



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Office of Field
Operations

Atlanta District Office

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May 2, 2023

Towson Cold Storage
EST. M18731
301 South Ridge Ave.
Tifton, GA 31794
(b) (6) @gmail.com
(229) 388-3242

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE

Dear Mr. Bill Towson:

On April 24, 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 Towson Cold Storage, Est. M18731 located at 301 South Ridge Ave., Tifton, GA 31794. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313.

On April 25, 2023, you submitted written corrective actions and preventive measures to meet the requirements of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. Based on your assessment, you determined that inadequate training for an animal of this size and temperament led to the animal's over-excitation, and a lack of a weapon of the proper caliber size and condition led to the animal needing multiple stunning attempts before rendering the hog unconscious. Your corrective actions included: evaluating hogs for size, sex, and aggressiveness before unloading; training employees on how to handle larger hogs more effectively; maintaining and recording maintenance of firearms and captive bolt guns; using a 22 caliber rifle as the primary stunning method for larger hogs and a 30/30 rifle as the secondary method; searching for a method to restrain big hogs in the knocking box; and retraining and monitoring employees in proper stunning methods.

On May 1, 2023, FSIS determined that the proffered corrective actions and preventive measures submitted were not adequate to properly address the inhumane handling incident and further clarification was requested. Specifically, FSIS requested clarification regarding the description of events not matching

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IPP's observations of the number of stunning attempts; explaining why a 22 caliber rifle instead of a larger caliber firearm was used in this event; planning to use the same 22 caliber rifle that caused this incident as the primary stunning method for larger hogs; verifying if a second stunning device will be in the immediate area during knocking; determining how often firearms will be maintained, determining what qualifies as a 'bigger' hog for your system; creating a more specific plan for a method to restrain large hogs; and verifying if the employee training will include how to determine unconsciousness and the source of this training.

On May 1, 2023, you submitted your second response to provide clarification to your proffered corrective actions. Your response included: a description of the events that included six stunning attempts, five with the 22 caliber rifle and one with a captive bolt gun; an explanation that there were not any firearms of bigger caliber on hand at the time and the 22 caliber rifle was inadequately cleaned and had a faulty spring; having both a 22 caliber rifle and 30/30 rifle on the kill floor for larger hogs and involving management to determine the appropriate firearm to use; creating a Captive Bolt and Firearm Maintenance Log for documenting maintenance and cleaning of firearms after each use and captive bolts monthly; specifying that 'bigger' hogs are those over 500 lbs; a diagram of the planned restraining gate to be implemented by May 30, 2023; and stating that a training session with a signed training log will be held for the next 10 kills and then will be held monthly. You provided a copy of the updated Robust Systematic Approach to Humane Handling Protocol, a copy of the updated Humane Slaughter Monitoring Report, a record documenting employees that were retrained, a copy of the Captive Bolt/Firearm Maintenance Log, and a diagram of the planned restraining gate.

On May 2, 2023, you were verbally notified by FSIS 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 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.

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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,

(b) (6)

Dr. Phyllis Adams
District Manager

cc: Melissa Moore, EARO
Alexander Domesle, Acting EARO
Phyllis Adams, DM
(b) (6) Humane Handling Enforcement Coordinator
Scott Ehle, Acting OIEA Regional Director
Edward Hepburn, DDM
Barney Welch, DDM
Tracy Bryant, DDM
(b) (6) SEIAO
(b) (6) DCS
(b) (6) DVMS
(b) (6) TA Coordinator
(b) (6) IIC at M18731
FO/Quarterly Reports

Establishment Name: Towson Cold Storage May 1, 2023

Establishment Number: 18731M

Week ending: _____

On April 24, 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 Towson Cold Storage, Est. 18731M located at 301 South Ridge Ave. Tifton, GA 31794. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313. This Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Verification Plan is designed to verify that the establishment fully implements the corrective actions and preventive measures proffered in response to the Notice of Suspension (NOS) issued on May 1, 2023. Inspection personnel and the Atlanta District Office will utilize the Verification Plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the corrective actions in assuring future regulatory compliance. This FSIS Verification Plan identifies the corrective actions, the relevant regulatory requirements, and the PHIS Task under which FSIS officials will verify the implementation and effectiveness of the proposed action plan. The verification plan has the following tasks.

Humane Handling and Slaughter Verification

"Results of Verification" should be recorded as acceptable or unacceptable. Under the heading "Inspection Actions", please document corrective actions taken in compliance with 9 CFR 313. Please explain all unacceptable findings in the "Inspection Actions" column.

Items to Verify	Results of Verification Acceptable (A) or Unacceptable (U)	Inspection Actions List actions taken if Unacceptable.
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<u>Livestock Humane Handling Verification</u> <u>Task</u> 9 CFR 313 A) Verify all employees handling live animals have been re-trained for humane handling techniques		
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<p>including the use of raddle paddles, electric sticks and other devices use to move livestock. Verify once.</p> <p>B) Verify firearms and handheld captive bolt (HHCB) are cleaned and maintained before each slaughter date. Note: Handheld captive bolts (monthly) and firearms daily after use. Verify records each slaughter day.</p> <p>C) Verify the establishment creates a monitoring record for consciousness. This document will include the signature, date, verification of knock placement, no rhythmic, no righting reflex, no tracking eye movement, no vocalization, and proper stick. (CFR 313.15). Verify once</p> <p>D) Verify that each employee responsible for knocking or monitoring HH activity is trained to determine unconsciousness for all species slaughtered at this establishment. Verify weekly.</p> <p>E) Verify that each animal is unconscious by direct observation and record review. PHIS HATS Category VIII. Verify daily.</p> <p>F) Verify that there is a secondary stunning firearm or captive bolt in the immediate area. Verify daily at each knock. Verify that a 30/30 caliber rifle is specifically available s as back-up for larger animals.</p> <p>G) Verify swine larger than five hundre (500) pounds are held separately in pens. Verify daily.</p>		
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<p>H) Verify that for the next 10 kills, a training session with completed training records, is done prior to kill. Each slaughter day.</p> <p>I) Verify that this training is performed once per month after the 10th session. Once per month</p> <p>J) Verify all firearm and captive bolt maintenance is documented in the Captive Bolt and Firearm Maintenance Log. Daily</p> <p>K) Verify animals are allowed to calm down in the knock box before stunning/shooting. Daily</p>		
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COMMENTS AND RECOMENDATIONS

Two Week Period Ending: _____

IIC Comments:

Continue Verification Process: _____

Suspension or Reinstatement of Suspension: _____

No Further Action / Close with a Letter of Warning: _____

IIC Signature _____

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