



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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SUBJECT: Current USDA Information on Central Valley Meat Investigation

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

State Distributing Agencies
All States

Based on the recent USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) findings of humane treatment violations at a slaughter facility, on August 19, 2012, USDA suspended inspections at the plant. Central Valley Meat (CVM) has been a supplier to the USDA's National School Lunch Program as well as to other commercial food processors. Currently, **there is no recall of CVM products at this time**. A thorough investigation is underway, and additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

USDA has purchased beef from the company, but no purchases are being made during the investigation. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and FSIS work as a team to ensure that products produced for the Federal nutrition assistance programs meet stringent food safety standards and that producers comply with humane handling regulations. USDA continues to conduct the investigation.

Based on a thorough review of the video provided to USDA:

- The video footage did show violations of humane handling regulations which prompted the immediate suspension of CVM operations. The teams will continue to examine the violations which have been documented in the video provided.
- In terms of food safety, the video does not show a "downer" animal entering the food supply. The Department is currently conducting a thorough investigation that encompasses food safety and will respond appropriately to its results.

USDA food safety regulations state that, if an animal is non-ambulatory disabled at any time prior to slaughter, i.e., a "downer," it must be promptly and humanely euthanized, and properly discarded so that it does not enter the food supply. Preliminary findings indicate that proper procedures were followed regarding non-ambulatory animal regulations.

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USDA FSIS Administrator Al Almanza states that, “Our top priority is to ensure the safety of the food Americans feed their families.” FSIS is responsible for ensuring that meat, poultry, and processed egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled, and also works to ensure industry’s compliance with poultry good commercial practices and with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA), which requires that livestock be handled and slaughtered in a humane way.

We will let you know as soon as we have additional information. Please share this information with all local program operators. The FSIS press release is found at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_082112_01/index.asp

Original Signed

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