



United States Department of Agriculture

---

Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

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

CERTIFIED MAIL

October 25, 2023

Nettles Beef Processing, Inc.  
M44200  
147 S.W. County Road 240  
Lake City, FL 32025  
[nettlesbeef@yahoo.com](mailto:nettlesbeef@yahoo.com)  
(368) 397-5053

**NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE**

Dear Mr. William J. Nettles:

On October 12, 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 Nettles Beef Processing, Inc., Est. M4420, located at 147 S.W. County Road 240, Lake City, FL 32025. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313.

On October 19, 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: training employees, installing a new restraining cage, addressing firearm selection and stunning location based on species/breed/age/sex, and reviewing and modifying the humane handling plan.

On October 23, 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 clarification regarding: the exact cause of the failed stunning attempts, how the new restraining cage will better restrain rams and when it will be installed, and further details regarding employee training (copy of training materials, sketches used for training of proper firearm placement on animal head, and records documenting training).

Records supporting monitoring of stunning effectiveness are also needed. The records currently do not provide information regarding the number of animals being killed each day of slaughter; what is being monitored regarding stunning effectiveness; 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 any additional stuns were applied; the type of stunning device used; and the initials or signature of the person performing the monitoring.

On October 23, 2023, you submitted your second response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions. Your response included: improper headshot positioning as the cause for the failed stunning attempts, a description of the features and maintenance of the new restraining cage, a copy of employee training materials, sketches used for training of proper firearm placement on animal head, and records documenting training.

On October 23, 2023, you also submitted a revised copy of the record to be used to document monitoring of stunning effectiveness. This record includes the number of animals being killed each day of slaughter; what is being monitored regarding stunning effectiveness (open eyes, limp tongue, no arching of the neck, no twitching of the nose, floppy head, no vocalizing); 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 any additional stuns were applied; the type of stunning device used and caliber; and the initials or signature of the person performing the monitoring.

On October 24, 2023, FSIS determined that the proffered corrective actions and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to properly address the inhumane handling incident and additional clarification was requested. Specifically, FSIS requested clarification regarding how the new restraining cage is able to accommodate small ruminants and what firearms will be used primarily and secondarily and for which species.

On October 24, 2023, you submitted your third response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions. Your response included: specific size adjustments on the new restraining cage; a description of how employees determine the appropriate firearm based on species; a statement that if a mis-stun is due to firearm, a change in firearm or cartridge will be used for the secondary shot.

On October 24, 2023, you were verbally notified by FSIS that the corrective actions and preventive measures met the requirements to place Nettles Beef Processing, LLC, Est. M44200, 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.

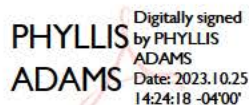
Please be further advised that the suspension of inspection at your establishment will remain in abeyance pending verification by FSIS that your proposed corrective actions and preventive measures have been implemented and are effective in ensuring future regulatory compliance and preventing the inhumane 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.

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

Sincerely,

 Digitally signed  
by PHYLLIS  
ADAMS  
Date: 2023.10.25  
14:24:18 -0400

Dr. Phyllis Adams  
District Manager

Mr. William J. Nettles, Owner  
Nettles Beef Processing, Inc., M44200

Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance  
October 25, 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  
(b) (6), SPHV  
FO/Quarterly Reports