



Animal Welfare Institute

900 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003
awionline.org phone: (202) 337-2332 fax: (202) 446-2131

December 15, 2021

Joseph Schein
Deputy District Manager
Philadelphia District Office, USDA-FSIS
701 Market Street Suite 4100-A
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Via electronic mail: joseph.schein@usda.gov

RE: Abattoir Associates Inc. (M44910)

Dear Mr. Schein:

I am writing on behalf of the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) regarding the recent enforcement history of Abattoir Associates Inc. (M44910) of Spring Mills, PA, and to urge you to take strong action in response to the establishment's repeated failures to slaughter animals humanely in accordance with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act.

AWI routinely monitors humane slaughter enforcement actions, and as a result we are aware that your office has suspended inspection at Abattoir Associates for humane slaughter violations on multiple occasions this year. To our knowledge, this includes one Notice of Suspension and three Reinstatements of Suspension—all issued for egregious stunning violations. Based on its history, we believe it is very likely that animals will suffer in the near future as a consequence of additional humane slaughter incidents at Abattoir Associates.

The third Reinstatement of Suspension, issued on December 10, 2021, noted that the establishment made four unsuccessful attempts to render a market hog insensible to pain with a captive bolt device and a backup handgun. According to the December 10th document, seven ineffective stunning incidents occurred at the plant within four months (August 9th through December 10th).

As you know, very few establishments receive this number of administrative enforcement actions for egregious humane slaughter violations. Certain plants, typically small or very small establishments, lack the managerial and/or financial resources to operate properly. It appears that Abattoir Associates is unwilling and/or unable to meet humane slaughter requirements and to successfully implement corrective measures to prevent reoccurrence of inhumane slaughter incidents. In fact, the Reinstatement of Suspension documents note that the establishment failed to follow its corrective action plan from prior suspensions.

We believe that this plant's enforcement history warrants a referral of the case to the FSIS

Enforcement and Litigation Division to consider removal of the federal grant of inspection from the establishment. Furthermore, we urge you to keep the third Reinstatement of Suspension in place until the Enforcement and Litigation Division has an opportunity to review the situation. At a minimum, plants with a record of repeated egregious humane slaughter violations, such as Abattoir Associates, should be required to undergo a comprehensive audit by an independent humane handling and slaughter expert as a condition of the establishment's continued operation.

Abattoir Associates has received ample opportunity to correct its deficiencies, and as the plant has repeatedly failed to do so, FSIS must take stronger enforcement action before more animals suffer needlessly.

Please contact me if AWI can be of any assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dena Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dena Jones
Director, Farm Animal Program