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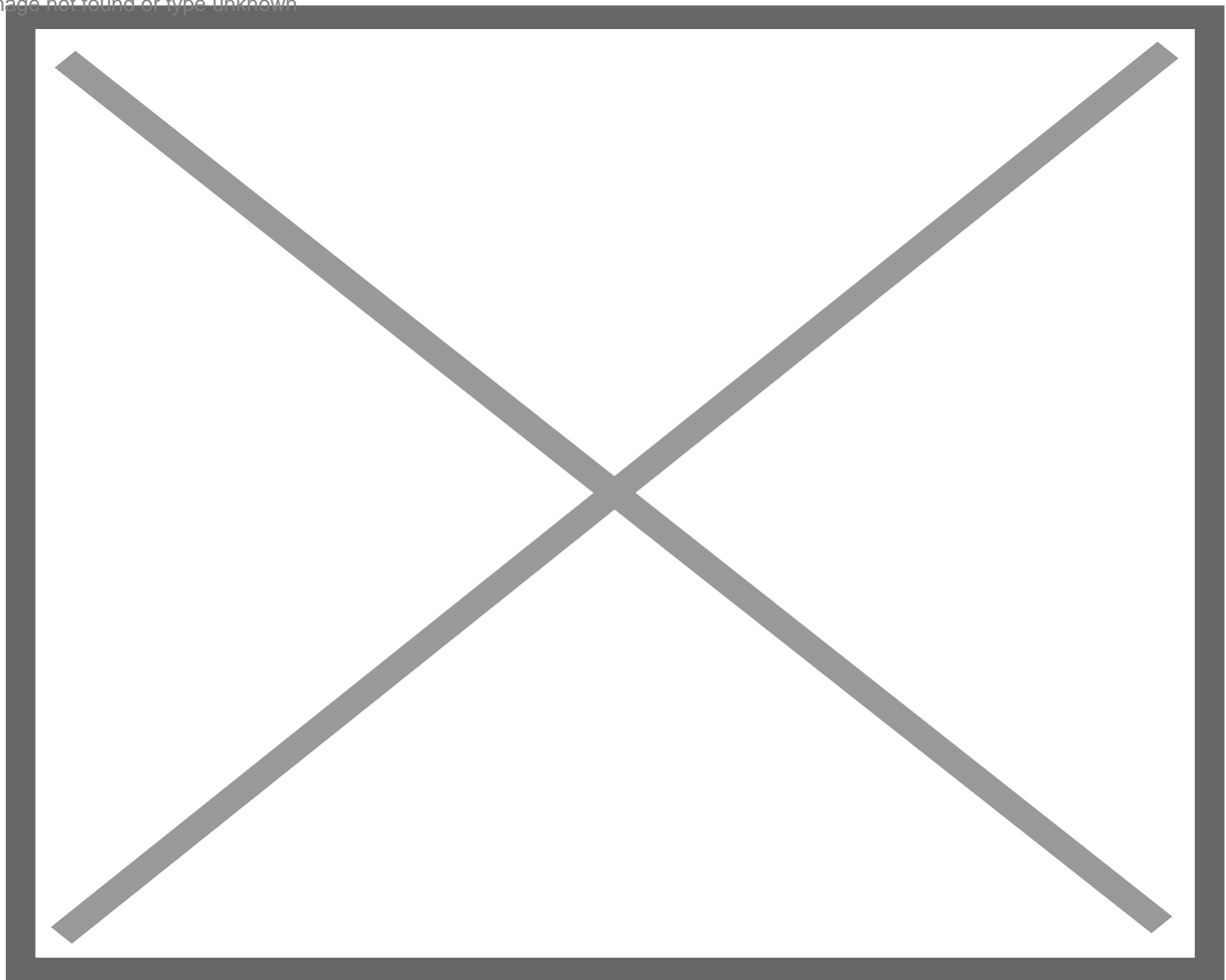
St. Croix Abattoir Closed Due to Major Safety Concern

Routine inspection reveals critical hazard, prompting immediate shutdown for repairs and further assessments

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A routine inspection of the abattoir on St. Croix has found a major maintenance issue that must be immediately addressed, the Department of Agriculture announced on Monday, informing of the facility's closure.

Such inspections, the department says, often surface "small issues" that can be addressed while the abattoir is running. "However, the present concern discovered poses a serious hazard to our employees," the announcement went on to say without revealing the hazard.

Prospective contractors are currently being consulted about how long the repair project might take and how much it might cost. A subsequent, thorough inspection of the abattoir is also planned "to

identify any other potential concerns to ensure our employees' protection and our customers' satisfaction," D.O.A. said.

Attempts to contact the abattoir director for more information about the specific problem discovered at the potential length of time it has been an issue, have thus far been unsuccessful.

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