



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

CERTIFIED MAIL

Office of Field
Operations
Atlanta District Office
100 Alabama St., SW.
Suite 3R90
Atlanta, GA. 30303
Phone: 404-562-5900
Fax: 404-562-5877
Toll Free:
800-282-7005

November 7, 2024

Ms. Kathryn Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Wayne Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Willie Dwight Hobby, Owner (CP)
Towson Cold Storage, Est. M18731
301 South Ridge Ave.
Tifton, GA 31794
towsons1983@gmail.com

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE

Dear Ms. Bell, Mr. Bell and Mr. Hobby:

On November 1, 2024, 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 Towson Cold Storage, Est. 18731, 301 South Ridge Ave., Tifton, GA 31741. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313.

On November 1, 2024, you submitted written corrective actions and preventive measures to meet the requirements of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. In your response you stated: the cause of the event was due to improper shot placement. Your corrective actions and preventive measures included: training your kill floor employees on proper shot placement for stunning livestock which will include hands on training for 90 days moving forward and monthly thereafter; you will verify that the secondary stun gun is present on the kill floor at the start of slaughter operations; you provided a copy of the record that will be used to document this; kill floor employees will be sent home with a video to watch regarding proper stunning techniques; you will perform maintenance on captive bolt gun every two weeks; and you will perform monitoring activities on the kill floor to ensure future compliance with your training on humane handling, and safety, through management oversight.

Ms. Kathryn Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Wayne Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Willie Dwight Hobby, Owner (CP)
Towson Cold Storage, Est. M18731

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance
November 7, 2024

On November 2, 2024, 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: provide a copy of the material used to train your employees in proper shot placement; provide a copy of the record used to document that your employees were trained; clarify what the hands-on training for 90 days will cover; provide a copy of the record that will be used to document hands-on training; provide a copy of a link to the video used to train your employees in proper stunning techniques; a copy of the record documenting that you employees viewed the video; provide a copy of the record that will be used to document maintenance of the captive bolt; clarify what you will be monitoring on the kill floor during slaughter operations to ensure compliance with your training on humane handling; the frequency that monitoring will performed; and provide a copy of the record that will used to document monitoring on the kill floor.

On November 4, 2024, you submitted your second response, in three (3) separate emails, to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions and preventive measures. In these emails included: a link to a Temple Grandin video titled "Improving Cattle Stockmanship" which was used to train your employees in proper shot placement for stunning livestock; a copy of a diagram showing proper shot placement for stunning livestock; you stated that you will send a copy of the record that will be used to document each training session; a link to a (b) (4) video titled "Captive Bolt Stunner Maintenance & Humane Animal Handling Tactics" which was used to train your employees on proper stunning techniques; a draft copy of a record that will be used to document captive bolt maintenance; a link to an eight (8) page document by Temple Grandin titled "How to Determine Insensibility (Unconsciousness) in Cattle, Pigs, and Sheep in Slaughter Plants"; and stated that a written observation of stunning effectiveness for each slaughter day will be attached to the SSOP paperwork.

On November 4, 2024, 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 correct links to the videos you used to train your employees in proper stunning techniques and proper shot placement because the links you sent were to videos that dealt with improving cattle stockmanship, and captive bolt function and maintenance; clarify what you would monitoring to determine signs of effectively stunned livestock; clarify the frequency of monitoring stunning effectiveness; and to provide a copy of the record that will be used to document monitoring of stunning effectiveness.

Ms. Kathryn Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Wayne Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Willie Dwight Hobby, Owner (CP)
Towson Cold Storage, Est. M18731

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance
November 7, 2024

On November 5, 2024, you submitted your third response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions and preventive measures. Your response included two (2) links to attachments associated with your corrective actions and preventive measures which could not be accessed.

On November 5, 2024, 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 resubmit your corrective actions, including attachments, in a format that would enable all information to be accessed.

On November 6, 2024, you attempted to resend your corrective actions, but the format used was such the attachments still could not be accessed. Subsequently, FSIS requested that your corrective actions be resubmitted in a format that would allow the attachments to be accessed.

On November 6, 2024, you resubmitted your third response in a format that allowed attachments to be accessed. Your response included: you identified the cause of the ineffective stunning as improper shot placement; you will retrain and provide a copy the record documenting that your employees were retrained on proper shot placement; you provided a link to a video and a diagram showing proper shot placement that were used to retrain you employees; you will conduct and document weekly training on proper shot placement of your employees for 90 days and then on a monthly basis; you provided a copy of the record that will be use to document weekly training; you will verify and document that a secondary gun is present on the kill floor prior to starting slaughter operations; you provided a copy of the record that will be used to document the secondary gun is on the kill floor; you will monitor and document stunning effectiveness for each animal stunned during the abeyance period; you provided a copy of the record that will be used to record monitoring of stunning effectiveness; you will perform and document maintenance of the captive bolt every two (2) weeks; and you provided a copy of the record that will be used to document captive bolt maintenance.

On November 7, 2024, 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 copy of the record used to document that your employees were retrained in proper shot placement.

Ms. Kathryn Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Wayne Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Willie Dwight Hobby, Owner (CP)
Towson Cold Storage, Est. M18731

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance
November 7, 2024

November 7, 2024, you provided a copy of the record documenting that your employees were retrained in proper shot placement.

On November 7, 2024, you were verbally notified by (b) (6), District Veterinary Medical Specialist (DVMS), that the corrective actions and preventive measures met the requirements to place Towson Cold Storage, Est. M18731 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.

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

Ms. Kathryn Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Wayne Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Willie Dwight Hobby, Owner (CP)
Towson Cold Storage, Est. M18731

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance
November 7, 2024

Sincerely,

PHYLLI
ADAMS
Digitally signed
by PHYLLIS
ADAMS
Date: 2024.11.07
15:17:41 -05'00'

Dr. Phyllis Adams
District Manager

Ms. Kathryn Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Wayne Bell, Owner (CP)
Mr. Willie Dwight Hobby, Owner (CP)
Towson Cold Storage, Est. M18731

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance
November 7, 2024

cc: Sherri Johnson, 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
Geneva Dennis, DCS
(b) (6), DVMS
(b) (6), FLS/GDA
FO/Quarterly Reports