HOW TO SET UP AND IMPLEMENT ANIMAL WELFARE AUDITING SYSTEMS

Temple Grandin

Department of Animal Sciences

Colorado State University
You Manage What You Measure

- Maintaining high standards requires continuous measurement.
- Handling quality can be maintained by regular audits of your handling practices with an objective numerical scoring system.

PREVENTS BAD FROM BECOMING NORMAL
Auditing Required for Maintaining High Standards

- 20% of stockpersons always stay good
- Others slip back into rough practices unless management constantly supervises
A Good Auditing System Must Not be Vague

Ban the words “properly”, “adequate” and “sufficient”. What is “proper” to one auditor might be considered “terrible” by another.

A guideline must have clearly written standards which are not subject to different interpretations by different people.
Example of a Clearly Worded Guideline

All pigs must have enough space to lie down without being on top of each other
American Meat Institute
Basic Critical Control Points
(Core Criteria)

1. Percentage of animals stunned correctly on the first attempt
2. Percentage of animals rendered insensible
3. Percentage of animals prodded with an electric prod
4. Percentage of animals that vocalize
5. Percentage of animals that slip or fall

All scores are on a per animal basis
Advantages of Numerical Scoring

- Simple and easy to train auditors and inspectors
- Objective and measured instead of subjective opinions
- Easy to understand – Similar to speed limits for cars
Objective Scoring Reduces Subjectivity and Improves Agreement Between Different Auditors from Different Customers

% of Plants That Passed the Stunning Audit. Twenty or more plants were scored by each auditing system.
It measures a small number of critical control points that will objectively locate many different problems affecting welfare. Scoring is based on performance.

When CCPs are being chosen, a good CCP will be a point that monitors a variety of problems.
HACCP Principles same as food safety

Directly observable things that are outcomes of bad practices or bad facilities

Not a paperwork audit
Percentage of Beef Plants That Stunned 95% or More Cattle with the First Shot

USDA survey prior to industry wide auditing

McDonald’s Audits started

Continued auditing by major customers. Continuous auditing maintains good performance
Simple Equipment Improvements

- Improved stunner maintenance
- Non slip flooring in races and stun boxes
- Adding solid sides to block distractions
- Adding lights and moving lights
Animals are spooked by distractions outside this pen.
Cattle movement improved after solid sides were installed.
Cardboard to prevent cattle from seeing through cracks
Animals Are Afraid of Dark Places

Adding a light at the restrainer entrance or making other lighting changes that eliminate shiny reflections will improve animal movement.
Reflections on the floor make animals balk.

Moving Ceiling Lights
Eliminated Reflections
Three Parts of an Effective Auditing System

- Internal self audits done weekly
- Independent outside third party audits
- Audits by major meat buyers
What Has Been Learned??

- **First year** - No difference in the results between announced and unannounced audits
- **2nd and 3rd year** – Some employees had to be removed
- **5th to 10th year** – Management learned to put on a show for the auditor
- **10th year** – Falsified internal audits found
Video Auditing Over the Internet Improves Handling

- Saw a lot of bad handling before employees knew cameras were on
- Stunning stayed good because it is so dependent upon stunner maintenance
- Effective video auditing must be monitored by people outside the plant
What Was The Biggest Change Observed in the Plants?

People and cattle were calmer. Yelling and whistling stopped!
Use Numerical Scoring to Show Improvement After Changes are Made
Reduction in Cattle Vocalizations After Equipment Modifications by Reducing Electric Prod Use

- Light on Restrainer Entrance: 8% reduced to 0%
- Reduce Pressure on Neck Restraint: 23% reduced to 0%