

Slaughter livestock must have water available

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NEW YORK, N.Y. — Officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture have decided to retain regulations that require drinking water be available for livestock awaiting slaughter.

Two industry petitions had requested exemptions from USDA regulations which require slaughterers to provide drinking water in all livestock holding pens. The regulations do not apply to areas used primarily as slaughter

passageways — such as alleyways and corridors.

L.L. Gast, acting administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service, said USDA asked for public comment on the issue September 12, and of the 636 comments received by November 12, 581 favored the existing regulations and 47 opposed them.

Gast said industry comments generally expressed concerns about the cost and need for

providing watering facilities in livestock holding pens, and questioned whether water needed to be available at all times. Other comments contended that withholding water would be inhumane.

"In evaluating the present livestock water regulations, not only did we analyze public comments, we also did a thorough search of relevant literature,"

Gast said. "We did not find sufficient evidence to change the present requirements."

Notice of the policy was published in the April 24 Federal Register. The notice clarifies the intent of the regulations, Gast said. The regulations, which implement the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1978, were originally published in the November 30, 1979, Federal Register.



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