



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Raleigh District Office

6020 Six Forks Road
Raleigh, NC. 27609
Voice: 919-844-8400
Fax: 1-844-839-6359

December 9, 2021

EMAIL

(b) (6)

Gunnoe Sausage Company, Inc., Est. M6541
3989 Cifax Road
Goode, VA 24556

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION

Dear (b) (6)

This letter confirms the verbal notification given on December 9, 2021, at approximately 0710 hours, by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Inspection Program Personnel (IPP) of the suspension of the assignment of inspectors for slaughter operations at Gunnoe Sausage Company, Inc., Est. M6541, herein after referred to as “your establishment.” This action was initiated in accordance with Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (9 CFR) 500.3, after FSIS determined that your establishment failed to slaughter and handle animals humanely.

Background/Authority

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) (Title 21 of the United States Code {21 U.S.C.} 603 et seq.) provides that for the purpose of preventing the inhumane slaughtering of livestock, the Secretary shall cause to be made, by inspectors appointed for that purpose, an examination and inspection of the methods by which cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equines are slaughtered and handled in connection with slaughter in the slaughtering establishments inspected under this Act. The Secretary may refuse to provide inspection to a new slaughtering establishment or may cause slaughtering to be temporarily suspended at a slaughtering establishment if the Secretary finds that any cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equines have been slaughtered or handled in connection with slaughter at such establishments by any method not in accordance with sections 1901 to 1906 of Title 7 until the establishment furnishes assurances, satisfactory to the Secretary, that all slaughtering and handling in connection with slaughter of livestock shall be in accordance with such a method.

The Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.) 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.

Findings/Basis for Suspension

At approximately 0650 hours on Thursday, December 9, 2021, at Gunnoe Sausage Company, Inc., Est. M6541, IPP identified an egregious humane handling non-compliance in which a sow regained consciousness after being stunned and stuck for bleeding. IPP observed the second sow of the day being stunned via electrical stunning and then placed on a platform where it was stuck for bleeding purposes. During these activities, the sow showed no signs of being conscious, so the employee returned to the knock box to stun other sows. Before the second sow was shackled, IPP and the establishment employee noticed that the animal had positioned itself in sternal recumbency (i.e., had righted itself) and was blinking, indicating that the sow had regained consciousness. The employee immediately returned to the sow and re-stuck it, after which the sow was allowed to exsanguinate and expire. IPP applied US Retain/Reject Tag #A4592499 to the knock box to prevent further slaughter of livestock; this is in accordance with 9 CFR 313.50(c). The IPP notified establishment personnel of the suspension of the assignment of inspection at approximately 0710 hours.

This incident represents a violation of 9 CFR 313.30(a)(4), which states “The stunned animal shall remain in a state of surgical anesthesia through shackling, sticking, and bleeding.” This incident is considered egregious because the animal regained consciousness after stunning and sticking, and because the employee made cuts to a conscious animal. Because the establishment has no documented systematic approach for humane handling, the Raleigh District Office (RDO) is issuing a Suspension Without Prior Notification, in accordance with regulatory authority granted in 9 CFR 500.3(b).

The suspension action will remain in effect until you provide the Raleigh District Office with adequate written assurances, including corrective actions and further planned preventive measures, to assure that livestock at your establishment are slaughtered humanely. In order to resume inspected operations, you must submit corrective actions to my attention at the District Office. These corrective actions should include at a minimum the following:

1. Identify the assessment process used to determine the nature and cause of the noncompliances.
2. Identify what the assessment revealed as the likely cause of the system failure.
3. Describe the specific actions that will be taken to eliminate the cause of the failures.
4. Describe the future monitoring activities you will use to ensure that changes are implemented and are effective.

You are reminded that, as an operator of a federally inspected plant, you are expected to comply with FSIS regulations and to take appropriate corrective actions to prevent inhumane handling of livestock 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. Please also be advised that you have the right to appeal this matter.

In accordance with 9 CFR 500.5(a)(5), you may appeal this action by contacting:

Sherry Johnson
Executive Associate for Regulatory Operations
Office of Field Operations
Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 3161, South Building
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: (202) 205-0001

In addition, you may also request a hearing regarding this determination pursuant to FSIS' Rules of Practice (9 CFR 500.). The rules of Practice were published in the Federal Register, Vol. 64, No. 228, on November 29, 1999. As specified in Section 500.5(d), 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, you should contact:

Scott C. Safian, Branch Chief
Enforcement Operations Branch
Office of Investigation, Enforcement and Audit
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Stop Code 3753, PP3, Cubicle 9-235-A
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250
Voice: (202) 418-8872
Fax: (202) 245-5097

It is our hope that this matter can be resolved quickly. If you have any questions, you may call me at 919-208-2945 or contact me via email at todd.furey2@usda.gov. You may also contact Dr. Arial Thompson, Deputy District Manager, at 919-208-2946. We urge your cooperation and voluntary compliance.

Sincerely,

ROGER MURPHY

Digitally signed by ROGER
MURPHY
Date: 2021.12.09 11:00:28 -05'00'

Todd Furey
District Manager
Raleigh, NC

cc:

P. Bronstein, AA/FO

H. Sidrak, DAA/FO

S. Johnson, EARO/FO

P. Wolseley, EARO/FO

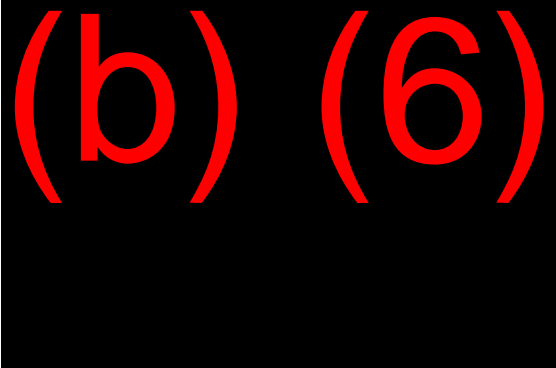
S. Safian, ELD/OIEA

L. Hortert, RD/CID/OIEA

R. Murphy, DDM/RDO/FO

M. Roling, DDM/RDO/FO

A. Thompson, DDM/RDO/FO



Quarterly Enforcement Report
Establishment File (Est. M6541)