



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
Inspection Service

Office of Field
Operations

Atlanta District Office

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Certified mail

February 28, 2022

Ms. Kathrine Jones, Co-Owner
Ms. Jeanne Doyle, Co-Owner
Palmetto Fresh Meats
Est. M47715
403 Jordanville Road
Aynor, South Carolina 29511

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HELD IN ABEYANCE

Dear Ms. Jones and Ms. Doyle:

On February 17, 2022, 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 Palmetto Fresh Meats., Est. M47715, located at 403 Jordanville Road Aynor, SC 29511. This action was based on your establishment's failure to handle livestock humanely according to 9 CFR Part 313.

On February 22, 2022 (at 2:50 pm), 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 only one employee had been responsible for knocking, checking, and sticking the animal which caused the employee to rush. Additionally, in the days prior to this incident, you had installed a new head catch but the head catch was set too wide which allowed the animal to retract its head from the restraint. Your corrective actions included: adjusting the head catch, setting it narrower to better secure the animals during knocking; ordering a second captive bolt gun to use as a backup device; having no more than two employees in the pen area where live animals are present (unless there is an emergency); enclosing the knock box to help calm animals; updating your knocking procedure to include that once the animal is restrained, one employee will knock the animal and the second employee will determine if the knock is good or if a backup knock is need; and knocking will be monitored and documented by a trained employee using your new slaughter checklist which will include the date, species, tag number, and step by step list of the slaughter process.

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On February 23, 2022 (at 11:40 am), 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:

1. Providing a copy of procedures that will be implemented to minimize the excitement of animals including monitoring of implementation of the procedures, training of employees and records that will be used to document monitoring and training.
2. Providing documentation pertaining to employee training/retraining associated with proper stunning, including shot placement for the appropriate species of animals being slaughtered and proper restraint of animals in the stun chute.
3. How the presence of both captive bolts on the kill floor will be monitored and what record will be used to document their presence on the kill floor?
4. The frequency that will be used to monitor and record restraint of animals to ensure they are properly restrained prior to stunning; frequency for monitoring the stunning effectiveness of animals and a copy of the records that will be used to document monitoring of proper animal restraint and stunning effectiveness.
5. If the first stun is ineffective, what method will be used to immediately apply a second stun to render the animal unconscious and what records will be used to document this?

On February 23, 2022 (at 2:51 pm), you submitted your second response with additional written corrective actions. You stated: you have enclosed the knock box to help with animal excitement, you have updated your knocking process to include two employees; once the animal is contained the first employee will knock the animal, a trained employee will then determine if the knock is good by using the criteria listed on the Slaughter Checklist (Animal is no longer on its feet, No rhythmic breathing, No corneal reflex); if the first knock was unsuccessful the first employee will knock a second time, followed by another knock test; knocking will be monitored and documented for each animal by a trained employee; and the checklist will include the date, species, tag number and step by step list of the slaughter process.

On February 24, 2022 (at 12:29 pm), FSIS requested further clarification for your submitted corrective actions on February 23, 2022. Specifically, FSIS requested clarification regarding

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1. Your Systematic Approach Plan indicates that the Slaughter Check List will include the criteria for determination of a “good knock”. The criteria listed under *Successful Knock Definition* is not complete.
2. Your Systematic Approach Plan states that the date, species, and tag number will be included on the Slaughter Check List. Please indicate the location of the tag or identification number placement on the Check List.
3. The provided Training document records that two individuals have been trained on 2/23/2022. The source of the training appears to be via YouTube. Please provide copies of the actual training courses.

On February 24, 2022 (at 1:33 pm), you submitted your third response with additional written corrective actions. This response included; a video link used to retrain establishment employees pertaining to animal handling, restraint, stunning, verification of stunning effectiveness, and sticking to bleed the stunned animal; a copy of training material used to retrain employees on captive bolt stunning of livestock; records documenting employee training; and a copy of the revised Slaughter Check List.

On February 24, 2022 (at 2:25 pm), you were verbally notified by the Atlanta District Office that your corrective actions and preventive measures met the requirements to place Palmetto Fresh Meats, Est. M47715, in a Notice of Suspension Held in Abeyance (NOSHA).

Please be further advised that this 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

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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,

PHYLLIS
ADAMS
Digitally signed by
PHYLLIS ADAMS
Date: 2022.02.28
15:18:03 -05'00'

Dr. Phyllis Adams
District Manager

cc: Philip Bronstein, AA/OFO
Hany Sidrak, DAA/OFO
Melissa Moore, EARO/OFO
Scott Safian, EOS/OIEA
Larry Hortert, RD/CID/OIEA

(b) (6)

Barney Welch, DDM/OFO
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