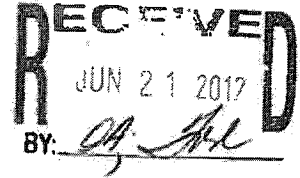


JEFF BINGAMAN
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senator_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov

United States Senate

June 6, 2012



Mr. Alfred V. Almanza
Administrator
Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Jamie Whitten Building, Room 331-E
Washington, DC 20250-1597

Dear Mr. Almanza:

The attached letter was sent to me by Mr. Ricardo De Los Santos of the Valley Meat Company in Roswell, New Mexico. The letter is in regard to Valley Meat Company's application to FSIS for a grant of inspection for equine slaughter.

In his letter, Mr. De Los Santos indicates his application has been pending since December 2011 and that the district FSIS office is denying him assistance on completing the requirements for the grant of inspection.

I respectfully request that you or your staff promptly look into this matter and respond to Mr. De Los Santos.

Thank you for your assistance in responding to my constituent's concerns.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Bingaman".

Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator

JB/dja

ALBUQUERQUE
(505) 346-6801

FARMINGTON
(505) 325-6030

LAS CRUCES
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ROSWELL
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SANTA FE
(505) 988-6647

AR0003795

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

Dear Mr Bingaman,

I recently made contact with your office in hopes of receiving some assistance with my equine slaughter plans in Roswell, NM.

I have been in application process since Dec. 2011 in applying for a grant of inspection for equine slaughter. I first applied through a regulation waiver to slaughter dual species and was denied and then later submitted a slaughter grant application for equine only in Mar. 2012.

I have had facility walkthroughs after complying with some equine regulatory structural modifications and have complied by submitting SSOP and HACCP to front line supervisor (FLS) and inspector in charge(IIC).

After findings of incompletes and deficiencies noted on my program submissions and no available assistance by FLS, I contacted the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for assistance in Apr. 2012 and resubmitted to FLS and district office (DO). I have waited patiently.

I received in writing, by FLS, this last week, further incompletes and deficiencies on my SSOP and HACCP programs. I forwarded findings to [REDACTED] and he called the Denver District Office-Dr Scott Wagner immediately and spelled out in no uncertain terms that he did not have any intentions of wasting his time with such broad terms and left-guessing incompletes and deficiencies and would expect further explanations from FLS on the programs before he would proceed.

When I addressed FLS [REDACTED] by telephone, she said that she was not allowed to help me due to Denver District orders but that I was real close. She told me to find an expert to help me and I told her that I had found one before I re-submitted the programs. No comment was noted.

Mr Bingaman, It is my concern that I am caught in a political whirlwind....I have the Governor and HSUS protesting equine slaughter on one side and I have the district USDA/FSIS office denying any assistance on my SSOP and HACCP programs of which are needed for equine slaughter start-ups with many needless delays in between.

I was told in the beginning (Nov 2011) by IIC and DO that the slaughter transition to equine was a simple process and that appropriations for equine inspection were available for 2012 and that we would commence with 2005 redbook guidelines on drug residue sampling. Simple. My job was to apply for a grant of inspection, comply with some structural modifications and submit my SSOP and HACCP programs.

I am a working USDA federal facility of cattle slaughter for 21 years....Today, I think I am unemployed along with all my employees all because I committed to equine slaughter after an

official lifting of an equine slaughter ban by congress and signed by the President in Nov 2011.

I am financially and emotionally drained. I need help. My greatest concern would be if our USDA/FSIS/APHIS is now HSUS in disguise. The language of the two is all too similar lately.

Sincerely

**Ricardo De Los Santos
Valley Meat Company
Roswell, NM 88203
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575-623-3180 h
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3102

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Jeff Benjamin
U.S.S.

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Mr. Alfred V. Almanza
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