



## **U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association Hide and Skin Traceability Program**

**Auditing Procedures for USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Staff**

### **NOTES:**

- **The term “Hide” is used here for simplicity’s sake, but any relevant product from the facility, including skins, can be included and certified under the program.**
- **The term “pallet” is used here, but any type of hide or skin packaging is acceptable: Bags, Totes, Combo Bins, Bundles, etc.**

### **INTAKE MEETING**

- A. Upon arrival at the Hide Facility, auditors should first determine (through discussions with plant staff) the type of traceability certification being sought for the plant in question. The three potential certification protocols are:**
- 1. MEAT PACKING HOUSE CERTIFICATION**
  - 2. PROCESSING HOUSE CERTIFICATION**
  - 3. COMBINED PACKING / PROCESSING HOUSE CERTIFICATION**
- B. The Hide Facility will provide a written STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) for the handling of hides from the point of SORTING/PALLETIZING of product through STORAGE and SHIPMENT. The SOP should specify, simply and clearly, how pallets or products are identified and recorded throughout the process, AND every significant movement of the hide pallet from sorting to the point they exit the facility as a shipment. (See attached sample SOP).**

Auditing of the plant will then proceed according to one of the following two checklists, depending on the type of certification being sought:

**1. MEAT PACKING HOUSE CERTIFICATION & 2. PROCESSING HOUSE CERTIFICATION**

*NOTE: The checklist for auditing both PACKING HOUSE and PROCESSING HOUSE CERTIFICATION are the same.*

- ✓ Auditors will observe the product sorting process and determine that, **AFTER SORTING**, pallets are individually identifiable and kept well-ordered. Any means of individual identification may be used, including (but not limited to) **LABELING, STAMPING, COLOR CODING, ELECTRONIC CODING OR SCANNING** and / or **SPECIFYING PRECISE LOCATIONS FOR SORTING AND STORAGE**.
- ✓ Auditors will determine that full pallets are recorded when entering inventory. Hide production records may be kept in any manner. Records should include **DATE OF PRODUCTION AND TYPE OF HIDE**.
- ✓ Auditors will ask to be shown the typical route or progression of the pallets from the sorting area to the **STORAGE AREA**. In the storage area, auditors will choose a random pallet and check the identification on the pallet against the pallet record, again for **DATE OF PRODUCTION AND TYPE OF HIDE**.
- ✓ Auditors will ask to be shown the typical route or progression of the pallets from storage to **STAGING FOR SHIPMENT**. Auditors will determine that records are kept showing pallets moving from inventory to **SHIPMENT**, including **DATE OF LOADING AND TYPE OF HIDE**.
- ✓ Finally, auditors will confirm with plant staff that pallets **RETAIN THE IDENTIFICATION MARK / LABEL** when they are loaded, and will confirm by observation that the identification mark / label is robust enough to remain on the pallet during shipment.

**2. COMBINED PACKING / PROCESSING HOUSE CERTIFICATION**

- ✓ Auditors will observe the sorting process and determine that, **AFTER SORTING**, pallets are individually identifiable and kept well ordered. Any means of identification may be used, including (but not limited to) **LABELING, STAMPING, COLOR CODING, ELECTRONIC CODING OR SCANNING** and / or **SPECIFYING PRECISE LOCATIONS FOR SORTING AND STORAGE**.

- ✓ **Auditors will ask to see examples of both MEAT PACKING HOUSE HIDES and PROCESSING HOUSE HIDES, and determine that each type of product and pallet is clearly identified, separated, and not commingled.**
- ✓ **Auditors will determine that full pallets are recorded when entering inventory. Records may be kept in any manner. Records should include DATE OF PRODUCTION AND TYPE OF HIDE.**
- ✓ **Auditors will ask to see the typical route or progression of the full pallets from the sorting area to the STORAGE AREA. In the storage area, auditors will choose TWO pallets, a PACKING HOUSE HIDE pallet and a PROCESSING HOUSE HIDE pallet, and check the identification on the pallets against the pallet record, again for DATE OF PRODUCTION AND TYPE OF HIDE.**
- ✓ **Auditors will confirm that PACKING HOUSE HIDE pallets and PROCESSING HOUSE HIDE pallets are stored in a well-ordered manner and not commingled.**
- ✓ **Auditors will ask to be shown the typical route or progression of the pallets from storage to STAGING FOR SHIPMENT. Auditors will determine that records are kept showing pallets moving from inventory to SHIPMENT, including DATE OF LOADING AND TYPE OF HIDE.**
- ✓ **Finally, auditors will confirm with plant staff that pallets RETAIN THE IDENTIFICATION MARK / LABEL when they are loaded, and will confirm by observation that the identification mark / label is robust enough to remain on the pallet during shipment.**

**\*\*\*SAMPLE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE\*\*\***

**DODGE CITY HIDE CO.**

**Standard Operating Procedure**

**HIDE PROCESSING / SORTING / STORAGE**

1. Cured hides are pulled from raceways. Hides are grouped, graded and weighed for sorting purposes.
2. Hides are sorted by selection on pallets and are identified by colored twine and bar-coded pallet tags. Full pallets are pressed to eliminate excess moisture.
3. Full pallets are weighed after pressing and scanned in to the inventory database. A record is created for each pallet specifying date and time of production, selection, and weight.
4. Full pallets are stored by location in the warehouse with other pallets of the same hide grouping.
5. At time of loading, hides are pulled from storage, weighed and scanned again before staging. Containers lined to prevent leakage during shipping
6. Pallets are loaded. Twine is pulled from pallets, scannable tags remain. Container is sealed.