



Memo to NAMA Members

In Response to Recent Events, North American Meat Association (NAMA) and Dr. Temple Grandin Collaborate With Arrowsight to Enhance Remote Video Auditing (RVA) Services for Animal Welfare Applications

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Background on Remote Video Auditing (RVA)

NAMA is committed to the proper handling of livestock and works proactively with the meat industry as well as technology and service providers to support compliance with all animal handling requirements. The Arrowsight RVA system for animal handling applications has been successfully utilized in many slaughter facilities throughout the US and Canada over the last several years. Arrowsight works within the AMI Guidelines and under PAACO training and certification, to implement custom programs for improved coaching through sampled remote video auditing and performance reporting feedback.

Given the size and scope of the average facility, plant operators generally elect to install cameras and have remote video auditing services performed within the select number of primary handling areas that are audited on a regular basis by in-plant auditors. RVA combined with daily and weekly performance reports are implemented to provide coaching data for the facility management team. While the responsibility and compliance for the process and personnel remain the sole accountability of the plant site team and FSIS inspectors, the RVA services are an important process improvement tool for plant operators to identify trend issues by their workers and act on them. This is accomplished through enhancing facility training programs developed and implemented by site management teams.

Recent Events and RVA Enhancements

The California beef plant highlighted in the recent undercover video was undergoing major construction during the time the video was filmed and as a result, all of the images shown were not in areas receiving RVA services. Additionally, the areas shown in the undercover video in the outside pens were not previously covered at all with RVA services and as a result, that plant has taken a proactive step to install extra cameras for additional RVA services.

"It is important for our industry technology and service suppliers to drive new discoveries through partnerships within our processing community, such as propelling advancements in animal welfare," says Barry Carpenter, CEO of NAMA.

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After reviewing the recent undercover video extensively, NAMA and Dr. Grandin are now working with Arrowsight and some of its leading clients to design a cost effective new plant process that will be accompanied with additional RVA services to better address the animal handling practices of the higher risk animals after they arrive at plants. Since the current use of RVA services is typically focused on a relatively small number of designated pens, an innovation is needed to more actively segregate and then audit the handling of those animals that have a higher likelihood of being handled over aggressively. Specifically, the new RVA application is being designed to sample a new plant process to segregate higher risk animals into designated pens that have full RVA camera coverage. This new RVA application will also audit cameras in between the unloading area and the designated pen to ensure that any higher risk animals identified at unloading do not get diverted to other pens. By implementing this new approach, NAMA believes the industry will be able to better ensure humane handling of all animals.

Dr. Grandin adds "RVA conducted by third party auditors help to ensure that plant employees follow proper procedures for handling and stunning animals. For RVA to be effective it must be monitored by auditors outside the plant. Arrowsight is a leader in providing this service. The recent undercover video made it very clear that more monitoring of the condition of the animals upon arrival at the plant is necessary. I am working with Arrowsight and its clients to develop methods to achieve this."