



July 12, 2024

Lebanese Butcher Slaughterhouse, Inc.

M31959

241 West Shirley Avenue

Warrenton, Virginia 20186

(b) (6) @gmail.com; (b) (6) @gmail.com

540-347-4178

ELECTRONIC MAIL on July 12, 2024

Attention: Kheder Rababeh (Owner); Samir Rababeh (Manager); Imad Rababeh (Manager); (b) (6)
(HACCP Coordinator)

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION

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) at Lebanese Butcher Slaughterhouse, Inc., M31959, located at 241 West Shirley Avenue, Warrenton, VA 20186. This letter follows verbal notification of the suspension action, provided by (b) (6) (b) (6) Supervisory Public Health Veterinarian (SPHV), to Samir Rababeh, Manager, at approximately 1118 hours on July 11, 2024. This action includes your Slaughter Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) processes employed at your establishment.

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 evidence 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 the regulatory requirements (9 CFR Part 313).

Background/Authority

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

At approximately 1045 hours on Thursday, July 11, 2024, at your establishment, IPP identified an egregious humane handling noncompliance in which IPP identified acts of abuse of livestock. IPP observed an establishment employee drag a conscious lamb approximately 3 ft. - 5 ft. across the floor to the entrance of Pen #1 while attempting to drive other lambs to the kill floor. IPP also observed the same establishment employee pick up and throw 2 lambs approximately 3 ft. – 5 ft. to the entrance of Pen #1. The employee picked the first lamb quickly off the ground and threw it (all 4 legs were in the air) to the pen entrance so that it landed on its hip; the lamb did immediately get back up. The second lamb was picked up in the same manner and thrown, resulted in it landing on its back and taking a few seconds to stand again. IPP informed the establishment manager, Mr. Samir Rababeh, that the observed actions were not compliant with humane handling regulations. After consulting with the Raleigh District Office, IPP informed management of the pending Suspension action and placed US Reject/Retain tag # B38203472 on the knock box, in accordance with 9 CFR 313.50(c). Official notification of the pending enforcement action was given to Mr. Rababeh at approximately 1118 hours.

This incident is noncompliant with 9 CFR 313.2(a), which says, in part: *“Driving of livestock from the unloading ramps to the holding pens and from the holding pens to the stunning area shall be done with a minimum of excitement and discomfort to the animals.”* The incident is also noncompliant with 9 CFR 313.2(d)(2), which says, in part: *“The dragging of disabled animals and other animals unable to move, while conscious, is prohibited.”* These findings are considered egregious because the employee inflicted unnecessary pain and/or suffering to the lambs and because the employee dragged a conscious animal.

On September 9, 2004, FSIS published *"Humane Handling and Slaughter Requirements and the Merits of a Systematic Approach to Meet Such Requirements"* in the Federal Register (69 FR 54625). On September 24, 2020, FSIS released FSIS Directive 6900.2 Revision 3, entitled, *"Humane Handling and Slaughter of Livestock."* Additionally, on October 23, 2013, FSIS introduced new guidance, titled *"FSIS Compliance Guide for a Systematic Approach to the Humane Handling of Livestock."* Within the guidance material is information intended to better ensure the humane treatment of livestock presented for slaughter. The guidance material provides a set of practices designed to minimize excitement, discomfort, and accidental injury regarding the humane handling of livestock to include the four components of a robust systematic approach to humane handling.

Kheder Rababeh, Owner
Lebanese Butcher Slaughterhouse, M31959

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This establishment does not have a Robust Systematic Approach for Humane Handling; therefore, no regulatory discretion is warranted, and this Suspension action was initiated.

Summary and 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)(3), 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.

Please provide a written response, inclusive of written corrective action and preventative measures, by addressing the following:

- Evaluate and identify the nature, cause of the incident.
- Describe the specific actions taken to eliminate the cause of the incident and prevent future recurrences.
- Describe specific monitoring activities planned to ensure future compliance.
- Provide any supporting documentation and records maintained and/or associated with the proposed corrective actions and preventative measures.

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 or 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:

Sherri Johnson
Executive Associate for Regulatory Operations
Office of Field Operations
Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture
SB, Room 3154
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250
Email: sherri.johnson@usda.gov
Phone: 202-379-6196

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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:

Dr. Ashley Etue, Acting 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

If you have any questions, please contact Todd Furey via telephone at 919-326-5281 or via electronic mail at todd.furey2@usda.gov. Additionally, you can contact Raleigh District Office at 919-844-8400 or by fax at 844-839-6359.

Sincerely,

ARIAL
GUPTON

Todd Furey
District Manager

Digitally signed by ARIAL
GUPTON
Date: 2024.07.12 10:48:16
-04'00'

Khader Rababeh, Owner
Lebanese Butcher Slaughterhouse, M31959

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cc: S. Johnson, EARO/FO
L. Hortert, RD/CID/OIEA
(b) (6), HHEC/FO
T. Furey, DM/RDO/FO
R. Murphy, DDM/RDO/FO
H. Havens, DDM/RDO/FO
A. Thompson, DDM/RDO/FO
(b) (6) /RDO/FO
(b) (6), DVMS/RDO/FO
(b) (6), SELAO/RDO/FO
(b) (6), FLS/RDO/FO
(b) (6) seller, SPHV/RDO/FO
(b) (6), SPHV/RDO/FO
Quarterly Enforcement Report
Establishment File (Est. M31959)