

HUMANE HANDLING *of Livestock*



INTRODUCTION

This booklet was designed to be a guide reviewing regulatory requirements for humane handling of livestock. The Federal Meat Inspection Act, Poultry Products Inspection Act and the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act provide the foundation in the way that the State of Kansas Meat and Poultry Inspection Program regulates the treatment and handling of all livestock that are slaughtered in state inspected establishments. Information found in this guide comes directly from the United State's Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) concerning humane handling and represents the regulations and procedures Kansas inspectors must follow in carrying out their responsibility to ensure humane handling of animals slaughtered under inspection.

BACKGROUND:

Egregious vs. Non-egregious situations

The Code of Federal Regulations clarifies the information given in the acts and is what is used when decisions are made about compliance with humane handling issues. Understanding the difference between egregious and non-egregious is important to effectively make these decisions. An **egregious situation** is any act or condition that results in severe harm to animals. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: stunning of animals and then allowing them to regain consciousness; multiple attempts, especially in the absence of immediate corrective measures, to stun an animal versus a single blow or shot that renders an animal immediately unconscious.

There is no exact definition of a **non-egregious** humane handling event. Whether an event is considered egregious or non-egregious depends on mitigating factors such as the presence of a systematic approach to humane handling plan. If a slaughter establishment prepares and implements a robust systematic plan, this would be clear evidence that the establishment is prepared. The FSIS humane handling compliance guide assists establishment management in how to prepare and implement this type of plan.

There are three steps to creating a Robust Systematic Plan to Humane Handling of Livestock.

1. Conduct an assessment.
2. Create a written plan.
3. Create a recordkeeping system.

The following is a sample Robust Systematic Plan* to Humane Handling of Livestock

Description of our business:

We are a small, family-owned business producing specialty pork products. We typically slaughter one day per week. We raise all of the pigs we slaughter on our near-by family farm and transport them to the official establishment on the day of slaughter in a family-owned livestock trailer. We hold no live swine at the official establishment longer than 10-12 hours. The rear gate of the livestock trailer doubles as the off-loading ramp. We slaughter only healthy swine and sell all unhealthy swine to a local livestock dealer.

Animal Handling Plan:

Live pigs off-load from the livestock trailer directly into one of two open-air holding pens. The pens connect by a gate to a common covered alleyway that leads to the restrainer. All holding pen and alleyway floors are waffled and sloped to facilitate drainage. Holding pens have water troughs. Interior and exterior fence construction is comprised of commercial hog fence panels and gates fastened to metal posts set in concrete. We herd swine with polyethylene sorting panels purchased locally. The restrainer is a manual device. We use electrical stunning to produce cardiac arrest. We have a back-up hand-held captive bolt in case the electrical stunning equipment becomes inoperable. We purchased the restraining and stunning devices through a local supplier. We operate the electrical stunner and captive bolt according to the operator's manuals that came with the equipment. Each stunned pig is shackled, hoisted, cut, and bled before we slaughter the next pig.

Assessment/Reassessment:

We based our initial assessment on the tool (attachment 2) in the FSIS Compliance Guide for a Systematic Approach to the Humane Handling of Livestock. We will reassess our plan as needed based on our monitoring results. We will document any reassessment, and summarize all changes to our plan and records, on the back of our monitoring record. We will list our procedures, monitoring frequencies, and objectives on the monitoring record.

Documentation:

We will record monitoring results on our monitoring record. We will create a record for each day we slaughter pigs. "Whenever the response to a monitoring question is "no" or at other times when a humane handling problem is identified, we will take immediate action to resolve it and document that action on the back of the monitoring record. Responses will follow these principles: 1.) If an animal is severely injured or in distress, we will immediately humanely euthanize; 2.) We will immediately halt or modify our operations when necessary to ensure all animals are handled humanely and not subject FSIS Compliance Guide for a Systematic Approach to the Humane Handling of Livestock Page 19 of 21 to injury or distress; 3.) We will make any necessary repairs to facilities at the earliest possible opportunity. Within 30 days, one of the owners will review the monitoring record, verify any corrective actions, review any reassessment, and record the date verified on the monitoring record. We will maintain all completed monitoring records in the owner's office for one year and then we will destroy them. We will make monitoring records available to FSIS in a timely manner.

**Source USDA FSIS Compliance Guide*

Inspectors and facilities can use the outline below of questions to inspect establishment facilities to ensure they are in compliance to humane handling laws.

ESTABLISHMENT HUMANE HANDLING MONITORING RECORD FOR (ENTER DATE):

Inspect livestock trailer first week of each month

Free from protruding objects and sharp edges	Yes/No
Free from openings that can trap animals' head, feet or leg	Yes/No
Provides good footing	Yes/No

Inspect pens, alleys and gates first week of each month

Free from protruding objects and sharp edges	Yes/No
Free from openings that can trap animal's head, feet or leg	Yes/No
Provides good footing	Yes/No

Inspect restrainer first week of each month

Free from protruding objects and sharp edges	Yes/No
Free from openings that can trap animals' head, feet or leg	Yes/No
Accommodates the size of animal	Yes/No

Monitor handling of animals each day we slaughter

All animals moved at walking pace with minimal excitement or discomfort	Yes/No
All animals restrained and stunned with minimal excitement and discomfort	Yes/No
No animals injured during movement, restraining and stunning	Yes/No
Trough watering devices turned on	Yes/No

Monitor operation of stunner each day we slaughter

Stunning equipment works properly on each animal	Yes/No
Stunning equipment is properly placed on each animal	Yes/No
All animals remain insensible to pain after single application of stunner	Yes/No
All animals remain insensible to pain throughout shackling, hoisting, cutting and bleeding	Yes/No

The following questionnaire is an example of what information an inspector may be asked to provide KDA Meat and Poultry program staff following a humane handling incident.

HUMANE HANDLING INCIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Ask the inspector to go through the entire event beginning at the time the animal enters the stun chute.

2. Take any further details not covered from the inspector's first telling of situation:
 - A. Who was involved?
 - B. Did the animal have any pre-existing conditions or any situations found on ante-mortem?
 - C. What type of animal was involved?
 - D. Was a reject tag applied to stun chute?
 - E. Were there any signs of pain, (such as vocalizing)?
 - F. Do you as inspector believe it was egregious or non-egregious?
 - G. Please give your reasons for your decision.

VERIFICATION OF ESTABLISHMENT HUMANE HANDLING ACTIVITIES

HATS (Humane Activities Tracking System)

The HATS, a system developed by USDA-FSIS, is a way of categorizing humane handling verification activities conducted by both veterinarians and other inspection personnel. It is part of eADRS (electronic Animal Disposition Reporting System) which provides valuable information concerning animal diseases and welfare in the United States.

FSIS records the time spent performing verification activities in HATS. The nine HATS categories address the regulations covering the humane handling and slaughter of livestock.

Inspectors verify the specific facility, handling or slaughter requirements for each of the categories. The adjacent table identifies each HATS category and the verification activities inspectors perform.

HATS Categories

CATEGORY	FSIS VERIFICATION
I. Inclement Weather	Verify how the establishment adapts its facilities and holding practices to inclement weather to ensure the humane handling of animals.
II. Truck Unloading	Verify that the establishment's livestock handling facilities are in proper repair during livestock unloading activities.
III. Water & Feed Availability	Verify the accessibility of water and feed to livestock.
IV. Ante-mortem inspection	Verify the establishment's procedures for humanely handling livestock during ante-mortem inspection of livestock.
V. Suspect & Disabled	Verify that the establishment handles suspect and disabled livestock humanely.
VI. Electric Prod, Alternative Object Use	Verify that the establishment humanely and effectively moves livestock without excessive prodding or the use of sharp objects.
VII. Slips & Falls	Verify that the establishment prevents livestock from slipping and falling due to inadequate footing or improper handling practices.
VIII. Stunning Effectiveness	Verify the establishment's procedures to appropriately and effectively administer stunning methods that are rapid and effective and that produce unconsciousness in the animals before the animal is shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast or struck.
IX. Conscious Animals on the Rail	Verify, after stunning, that livestock remain unconscious before and after they are shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast or stuck.

HATS Verification Tool

The below form is an electronic tool available to Kansas Meat & Poultry inspectors to verify and record violation incidents.

**Kansas Department of Agriculture
Meat & Poultry Inspection
Humane Handling Verification Tool MP-86 (5/27/15)**

Date _____

Estab. Name _____ Estab. No. _____

Auditor _____

Inspector _____

Establishment Humane Handling Plan _____

Stunning Method _____

Total Number of Animals Slaughtered _____

HAT's Category Evaluated

If category is evaluated and no issues are found, mark category with "X".

If category is evaluated and an issue is found, write the noncompliance record in ACCESS database, record the NR number below in "Comments" after listing Category number and other relevant details.

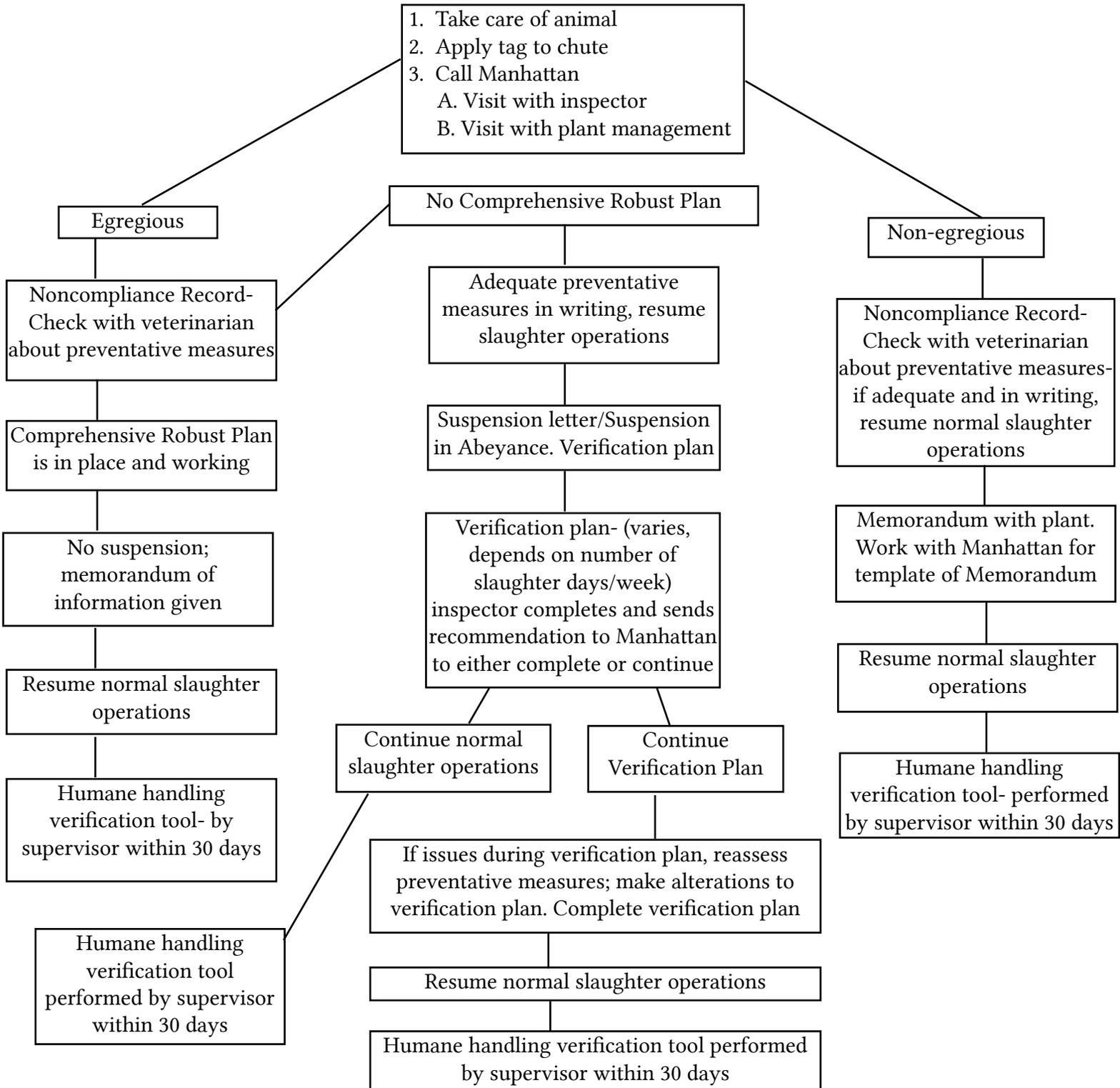
Animal ID-species, sex, color, tag, etc.	I Inclement Weather	II Unloading	III Feed-Water available	IV Handling During AM	V Handling Suspects	VI Alternate Object Use	VII Slip Fall	VIII Effective Stun	IX Conscious on Rail

Comments [include details of HH plan; records kept; alternate object use; animal predisposition; special circumstances; What if's-possible scenarios used for training inspector]:

KDA Decision Trees

The following information in the Decision Trees specifically address situations regarding HATS categories VIII and IX, Stunning Effectiveness and Conscious Animals on the Rail.

First Event (no Humane Handling Noncompliance records in at least six months)



Humane Handling Repeat Event (less than 6 months from previous event)



*Rules of Practice defines **suspension** as “an interruption in the assignment of program employees to all or part of an establishment.”*

Verification Plan

The below is an example of a verification plan to be produced by a Kansas Meat & Poultry inspector as a recollection of the events of a particular occurrence.

VERIFICATION PLAN

Establishment Name: xxxxxxxxx

Establishment Number: xxx

On **Month, Day, Year** at **Time**, **Inspector xxx** was observing the stunning of a feeder hog that weighed approximately xxx pounds. It took **employee xxx** attempts to bring the animal insensible to pain. The first attempt he held the prongs behind the animal's ears and pressed the button to allow electric current to flow to prongs for approximately one second. After the first attempt, the hog was very excited, vocalizing, moving and thrashing its head, **employee** quickly attempted stunning **xxx** more times but could not keep in constant contact with the animal's head. On the **xxx** attempt he was able to keep contact with both probes and held the trigger until the hog was rendered insensible to pain, approximately **xxx seconds**, then quickly hoisted and stuck animal to bleed it before it regained consciousness. **xxx** immediately tagged the knocking chute, stopped slaughter, and notified IIC **xxx** of the situation. After notifying IIC **xxx**, he immediately called **xxx** and was instructed to have a plant official fill out the Corrective Action Log. After the Corrective Action Log was completed, IIC **xxx** contacted **xxx** per request of **xxx** and described and handled the events as he understood them.

Verification is defined as those activities, other than monitoring, that determine the validity of the in-plant control system and that the system is operating according to the plan. This verification plan includes the commitments and corrective actions that were proffered by the establishment in response to the **Notice of Withholding Inspection from Slaughter** issued on **Month, Day, Year**. This verification plan is designed to verify the commitments made by the establishment to the State of Kansas Meat and Poultry Inspection Program on **Month, Day, Year**.

Humane Handling

Corrective Action	Regulation	Task Code	Frequency
Establishment's corrective action--- Inspector's verification action	Relevant regulation	04C02	How often the inspector should perform verification task
Employee in charge of stunning has reviewed proper stunning procedure with supervisors.	9CFR 313.30	04C02	Once
Larger hogs (over 400 pounds) will be pre-watered, stunner settings on High 580, and applied for at least 2 seconds. Prior experience will be used by the stunning operator to judge weight of hogs to be stunned. Stunning operator will notify the inspector before these changes will be made.----The inspector will verify that a 400 pound plus hog has been identified by the stunning operator.	9CFR 313.30	04C02	For the next four weeks or no less than four hog slaughter days; on all hogs identified by the stunning operator during this period.

continued on next page

Verification Plan, continued

Verification Plan

[Establishment]

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<p>The inspector will write the hog's identification (owner name, tag number, description), hog's weight post slaughter on Verification Plan MP Form 66 He will then verify that the hog has been pre-watered, the stunning setting is at the highest level, and the stunning operator operates the trigger for at least two seconds. Any issues with the stunning will be documented on MP Form 66.</p>			
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NOTE: If the establishment fails to follow their written corrective/preventive measures stated in their Action Plan dated **Month, Day, Year** and Noncompliance Regulation does not cover the Action plan failure, the IIC will notify the Manhattan Office for further instructions regarding whether the verification plan will be extended or a reinstatement of withholding inspection from slaughter will occur.

Verification Plan, continued

Verification Plan
[Establishment]
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COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PERIOD OF ACTION PLAN: February 3, 2014 to February 24, 2014

IIC comments:

Continue Verification Process: _____

Suspension or Reinstatement of Suspension: _____

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

IIC Signature _____

IIC Name (print) _____

References

Acronyms used:

USDA-United States Department of Agriculture

FSIS-Food Safety and Inspection Service

HATS-Humane Animal Tracking System

CFR-Code of Federal Regulations

FMIA-Federal Meat Inspection Act

HMSA-Humane Methods of Slaughter Act

IPP-inspection plant personnel

EST-establishment

U.S. Suspect-United States Suspect

FSIS Compliance Guide for Systematic Approach to Humane Handling of Livestock, FSIS October 2013

Humane Handling of Livestock and Poultry, An Educational Guidebook Based on FSIS Policies, USDA April 2009,



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