

BIRDSHOT & BUCKSHOT

Understanding Pellet Injury in Beef Cattle

Pasture and woodland used for grazing cattle – both private and public – is often of interest to hunters or shooters, and cattle may be exposed to stray shotgun pellets (birdshot and buckshot). Understanding the consequences of pellet injury to cattle as it relates to animal welfare, meat quality and food safety is important to maintain consumer confidence and industry longevity.

Concerns for Packers



Animal Welfare

Injury from shot pellets causes pain, potential infection and stress.



Food Safety

Metal fragments in meat pose a health hazard if they are consumed.



Carcass Contamination

Embedded shot may bypass detectors and cause tissue damage, lowering meat quality and increasing trim losses.



Inspection Failures

Presence of shot may cause carcass condemnation or require extensive assessment.

Hidden Signs of Pellet Injury in Carcasses

- Bruising or abscess under hide
- Small entry wound or puncture
- Pellet fragments detected during inspection
- Internal bleeding or organ damage

Pellet identified during processing inspection



What Can Packers Do?

- ✓ **Inspect carcasses thoroughly** for signs of pellet damage.
- ✓ **Report any suspected cases** to Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) using the Foreign Object in Carcass Reporting Form.
- ✓ **Document and trace** incidents back to producers for corrective action.
- ✓ **Report and resolve** suspected cases according to internal Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans.



Scan the QR code to access the [Foreign Object in Carcass Reporting Form](#)

