



FSIS DIRECTIVE 6910.1
DISTRICT VETERINARY
MEDICAL SPECIALIST (DVMS)
– WORK METHODS

OPPD, Policy Development Division,

District Correlation

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to provide instructions to District Veterinary Medical Specialists (DVMSs) regarding the work methods when:

- conducting humane handling verification visits at livestock establishments or
- when conducting a visit at a poultry establishment to determine whether live poultry are being handled in a manner consistent with poultry good commercial practice.



REASON FOR REISSUANCE

FSIS is reissuing this directive to include instructions for completing FSIS Form 6910-3, Humane Handling And Slaughter Verification Tool. The purpose of this tool is to facilitate the work of the DVMS by providing him or her with a means of assessing how an establishment's systematic approach to handling animals humanely is functioning.



REASON FOR REISSUANCE (cont.)

By having the DVMS assess the establishment's system in the fixed context provided by the tool, the Agency is providing the DVMS with an objective system that will facilitate the DVMS's determination of whether there are problems in the establishment's system that the establishment needs to address. It will also enable the DVMS to direct in-plant personnel to focus on verifying that potential regulatory noncompliance associated with these areas are addressed.



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3, HUMANE HANDLING AND VERIFICATION TOOL

After completing the humane handling assessment, the DVMS is to complete FSIS Form 6910-3 (see Attachment 1 for instructions to complete the form). The DVMS should complete tool over a period time during the visit and ensure that it is applied during all shifts (NOTE: each shift does not need a completed form).



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

The DVMS is to assess whether the establishment is employing a systematic approach to the humane handling and slaughter of livestock. Such an approach includes appropriate handling practices, proper restraint, and effective stunning that leads to insensible animals throughout shackling, hoisting, and sticking and bleeding. Effective animal handling practices minimize the excitement, discomfort, and injury of animals that are being held in holding pens or are being driven to the stunning area.



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

An approach that delivers calm animals to the stunning area facilitates accurate placement and operation of the stunning equipment. An effective stun leads to an insensible or dead animal being presented to the sticker and, ultimately, to the proper slaughter of the animal.



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

The data also can be stored for later reference and comparison of verification visits. DVMSs are to share the results from this verification with the establishment's management at the time of the visit and discuss both compliant and noncompliant findings.



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

The verification tool, though non-regulatory, provides objective criteria for assessing humane handling and slaughter practices. The tool is designed to provide data that will assist the DVMS in decision-making about an establishment's practices for humanely handling and slaughtering livestock.



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

The verification tool is separated into sections (Sections A through F), and each section is to be completed. The DVMS is to record the data in the appropriate section of the form. The data gathered within each section respond to objective criteria.



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

The section categories are as follows:

Verification of Animal Handling:

- Slips and falls (Other area) - SF-O (Section A)
- Prod use (Other area) – PR-O (Section B)
- Slips and falls (Stun chute area) - SF-C (Section C)
- Prod use (Stun chute area) - PR-C (Section D)

Stunning effectiveness - ST (Section E)

Conscious animal - Rail (Section F)



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

The DVMS is to use the tool in all livestock (large, small, and very small) slaughter establishments. The following list describes the amount of data to collect for each section of the verification tool based on establishment size:



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

In **large** establishments, the DVMS is to observe at least 100 animals (per shift, if a 2-shift establishment) for each section of the verification tool. These animals do not have to be observed consecutively; the data can be collected at different times.



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

In **small** establishments using a moving chain or a gravity rail system, the DVMS is to observe at least 10% of the animals scheduled for slaughter for each section of the verification tool. The DVMS does not have to observe these animals consecutively; the DVMS can collect the data at different times.



USING FSIS FORM 6910-3 (cont)

In **very small** establishments, the DVMS is to observe at least 1 animal, or 10% of the animals scheduled for slaughter (whichever yields the greater number of animals) for each section of the verification tool.

At the discretion of the DVMS, he or she may observe more animals for each section.