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Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
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Service

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January 18, 2001

TO: All Inspectors-In-Charge, Circuit Supervisors, District Managers,
and All Livestock Slaughter Plants.

FROM: Mark Mina *[Signature]*
Deputy Administrator
Office of Field Operations

SUBJECT: FSIS Responsibilities Related to the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act

This memo is a reminder of the importance of the monitoring and enforcement of the Humane Slaughter Act, as outlined in CFR 9 Part 313. Inspection methods are defined in Directive 6900.1 Revision 1 issued 11/98. FSIS Inspection personnel have an obligation to ensure compliance with the Humane Slaughter Act by the regulated industry.

The Humane Slaughter Act requires that cattle, calves, horses, mules, sheep, goats, swine, and other livestock be rendered insensible to pain before being shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast or cut. CFR 9 Part 313 describes acceptable humane handling and slaughter methods using the intent of the Humane Slaughter Act including prohibiting the dragging of downer animals. Directive 6900.1 revision 1 further clarifies issues surrounding the presentation of downer animals for inspection.

Although the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP rule of 1996 removed FSIS from a "command and control" inspection mode and replaced it with performance standards and verification, the intent of the Humane Slaughter Act of 1978 was not changed. FSIS ensures, by verification, that the establishment handles and slaughters livestock humanely. Verification frequency should be adequate to assure the IICs that plants are in compliance with the Humane Slaughter Act.

All failures to comply with the Humane Slaughter Act must be documented. Resources concerning Humane Slaughter include CFR 9 part 313; The Humane Slaughter Act of 1978; FSIS Directive 6900.1 Revision 1; 904 VMO Training