



APPROVED

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS SCHEDULE – BISON HANDLING AND WELFARE 2010 (TRS-BHW-2010)

Contracting Officer Technical
Representative (COTR) Standards,
Analysis, and Technology Branch
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Effective: October 2010

Bison Handling and Welfare

1.0 General

1.1 Program Approach

The contractor and all subcontractors must develop and implement a written program that is consistent with a systematic approach to humane handling and welfare as outlined in 69 FR 54625. The program will discuss the applicable provisions of 9 CFR 352 to ensure proper bison handling and welfare techniques are conducted from the time the transportation conveyance enters the facility's premises through the stunning and exsanguination processes.

1.2 Contracting Officer

The contracting officer can declare a contractor's and/or subcontractor's Bison Handling and Welfare Program out of compliance at any time.

1.3 Program Submission

The program will be submitted as a supporting document to the firm's approved technical proposal and must address the requirements outlined in **Section 2.0 – Program Components**.

2.0 Program Components

The contractor must ensure that any facility that harvests bison for the program has a:

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2.1 Mission Statement

Mission Statement on Bison Handling and Welfare that is distributed to all employees and conspicuously displayed at the premises.

2.2 Training Program^{1, 2, 3}

Training program on Bison Handling and Welfare that:

- is provided to all employees interacting with bison;
- covers Chapter 3: Transportation Audit Guidelines, Core Criteria 1 and 3 of the AMI *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition*;
- covers Chapter 4: Auditing Animal Handling and Stunning 7 Core Criteria of the AMI *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition*;
- is conducted no less frequently than once a year for each designated employee; and,
- requires signed documentation from each employee and confirmation by signature of the designated trainer upon successful completion of training.

2.3 Quality Management Plan^{1, 2, 3}

Written quality management plan (internal) which addresses the provisions of Chapter 3: Transportation Audit Guidelines, Core Criteria 1 and 3, and Chapter 4: Auditing Animal Handling and Stunning, 7 Core Criteria, of the AMI *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition*, found at the following web site:

<http://www.animalhandling.org/ht/d/sp/i/26752/pid/26752>

This internal quality management plan must also provide for routine assessment and monitoring of humane handling through the use of a numerical scoring system conducted by a trained employee.

¹Guidelines and audit criteria specified for cattle in Chapter 4: Auditing Animal Handling and Stunning 7 Core Criteria of the AMI *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition* should be emulated, to the extent possible, for bison.

²Core Criteria 4: Vocalization in Chapter 4: Auditing Animal Handling and Stunning 7 Core Criteria of the AMI *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition* shall be amended to so that vocalization *only* is evaluated at the lead up chute prior to the restrainer with five percent or less vocalization being an acceptable score. Grunting should not be counted.

³Core Criteria 5: Electric Prod Use in Chapter 4: Auditing Animal Handling and Stunning 7 Core Criteria of the AMI *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition* shall be amended to provide for a “zero tolerance” threshold for bison.

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2.4 Non-Ambulatory Bison

Written protocol in-place and enforced that precludes the receipt of or having non-ambulatory, disabled bison on the harvest facility premise. In the event that bison become non-ambulatory or disabled at any time while present at the harvest facility, the bison will be humanely euthanized and the carcass removed from the premise in a timely manner through contracted services or other means.

3.0 Program Evaluation and Eligibility

The program will be audited (external) by a firm accredited by AMS. The accreditation of the firm will be conducted by the Audit, Review and Compliance Branch through the **LS ISO Guide 65 Program**. Alternatively, at the option of the contractor or subcontractor, the audits can be performed by AMS auditors. Audit findings thought to be in conflict with Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulations will be communicated to the establishment's Inspector in Charge (IIC) or designee.

3.1 Audit Format

The AMS accredited auditing firm must conduct audits utilizing the following format:

3.1.1 Transportation Segment (*Chapter 3: AMI Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition*)

Audited firms must pass Core Criteria 1 with a minimum scoring of excellent and Core Criteria 3 with a minimum scoring of acceptable each time an audit is performed.

3.1.2 Animal Handling and Stunning Segment (*Chapter 4: AMI Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition*)

Audited firms must pass Core Criteria 1 through 4 with a minimum scoring of acceptable while Core Criteria 5 and 7 must be adhered to with full compliance (zero tolerance) each time an audit is performed.

3.2 Initial Audit

Initial audit must be performed prior to award of contracts.

3.3 Audit Failure

If an audit is failed for any of the Core Criteria, the firm is not eligible to provide product until such a time that corrective and preventative actions are approved by the Contracting Officer, implemented and proven effective.

3.4 Audit Frequency and Status

- STANDARD - Until four (4) consecutive successfully passed audits are attained, an audit must be conducted within 3 months of the previous audit.
- MONTHLY - If at any time an audit identifies any of the Core Criteria not meeting the pass requirements while in the STANDARD phase, auditing will be required to be conducted on a monthly basis once corrective and preventative actions have been approved by the Contracting Officer, implemented and proven effective. This schedule will be for a period of time until four (4) successive audits are found to meet the pass requirements noted within Chapter 3 (Core Criteria 1 and 3) and Chapter 4 (Core Criteria 1 through 7) of the *AMI Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide 2010 Edition*; at which time audits shall be conducted on the STANDARD basis.
- If four successfully conducted audits are sequentially completed within a one year period while in STANDARD auditing phase, the facility may move to a SEMI-ANNUAL audit basis.
- SEMI-ANNUAL - Semi-annual audits may continue until such time that a failed audit is reported or a period of greater than six months has elapsed without any audits being performed; at which time the audits must resume as described for STANDARD audits.

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