

Farmer Certification and Slaughter Standard Operating Procedure

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

How To Use This Document

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines plant procedures for humane animal handling and for limiting or preventing carcass contamination when receiving live animals, stunning and slaughtering, skinning, eviscerating, splitting, and cooling. Use this example as a reference when developing your own establishment's SOP for slaughter. The exact language in SOPs may vary from one establishment to another, but the level of detail should compare with what is found in the following example.

Farmer Certification

I, _____ do hereby certify that this animal has met all withdrawal times or has not been treated with any antibiotics. To the best of my knowledge there are no needles or other foreign bodies present. (Beef Only) This animal is ____ months of age.

SOP Slaughter

Who has overall responsibility?

The plant will ensure these steps are followed to help limit or prevent carcass contamination.

- Animals entering the facility are checked for signs of disease and segregated as necessary.
- Upon arrival, animals are checked and scored for fecal or mud contamination. Animals deemed to have high levels undergo a pre-wash to limit the risk of contaminating the carcass during the skinning process *(images could be included here to show examples of animals with different levels of fecal or mud contamination)*.
- A concerted effort is made to handle all animals humanely. This includes:
  - » Water offered during holding
  - » Feed offered if held overnight
  - » Protection from the elements
  - » Protection from unwarranted harm during movement and holding
  - » Proper stunning and verification before continuing the slaughter process
- Stun
  - » The type of stun used depends on the species and may be electric or mechanical (i.e. captive bolt or firearm).
  - » If a firearm is used, the head must be discarded. Head and cheek meat are disposed.
  - » All staff are trained on proper stun and reanimation checks (signs the animal may be regaining consciousness).

- Skinning
  - » Proper sanitation is followed during the entire process.
  - » All employees wash hands frequently to prevent contamination and after touching any non-food contact surface or after being contaminated during the process of skinning.
  - » When removing the feet and hide of the animal, knives and other food contact utensils are maintained in a clean and sanitary condition, as described in the establishment Sanitation Standard Operation Procedure (SSOP).
  - » Cuts will be made in a manner to limit contamination of the carcass. For instance, the knife blade faces outward as it is used to remove hide from flesh. A knife sterilizer is used as part of sanitation procedures.
  - » A bottle of sanitizer is kept on the slaughter floor to be used as necessary.
- Evisceration
  - » All procedures outlined in the SSOP and skinning SOP are followed at this step as well.
  - » Special care is maintained in the removal of intestines and other viscera that risk adulterating the final product.
  - » If contamination occurs, all affected areas are trimmed prior to any washing. If contamination occurs on bone or other areas that do not allow trimming, the area is cleaned in a manner that prevents spread before washing.
  - » Variety meats, including liver, kidneys, or tongues are washed and hung on hooks for proper chilling and stored with the carcass in the cooler.
- Splitting
  - » All procedures outlined in the SSOP and skinning SOP are followed at this step as well.
  - » Specified Risk Material (SRM) removal for cattle follows the procedures outlined in a separate SOP for minimizing Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) risks.
- Cooling
  - » All carcasses are cooled as rapidly as possible.
  - » Large hogs and beef are cooled to below 40ºF within 24 hours.
  - » All variety meats that are kept separate are cooled in 4 hours or less.
  - » All coolers and freezers are monitored daily for proper temperatures.
    - → Carcass cooler is maintained at less than 41ºF.
    - → Freezers are maintained at less than 30ºF.