalization, righting reflex, standing upright or trying to stand back up, and tracking eye movement. You identified the equipment as weapons that are used and will be cleaned before each use for the next (b) (4) to ensure the equipment is working properly. You stated if there is no misfire during this period, you will go back to your normal cleaning routine of cleaning every (b) (4)

Additionally, you identified the shot placement to used will be behind the head method instead of between the eyes. The employees were trained to use a behind the head method, so the bullet is going down in the brain limiting the chance of missing the target. You also trained the employees on how to use a sorting board to limit animal movement while stunning. Retraining for employees will occur (b) (4) on proper shot placement techniques and how to manage animal movement. You identified the caliber of weapon currently used is a .22 long rifle.

On April 17, 2025, you submitted your second response. You will restrain and stun one small ruminant at a time. You stated that when you identify an older or larger small ruminant you will change your weapon of choice to a 9 mm with a 20-gauge slug as your secondary.

On April 17, 2025, FSIS determined that the proffered corrective actions and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to address the inhumane handling incident and requested additional clarification. Specifically, FSIS requested you to provide a response to how you plan to monitor proper restraint, the frequency of monitoring for proper restraint during stunning and provide a copy of the record that will be used to document that the small ruminant is restrained using the sorting board restraint. Also, you stated employees were retrained on identifying signs of consciousness as in vocalization, righting reflex, standing upright or trying to stand back up, and tracking eye movement. FSIS requested you provide a response to clarify the frequency you will use to verify stunning effectiveness and to provide a copy of the record that will be used to document monitoring of stunning effectiveness and frequency.

On April 17, 2025, you submitted your third response. Your response included: you will put (b) (4)

(b) (4) You will monitor and document animal restraint type used for 60 days. The employee will be required to answer each question for each animal on kill days and will be initialed by responsible employee.

You stated you will monitor stunning effectiveness for 60 days identifying signs of consciousness as in vocalization, righting reflex, standing upright or trying to stand back up, and tracking eye movement. The employee will be responsible to answer daily and initial.

You provided a copy of the record that will be used to record monitoring of type of restraint used and stunning effectiveness of vocalization, righting reflex, standing upright or trying to stand back up, and tracking eye movement.

On April 17, 2025, FSIS determined that the proffered corrective actions and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to address the inhumane handling incident and requested additional clarification. Specifically, FSIS requested you provide further clarification of the monitoring timeframe as your responses did not adequately address the timeframe that is required for a Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance. You were advised that a Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance is typically 90 days, and the monitoring should be performed during the entire period.

On April 17, 2025, you submitted your fourth response. Your response included you will monitor for 90 days, both animal restraint type used and stunning effectiveness for identifying signs of consciousness as in vocalization, righting reflex, standing upright or trying to stand back up, and tracking eye movement.

On April 18, 2025, you were verbally notified by Dr. Edward Hepburn, Deputy District Manager (DDM), that the corrective actions and preventive measures met the requirements to place Georgia Premium Meats, Est. M1052, in Abeyance and that a Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance (NOSHA) and a 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.

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.

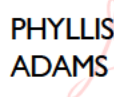
Please be reminded that as a federally inspected establishment, you are expected to comply with FSIS regulations and to take appropriate actions to prevent the inhumane handling of animals. It is important for you to understand that FSIS has the responsibility to initiate action if your establishment 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.

James Stephen Jackson, Owner
Georgia Premium Meats, M1052

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance
April 18, 2025

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

Sincerely,

 Digitally signed
by PHYLLIS
ADAMS
Date: 2025.04.18
13:36:40 -04'00'

Dr. Phyllis Adams
District Manager

James Stephen Jackson, Owner
Georgia Premium Meats, M1052

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance
April 18, 2025

cc: Geraldine French, Acting EARO
Phyllis Adams, DM
Joseph Priore, OIEA Regional Director
Edward Hepburn, DDM
Barney Welch, DDM
Geneva Dennis, DCS
(b) (6) DVMS
(b) (6) DVMO
Andrea Smith, State Director of Meat Inspection
Richard Fife, State Program Manager
(b) (6) TA Program Coordinator
(b) (6) PHV
FO Quarterly Reports