

Food Standards Agency: Information released under the Freedom of Information Act

Date released: 29 December 2017

Request:

Dear sir,

1. How many halal abattoirs are there in the UK?
2. What percentage is that of the total number of abattoirs?
3. How many animals of each type are killed in halal abattoirs each year?
4. Why are halal abattoirs allowed to cut the throats of animals to kill them without stunning them first?
5. Are any animals stunned before they are killed in a halal abattoir?
6. If so, what proportion of the total?
7. Who checks to see if the stunning is sufficient to make the animal unconscious before it is killed?
8. In each of the last 5 years has there been any prosecutions for cruelty to animals in a Halal abattoir?
9. Does the new provision to have CCTV in abattoirs apply to halal abattoirs?
10. Who will be able to view this CCTV footage?
11. Will your inspectors be able to view it? If so, how often will it be done?
12. Is the health inspection of killed meat in halal abattoirs exactly the same as non-halal abattoirs?
13. How do you ensure that halal meat is not sold to non-Muslims, which is illegal?

Response

In relation to the specific questions you have asked and for ease of clarity I shall use the same numbering as you have above:

- 1. How many halal abattoirs are there in the UK?**
- 2. What percentage is that of the total number of abattoirs?**
- 3. How many animals of each type are killed in halal abattoirs each year?**

Once approved for slaughter, every slaughterhouse has the capability to carry out religious slaughter with or without prior stunning provided that the requirements in the Regulations are followed. There is no separate approval process for slaughter under a specific religious belief, other than the approval of boxes used for the restraint of cattle slaughtered by a religious method without stunning. Until March 2017 the FSA did not routinely record those premises which were carrying out religious slaughter with or without prior stunning. Details including the number of non-stun plants for April 2017 – June 2017 was provided to the FSA Open Board in September 2017 and can be found in Annex 2 at the following link:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa170905b.pdf>

- 4. Why are halal abattoirs allowed to cut the throats of animals to kill them without stunning them first?**

The right to observe and practice religion is enshrined in Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Council Regulation (EC)1099/2009 allows

EU member states to consider derogation from stunning in case of religious slaughter taking place in slaughterhouses, in accordance with the above. The link below sets out (EC) 1099/2009 in full:

[http://eur-](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:303:0001:0030:EN:PDF)

[lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:303:0001:0030:EN:PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:303:0001:0030:EN:PDF)

5. Are any animals stunned before they are killed in a halal abattoir?

6. If so, what proportion of the total?

Some animals killed under the halal method are stunned. The FSA does not routinely collect this data but it was last collected in the 2013 survey.

All FSA animal welfare surveys, including the May 2016 CCTV survey, can be found at the following link.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/sectorrules/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-survey>

7. Who checks to see if the stunning is sufficient to make the animal unconscious before it is killed?

The person stunning an animal is responsible for ensuring that the stun is applied correctly and either they or another person at that point will carry out checks to ensure that the animal is stunned and remains unconscious until dead. There is a requirement in EC 1099/2009 for the Food Business Operator to have in place Standard Operating Procedures and to carry out checks to verify that they are working in compliance with the requirements in that legislation

8. In each of the last 5 years has there been any prosecutions for cruelty to animals in a Halal abattoir?

The FSA does not hold this information. Under the Welfare at Time of Killing (WATOK) legislation, the Crown Prosecution Service has the power to prosecute on behalf of the [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#) (Defra) in instances where animals are not spared avoidable pain, distress or suffering. Under the legislation that the FSA enforce there is no such offence as 'cruelty to animals', which implies intent; there only needs to be proof that animals have been caused unnecessary suffering.

9. Does the new provision to have CCTV in abattoirs apply to halal abattoirs?

10. Who will be able to view this CCTV footage?

11. Will your inspectors be able to view it? If so, how often will it be done?

This policy and supporting legislation is currently under development, and is the responsibility of Defra. The FSA does not know the full scope or extent to which this measure will be applied.

Details of the Government's consultation and findings can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cctv-to-be-introduced-in-all-slaughterhouses-in-england-in-2018>

12. Is the health inspection of killed meat in halal abattoirs exactly the same as non-halal abattoirs?

There is no difference in the post mortem inspection of meat in plants which carry out religious slaughter

13. How do you ensure that halal meat is not sold to non-Muslims, which is illegal?

FSA does not have responsibility for labelling and traceability. This policy sits with Defra. Please contact Defra for further information. Their contact details can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-defra>