

(i) Drums, cans, tanks, vats, and other receptacles used to hold or transport ready-to-cook rabbits shall be kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

§ 354.243 Operations and procedures.

Operations and procedures involving the preparation, storing, or handling of any product shall be strictly in accord with clean and sanitary methods.

(a) There shall be no handling or storing of materials which create an objectionable condition in rooms, compartments, or other places in the plant where any product is prepared, stored, or otherwise handled.

(b) Blood from the killing operation shall be confined to a relatively small area and kept from being splashed about the room.

(c) In the final washing, the carcass shall be passed through a system of sprays providing an abundant supply of fresh clean water.

(d) The floors in the eviscerating room shall be kept clean and reasonably dry during eviscerating operations and free of all refuse.

(e) Conveyors shall be operated at such speeds as will permit a sanitary eviscerating operation and will permit adequate inspection for condition and wholesomeness.

(f) Mechanized packaging equipment shall be maintained in good sanitary condition.

(g) All offal resulting from the eviscerating operation shall be removed as often as necessary to prevent the development of a nuisance.

(h) Paper and other material used for lining containers in which products are packaged shall be of such kinds as do not tear readily during use, but remain intact when moistened by the product. Wooden containers to be used for packaging ready-to-cook rabbits shall be fully lined except when the individual carcasses to be packaged therein are fully wrapped.

(i) Protective coverings shall be used for the product in the plant and as it is distributed from the plant, as will afford adequate protection for the product against contamination by any foreign substance (including, but not being limited to, dust, dirt, and insects), considering the means intended

to be employed in transporting the product from the plant.

(j) Refuse may be moved directly to loading docks only for prompt removal.

(k) Cleanliness and hygiene of personnel: (1) All employees coming in contact with exposed edible products or edible products handling equipment shall wear clean garments and should wear caps or hair nets, and shall keep their hands clean at all times while thus engaged.

(2) Hands of employees handling edible products or edible products handling equipment shall be free of infected cuts, boils, and open sores at all times while thus engaged.

(3) Every person, after each use of toilet or change of garments, shall wash his hands thoroughly before returning to duties that require the handling of edible products or containers therefor or edible products handling equipment.

(4) Neither smoking nor chewing of tobacco shall be permitted in any room where exposed edible products are prepared, processed, or otherwise handled.

§ 354.244 Temperatures and cooling and freezing procedures.

Temperatures and procedures which are necessary for cooling and freezing of rabbits in accordance with sound commercial practice shall be maintained in the coolers and freezers, and chilling temperatures and procedures shall also be in accordance with sound commercial practice.

(a) *Cooling.* Immediately after evisceration and washing of the carcass, it shall be placed in a cooling tank containing running cold tap water to remove the animal heat from the carcass. Carcasses shall not be allowed to remain in the cooling tank for longer than 1 hour.

(b) *Air chilling.* Immediately after the initial water chilling, the carcasses shall be placed in cooling racks and thereupon placed in a refrigerated cooler with moderate air movements and a temperature which will reduce the internal temperature of the carcasses to from 36 °F. to 40 °F., both inclusive, within 24 hours.

(c) *Freezing.* (1) When ready-to-cook rabbits are packaged in bulk or shipping containers, the carcasses should