PHV Refresher Training: Consciousness And Stunning
Purpose for PHV Refresher training

PHVs must be confident they can determine whether or not an animal is conscious
Definitions

Unconscious:

- Not awake or aware;
- Not able to respond to stimuli;
- Not able to respond to environment

Unconscious = Insensible
Definitions

Stunning: The action of causing unconsciousness in an animal; performed by one of the four approved methods

- Chemical
  - Carbon Dioxide (9 CFR 313.5)
- Mechanical Captive Bolt (9 CFR 313.15)
- Mechanical Gunshot (9 CFR 313.16)
- Electrical
  - Electric current (9 CFR 313.30)
Definitions

**Stunning Attempt:** Application of one of the four methods of stunning with the intent to render the animal unconscious.

**Effective Stun:** Successfully making an animal unconscious throughout shackling, sticking, and bleeding.
Definitions

Ineffective or Failed Stunning Attempt: A stunning attempt that makes contact with the animal but does not make the animal unconscious
Definitions

**Security Stun/Knock**: An additional stunning action applied after the effective stun renders the animal unconscious

- It is applied at the discretion of the plant
- It is also sometimes called a Safety Stun, Assurance Stun, or Double Stun
Immediate, Effective Corrective Action:
A plant employee instantly makes an ineffectively stunned animal unconscious

- Without hesitation
- With immediately available back-up stunning device
- Without being instructed by IPP
Definitions

Immediate, Effective Corrective Action

- Not defined by a specific elapsed time
- Timely and effective in rendering the animal unconscious
- Consider access to animal, animal movement, adequate placement of stunning device
Signs of an Unconscious Animal

- Collapses or falls after being stunned
- No menace response
- Floppy ears, head & neck; Limp tail

Menace response is the reflex blinking that occurs at the rapid approach of an object.
Floppy, Loose Head
Limp Tail
An unconscious animal may display the following signs

- Rhythmic breathing
- Eye reflex in response to mechanical (touch) stimulus
- Spontaneous natural eye blinks without touching the eye or eye area (in isolated cases)
Unconscious Animals

Observations of these signs should not automatically result in taking a regulatory control action.

- These should trigger further evaluation to determine if the animal is conscious.
- These signs need to be carefully assessed and interpreted, as they are indications that the animal may be regaining consciousness or that the stunning was ineffective.
- They are not, in and of themselves, a definitive determination that the animal is conscious and able to feel pain.
Signs of a Conscious Animal

Stands intentionally after stunning attempt

CONSCIOUS ANIMAL

Eye tracking & reacts to surroundings

Righting reflex +/- Vocalization
Righting Reflex
Enforcement

Regulatory actions are only taken when:

- An animal remains conscious after an ineffective stun
- An animal returns to consciousness after an effective stun
Examples of Enforcement

Missed Stunning Attempt followed by Effective Stun

- The animal is stunned with a minimum of excitement and discomfort
  - **No Action** at the discretion of the IPP

- The Missed Stunning Attempt causes excessive excitement and discomfort to the animal
  - **NR** at the discretion of the IPP
Examples of Enforcement

Ineffective or Failed Stunning Attempt

- With Immediate Corrective Action (one second stun) that makes the animal unconscious
  - NR

- No Immediate Corrective Action or Delayed Corrective Action
- The animal remains sensible after multiple stunning attempts
- Back-up methods fail
- Animal returns to consciousness before fully bled out/dead
  - Egregious Inhumane Event - Suspension or NOIE
Examples of Enforcement

IPP should not take enforcement action for an unconscious animal that shows signs of returning to sensibility, if it either dies or is re-stunned by the plant before sensibility occurs.
Questions?