Thoughts on the “Robust” Systematic Approach to Humane Handling and Slaughter

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“Robust” Systematic Approach

- No regulatory requirement for written systematic approach
- “Robust” approach introduced in August 2011 in Directive 6900.2 Revision 2

Living Document-Adapting and Improving
“Robust” Systematic Approach

1) Assess your facilities from animal arrival to bleed rail
2) Design your facility and implement best practices
3) Evaluate it (semi-annually, annually)
4) Improve and modify based on your evaluation or any events where animals are injured or miss-stunned
   - Written Plan
   - Written Records/Audits
   - Accessible to FSIS personnel
## “Robust” Systematic Approach

### FSIS Compliance Guide for a Systematic Approach to the Humane Handling of Livestock

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Design facilities and practices</th>
<th>Periodic Evaluation</th>
<th>Written Plan</th>
<th>Written Records</th>
<th>FSIS Review and Designate as “Robust”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Standard” Systematic Approach</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Robust” Systematic Approach</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
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“Robust” Systematic Approach

- Develop a Written Plan
  - HACCP plan for animal handling and slaughter
  - Include a mission statement, a description of your animal flow (flowchart) and SOPs
  - If you use the Compliance Guide example, make it yours; company logo, personal touch, mission statement
“Robust” Systematic Approach

Develop a Written Plan

- Separate binder for humane written plan
  
  Can you find it for FSIS review?

- Include SOPs for each process (plain talk)

- Emergency plan, unforeseen FSIS actions

- Risk Assessment: What’s the worst that can happen? (Address It)

- Can anything be improved? (Fix It)
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FSIS Compliance Guide for a Systematic Approach to the Humane Handling of Livestock

Attachment 3: Sample EST 38 Humane Handling and Slaughter Plan

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
“Robust” Systematic Approach

- Include this in the pages of your written plan!
“Robust” Systematic Approach

- Develop a Written Plan
  - Training, training, training
  - (Document, document, document training)
  - On intake, then a refresher, retrain after NR?
  - Describe training material and frequency
  - Include in binder
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- Develop a Written Plan
  - Stunning instruments; what are they, how many, where are they kept, charges, ammo
  - Include in SOP details about maintaining guns, gun repair, gun parts and cleaning
  - Describe what you will measure in a records log
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Create a Record-keeping system

- Separate record for handling/slaughter audits, stunner maintenance
  *probably not a single line on slaughter floor pre-op sheet
- 313.1, some of 313.2: Pre-op checklist
- If you create a record for it, say something about it in the written plan
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- Create Record-keeping system
  - Each stunning instrument needs to be identified, and should have its own record sheet
  - Indicate in your written plan where records will be kept, and how they are evaluated
  - Be able to find records for FSIS personnel
“Robust” Systematic Approach

- Create Record-keeping system
  - For every slaughter day, it’s a good idea to have some sort of monitoring and recordkeeping every day
  - Auditing your plant operations: If you don’t know that something is wrong, you don’t know how to fix it*
  - Record corrections and improvements (Take credit for your work!)
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FSIS Access to Plan and Records

- From Directive 6900.2 Rev. 2; when you think you have a “robust” plan, you have the IIC or FLS review it and have them pronounce “robust” or “not robust”
- Contact your District Veterinary Medical Specialist (DVMS) for review
- During DVMS routine visit, ask them if the plan is “robust” or not
“Robust” Systematic Approach

- FSIS Access to Plan and Records
  - Dr. Patty Bennett, Dr. Keith Gilmore
  - NAMI, other consultants
  - Don’t wait until you have a U.S. Rejected tag thrown down to ask if your plan is “robust”
“Robust” Systematic Approach

Most Important Takeaway from my travels

- If the animal is not stunned on the first shot, stun it until it is unconscious
- Ensure that your stunning SOP includes this statement
- Ensure that your employees understand the importance of this task
- Follow the advice from this meeting
“Robust” Systematic Approach

• Thank You NAMI!