



Food Safety and  
Inspection Service

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Office of Field Operations

May 17, 2023

Philadelphia District  
Mellon Independence  
Center,  
701 Market Street Suite  
4100-A  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Mr. Mark Zimmerman, Vice President  
**Hoffer's Ligonier Valley Packing, inc. (Est. M4025)**  
582 Darlington Road  
Ligonier, Pennsylvania 15658  
[hofferpacking@gmail.com](mailto:hofferpacking@gmail.com)  
(724) 238-7112

**NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE**

Attention: Mr. Zimmerman,

This letter serves as official notification by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of our decision to place the suspension action at **Hoffer's Ligonier Valley Packing, inc. (Est. M4025)**, located at 582 Darlington Road Ligonier, Pennsylvania 15658 in abeyance. This letter follows verbal notification of the abeyance action, provided by Mr. George Slobodjian, Deputy District Manager (DDM) to establishment management personnel, (b) (6) at approximately 1505 hours on Wednesday, May 17, 2023.

The decision to institute the abeyance was made in accordance with the Rules of Practice, Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (9 CFR) Part 500.5 part (e).

In response to the Notice of Suspension (NOS), you submitted proposed corrective actions and preventative measures on May 17, 2023. On May 17, 2023, FSIS requested clarification to those responses. On May 17, 2023 you submitted responses to the clarification request(s) which included corrective actions and program updates.

**Your corrective and preventative measures include but are not limited to:**

1. Provided a copy of the "HLVP Robust Handling plan" with updates that state:
  - a. 1 market hog will be brought to the stun box at a time to allow for proper head and chest stunning as well as timely shackling and bleeding of the market hog.
  - b. For swine, the captive bolt will be the secondary backup in case of electric stunner malfunction. The backup captive bolt shall be in a watertight box around the half wall by stun box (directly next to location of primary captive bolt (between stuns) and ammunition). This area is essentially located at the rear of stun

box with a block pillar separating the stun box from location of captive bolt guns. 6-8 feet from head of stun box.

- c. Roaster swine, under 100 pounds, classify as small animals and can still have more than one (roaster swine) in the stunning box.
  - d. Unconsciousness: The stunner or bleeder shall check for unconsciousness on every stunned animal. Captive bolt stunned animals shall be checked for immediate fall to ground, corneal reflex, independent blinking, vocalization, and any attempt to right itself. Electrically stunned animals shall be checked for an immediate fall to ground following the electrical stun, no eye tracking or corneal response, the head is limp, no response to stimuli (touching on the sides), the animal, while potentially kicking, will not attempt to stand or have any coordinated movements. If there are signs of Returning to Consciousness, Immediate Corrective Action shall be taken, and the animal shall be given a Security Stun.
2. Only employees trained in stunning shall operate stunning equipment AND hoist control during electric stunning.
  3. All swine will be head and chest stunned with the electrical stunning device.
  4. Establishment will institute two (2) separate training logs, on an annual basis, one (1) [training] will be for all employees who work the slaughter floor, which will be general humane handling procedures for moving animals through pens and in alley ways. The second will be for stunning personnel which at this time will include (b) (6), Mark Zimmerman, and (b) (6). Additional employees may be added to this list at another time. These are the only three (3) employees who have training and plant permission to stun and therefore to operate bleed hoist during electric stunning. The reason for hoist control being limited to the above 3 employees during electric stunning is due to the specific monitoring that must be performed while electrically stunning. Therefore, if the stunner feels a security stun is required, he shall maintain control of the hoist from the time the animal is first stunned until the animal is bled.

FSIS has carefully reviewed your responses and made the decision to place the NOS in abeyance. FSIS has designed a Verification Plan (VP), and Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) will use it to monitor and verify that you have effectively implemented your proposed actions. The VP identifies your corrective actions based on your responses, the relevant regulatory requirements, the tasks IPP will use to conduct verification activities, and the times that you identified. IPP will continue to ensure all humane handling/stunning regulatory requirements of 9 CFR Part 313 are in regulatory compliance. We have attached a copy of the VP to assist you as a reference during the Agency's verification activities.

A final decision relative to this enforcement action will be determined based on your establishment's ability to execute and comply with your proffered corrective actions and all applicable regulatory requirements. Your establishment's failure to meet the


conditions of this abeyance may result in additional regulatory and/or administrative actions in accordance with the Rules of Practice 9 CFR Part 500.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact Mr. George Slobodjian, DDM, via electronic mail at [george.slobodjian@usda.gov](mailto:george.slobodjian@usda.gov) or by telephone at (267) 807-7546. Additionally, you can contact the Philadelphia District Office at (800) 637-6681 or by fax at (215) 597-4217.

Sincerely,

**GEORGE  
SLOBODJIAN**

Mr. Jason Orlando  
District Manager

 Digitally signed by GEORGE  
SLOBODJIAN  
Date: 2023.05.17 15:36:45 -0400

**Hoffer's Ligonier Valley Packing, inc. (Est. M4025) Verification Plan  
May 17, 2023**

ESTABLISHMENT ACTION PLAN	9 CFR REGULATION	HUMANE HANDLING VERIFICATION CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
<p><b>1A.</b> Establishment management has updated the HLVP Robust Handling plan. A copy of the plan will be kept on file, and available for IPP review.</p> <p><b>1B.</b> Establishment personnel monitor their humane handling procedures and document the Humane Handling Record checklist weekly. A copy of these records will be kept on file, and available for IPP review.</p>	<p>313.30 313.15 313.16 313.2</p>	<p>Category IX – Conscious Animals on the Rail</p>	<p><b>1A.</b> Upon implementation, May 18, 2023.</p> <p><b>1B.</b> Upon implementation, May 18, 2023 and weekly thereafter.</p>
<p><b>2A.</b> Training log submitted for all employees who work the slaughter floor, which will confirm the general humane handling procedures for moving animals through pens and in alley ways.</p> <p><b>2B.</b> Training log submitted for stunning personnel only, which includes (b) (6), Mark Zimmerman, and (b) (6) at this time. Additional establishment personnel may be added but must receive training and that training will be documented.</p> <p>* A copy of the training log(s) will be kept on file, and available for IPP review.</p>	<p>313.30 313.2</p>	<p>Category IX – Conscious Animals on the Rail</p>	<p><b>2A and 2B.</b> Upon implementation, May 18, 2023 and as establishment staffing changes occur.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> For swine greater than 100 pounds, one hog will be brought to the stun box at a time</p>	<p>313.30 313.2</p>	<p>Category IX – Conscious Animals on the Rail</p>	<p><b>3.</b> Upon implementation, May 18, 2023, and for each swine slaughtered</p>
<p><b>4.</b> Each market hog is electrically stunned via first the head and then the chest. Timely shackling and bleeding of the animal is performed thereafter. Electrically stunned animals shall be checked for an immediate fall to ground following the electrical stun, no</p>	<p>313.30 313.2</p>	<p>Category IX – Conscious Animals on the Rail</p>	<p><b>4.</b> Upon implementation, May 18, 2023, and for each swine slaughtered</p>

eye tracking or corneal response, the head is limp, no response to stimuli (touching on the sides), the animal, while potentially kicking, will not attempt to stand or have any coordinated movements. If there are signs of Returning to Consciousness, Immediate Corrective Action shall be taken, and the animal shall be given a Security Stun.			
<b>5.</b> Backup stunning equipment for market hogs is the electric stunner, with captive bolt gun as secondary backup. The captive bolt is immediately available to the stunning operator in case of electric stunner malfunction	313.30 313.2 313.15	Category IX – Conscious Animals on the Rail	<b>5.</b> Upon implementation, May 18, 2023, and for each swine slaughtered
<b>6.</b> Only employees trained in stunning swine shall operate stunning equipment <u>AND</u> hoist control during electric stunning	313.30 313.2	Category IX – Conscious Animals on the Rail	<b>6.</b> Upon implementation, May 18, 2023, and for each swine slaughtered

**Humane handling verification every slaughter operation day to verify the adequacy and effectiveness of the establishment’s compliance with the humane handling regulatory requirements of 9 CFR Part 313.**

**\*Inspection Program Personnel will review all monitoring, verification, and corrective action records to verify procedures are being conducted as prescribed and at the specified frequency.**

**Cc:**

Mr. Alexander Domesle, Acting EARO, FSIS, OFO, Washington, DC

Ms. Melissa Moore, EARO, FSIS, OFO, Washington, DC

Mr. Joseph Priore, RD, FSIS, OIEA, Northeast Region

Mr. Jason Orlando, DM, FSIS, OFO, Philadelphia District Office

Dr. Chelsea Buckley, DDM, FSIS, OFO, Philadelphia District Office

Mr. George Slobodjian, DDM, FSIS, OFO, Philadelphia District Office

Mr. Joseph Schein, DDM, FSIS, OFO, Philadelphia District Office

(b) (6) SEIAO OFO Philadelphia District Office

(b) (6) , DCS, OFO, Philadelphia District Office

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