



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

CERTIFIED MAIL

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October 28, 2024

Mr. Majdi Amria, Owner
Pyramid Trading, LLC, Est. M2703
68 Querry Rd.
Newnan, GA 30263
majdi@southernmeatsupplies.com

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE

Dear Mr. Amria:

On October 17, 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 Pyramid Trading, LLC, Est. M2703, 68 Querry Rd., Newnan, GA 30263. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313.

On October 18, 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 incident occurred as a result of a miscalculation in reference to the particular animal size in relation to the expected accommodation and application of the knock box." Your corrective actions and preventive measures included: you will conduct an intensified staff training session in slaughter procedures and humane handling on Saturday, October 19, 2024, which will include a comprehensive instruction pertaining to the incident, as well as all peripheral aspects; and you will implement use of a mobile gate system within the knock box to accommodate smaller animals when necessary to ensure such an event does not occur again.

On October 18, 2024, PSIS determined that the 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: clarify the nature and cause of the incident; provide a copy of the material used to retrain your staff in slaughter procedures and humane handling which would include proper shot placement when stunning an animal; and provide a copy of the record used to document retraining of your employees; provide a copy of the record that will be used to document monitoring of stunning effectiveness; to clarify the parameters, associated with animal

size and species, that will be used to determine when the mobile gate system will be used; and to provide a copy of the record that will be used to document when the mobile gate system is used.

On October 22, 2024, you submitted your second response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions and preventive measures. In this response you clarified that the cause of the incident was due to improper restraint of the heifer in the kill box, two ineffective stuns with a 9mm handgun and your employee performed the ritual cut on a conscious animal. Your corrective actions and preventive measures included: you trained your employees in humane handling, firearm use and stunning methods; you provided a copy of the records documenting that your employees were trained in humane stunning methods which included proper shot placement, firearm safety and firearm maintenance; you will no longer use a 9mm firearm for stunning; you will use a (b) (4) rifle or (b) (4) slug shotgun for stunning cattle; you will install an adjustable head catch to better accommodate cattle of varying sizes to ensure they are properly restrained in the head catch; you will perform daily monitoring of all stunning operations and animal handling; you will perform weekly animal welfare compliance audits; you will perform daily stunning equipment functionality checks; you will implement use of an incident reporting log to document noncompliance associated with humane handling; and you provided a copy of the records that will be used to document implementation of your corrective actions.

On October 23, 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 diagram that was used to illustrate proper shot placement to effectively stun a bovine; to clarify what part of the head catch will be adjustable regarding the head catch itself or the width &/or length of the knock box; to clarify if the daily monitoring is being implemented for your entire ritual slaughter process or if it is just for cattle being stunned; and to provide a copy of the record that will be used to document weekly animal welfare audits conducted by management.

On October 24, 2024, you submitted your third response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions and preventive measures. In this response you: provided a copy of the diagram that was used to illustrate proper shot placement to effectively stun a bovine; clarified that you would install an adjustable squeeze gate inside the knock box to restrain smaller bovine that pose a problem for stunning and/or restraint; clarified that the daily monitoring being implemented was just for cattle being stunned; and provided a copy of the record that will be used to document weekly animal welfare audits conducted by management.

On October 28, 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 Pyramid Trading, LLC, Est. M32170 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.

Mr. Majdi Amria, Owner
Pyramid Trading, LLC., M2703

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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.

Sincerely,

BARNEY WELCH

Digitally signed by BARNEY WELCH
Date: 2024.10.28 15:49:43 -0400

For
Dr. Phyllis Adams
District Manager

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

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(b) (6), DVMS
(b) (6), FLS
(b) (6), SPHV
PO/Quarterly Reports