



United States Department of Agriculture

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Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

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CERTIFIED MAIL

October 6, 2023

Ivy Log Meat Processing, LLC  
M1844  
6310 Murphy Highway  
Blairsville, GA 30512  
david@ivylogmeatprocessing.com  
(706) 897-0619

**NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE**

Dear Mr. David Christensen:

On September 26, 2023, 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 Ivy Log Meat Processing, LLC, Est. M1844, located at 6310 Murphy Highway, Blairsville, GA 30512. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313.

On September 27, 2023, you submitted written corrective actions and preventive measures to meet the requirements of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. Your corrective actions and preventive measures included: retraining all slaughter on your Humane Handling Procedures which include documents demonstrating the exact location for bullets to penetrate the brain to ensure the animal being stunned is insensible; conduct a review to ensure the proper stunning equipment is readily available during slaughter operations; construct a squeeze chute to ensure smaller livestock, such as hogs, are held and unable to move during the knocking process; you ordered a captive bolt to deliver consistent, accurate stuns and it will be delivered on October 4, 2023; you will implement a program to check your stunning equipment to ensure proper function for each slaughter.

On September 28, 2023, FSIS determined that the proffered corrective actions

and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to properly address the inhumane handling incident and clarification was requested. Specifically, FSIS requested: a copy of your Humane Handling Procedures used to restrain your On September 29, 2023, FSIS determined that the employees including documents demonstrating proper shot placement for stunning livestock and a copy of the record used to document that your employees were restrained; provide information pertaining to what you determined based your review to ensure that the proper equipment is readily available during slaughter operations; provide a date regarding when the squeeze shoot will be installed and explain how smaller livestock such as hogs will be restrained prior to the squeeze shoot being installed; clarify what specific stunning activities will be monitored by plant management; provide a copy of the record that will be used to document monitoring of stunning activities; the frequency of monitoring these activities for two weeks is not adequate; what device(s) will be used to stun livestock until the captive bolt device is received?; provide a copy of the material that will be used to train your employees in the proper use of a captive bolt; provide a copy of the record documenting your employees have been properly trained in the use of a captive bolt; and provide a copy of the record that will be used to document monitoring of your stunning equipment for proper function for each slaughter day.

On September 28, 2023, you submitted your second response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions. Your response included: use of a .357 magnum pistol to stun a large sow until the captive bolt is received; the sow will be restrained in the cattle chute; all inspected hog slaughter will be suspended until a you determine your stunning procedures will effectively stun all animals; the suspension will continue until a restraining device is installed for hogs and small livestock; you will examine the hogs skull by splitting it open to determine what went wrong during the stunning process; and you will monitor each and every stun during the next 4 months to ensure documented training was effective.

On September 28, 2023, you submitted your third response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective action. As part of your reassessment, you determined; the use of .22 log rifle pistol resulted in inaccurate shots causing unnecessary pain and suffering to the hog being stunned; and the hog was shot with a .357 magnum pistol as soon as possible rendering it unconscious. To eliminate the cause you will: start with documented retraining of all slaughter employees to follow you're your Humane Handling Program with specific documents showing the exact locations for livestock to receive an effective stun; a copy of the employees and the retraining material used will be provided to FSIS; the captive bolt device has been ordered and is expected to arrive on October 6, 2023; the captive bolt will be used to stun most livestock slaughtered; larger animals such as bulls or large sows will be stunned using a .357 magnum pistol; a restraining device for hogs is being constructed and will be installed by October 6, 2023; all stunning will be monitored for each animal slaughtered for the next four (4) months; stunning equipment will be maintained and checked prior to each slaughter day; records will be documented on the humane handling forms; your humane handling program will

be updated and forwarded to FSIS via electronic mail to include scanned copies of the retraining material and documents indicating employees understand and have signed accepting the retraining documents.

On September 28, 2023, FSIS determined that the proffered corrective actions and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to properly address the inhumane handling incident and clarification was requested. Specifically, FSIS requested; a copy of your updated Humane Handling Program; a copy of the material used to retrain your employees in proper shot placement; copies of records that will be used as part of your humane handling program; a copy of record used to document the retraining of establishment employees regarding proper shot placement; a copy of the material used to train you employees in proper use of the captive bolt; and a copy of the record used to document employee training in the proper use of the captive bolt.

On September 29, 2023, you submitted your fourth response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective action. As part of your reassessment: you split the head of the hog the was not properly stunned and determined that the bullets from the .22 long rifle pistol did not penetrate the brain thus causing the problem; the .22 long rifle pistol will no longer be used to stun any livestock; you will use a .357 magnum pistol to ensure all animals stunned are insensible until you receive the captive bolt; the captive bolt is scheduled for delivery on October 6, 2023; close evaluation of the captive bolt will be implemented; all stunning activities will be monitored by the plant manager for four (4) months; all employees that stun livestock will be retrained to follow your Humane Handling Program; and you will document that the employees have been retrained in proper shot placement for stunning livestock.

On September 29, 2023, FSIS determined that the proffered corrective actions and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to properly address the inhumane handling incident and clarification was requested. Specifically, FSIS requested; a copy of your updated Humane Handling Program; copies of records that will be used as part of your Humane Handling Program; a copy of record used to document the retraining of establishment employees regarding proper shot placement; and a copy of the record used to document employee training in the proper use of the captive bolt.

On October 5, 2023, you submitted your fifth response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective action. Your response included: a copy of the documentation and links to videos used to retrain your employees in proper shot placement for stunning livestock; links to videos use to train your employees in the use of the captive bolt; a copy of a record documenting employee retraining in shot placement and training in the use of the captive bolt; a picture of the new small animal restraining chute for stunning; and a copy your Humane Handling Program which included copies of the record that would be used to document monitoring of stunning effectiveness.

On October 5, 2023, FSIS determined that the records to be used to document monitoring

of stunning effectiveness were not adequate. Specifically, the records do not provide information regarding the number of animals being killed each day of slaughter; what is being monitored regarding stunning effectiveness (as we discussed the sign of an unconscious animal include; the animal is down and does not exhibit a righting reflex, the animal does not vocalize and the animal does not exhibit tracking eye movement); the time each observation was made; the type of animal being stunned and any identifying marks; the results of monitoring of stunning effectiveness for each animal stunned; if an additional stuns were applied; the type of stunning device used; and the initials or signature of the person performing the monitoring.

On October 5, 2023, you submitted a revised copy of the record to be used to document monitoring of stunning effectiveness.

On October 6, 2023, you were verbally notified by FSIS that the corrective actions and preventive measures met the requirements to place Ivy Log Meat Processing, LLC, Est. M1844, 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.

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.

Mr. David Christensen, Owner  
Ivy Log Meat Processing, LLC, M1844

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance  
October 6, 2023

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

Sincerely,

PHYLLIS Digitally signed  
by PHYLLIS  
ADAMS  
ADAMS Date: 2023.10.06  
13:23:03 -0400

Dr. Phyllis Adams  
District Manager

Mr. David Christensen, Owner  
Ivy Log Meat Processing, LLC, M1844

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance  
October 6, 2023

cc: Karen Hunter, EARO  
Phyllis Adams, DM  
(b) (6), Humane Handling Enforcement Coordinator  
Larry Hortert, OIEA Regional Director  
Edward Hepburn, DDM  
Barney Welch, DDM  
Tracy Bryant, DDM  
(b) (6), SEIAO  
(b) (6), DCS  
(b) (6), DVMS  
(b) (6), FLS  
FO/Quarterly Reports