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Request:

Please supply me with the following information, for each calendar year, commencing 2010, up to and including this year if possible:

- i) Total number of slaughterhouses, registered with the FSA, operating in the UK (during any part of the calendar year)
- ii) Total number of slaughterhouses producing meat using non-stun or reversible stun methods, either in part or full (during any part of the calendar year)
- iii) Total number of slaughterhouses which were formerly not using non-stun or reversible stun methods, prior to the year in question, but began to do so in that year
- iv) Total number of new slaughterhouses which opened during the calendar year in question.
- v) Total number of new slaughterhouses which opened during the calendar year in question, using non-stun or reversible stun methods, either in part or in full
- vi) Total number of unannounced slaughterhouse inspections carried out by the FSA, or on the FSA's behalf, during the calendar year in question
- vii) Total number of unannounced slaughterhouse inspections carried out by the FSA, or on the FSA's behalf, where slaughterhouse visited is/was using non-stun or reversible stun methods, either in part or full, during the calendar year in question.
- viii) Percentage of slaughterhouses in the UK that are Halal/Kosher.

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:

- i) *Total number of slaughterhouses, registered with the FSA, operating in the UK (during any part of the calendar year)*

The table below gives, by year, the number of operating slaughterhouses. This figure reflects the slaughterhouses that submitted throughput figures to the FSA during each calendar year. The FSA was responsible for this work in Scotland until 30 March 2015 and figures are included until that date, if you require data for Scotland after this date you will need to contact Food Standards Scotland directly.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
378	374	373	364	352	347	309	303

- ii) *Total number of slaughterhouses producing meat using non-stun or reversible stun methods, either in part or full (during any part of the calendar 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>

The FOI request you reference to in your email describes data held from a survey the FSA had completed of slaughterhouses carrying out slaughter without prior stunning and a list of all plants carrying out non-stun slaughter was drawn up for this purpose. Since that FOI, the survey I mentioned has now been published by Defra and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farm-animals-data-from-survey-of-slaughter-methods>

You may also find the following link useful for historical information:

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

iii) *Total number of slaughterhouses which were formerly not using non-stun or reversible stun methods, prior to the year in question, but began to do so in that year*

This information is not held by the FSA. Please see answer to question 2 above.

iv) *Total number of new slaughterhouses which opened during the calendar year in question.*

The following table provides details of the total number of new red and white meat slaughterhouses. As per above the FSA was responsible for this work in Scotland until 30 March 2015 and figures are included until that date, if you require data for Scotland after this date you will need to contact Food Standards Scotland directly.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
8	10	12	6	9	10	5	5

v) *Total number of new slaughterhouses which opened during the calendar year in question, using non-stun or reversible stun methods, either in part or in full.*

As mentioned above, 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 and the FSA does therefore not routinely capture this information.

vi) *Total number of unannounced slaughterhouse inspections carried out by the FSA, or on the FSA's behalf, during the calendar year in question.*

The FSA, or anyone on their behalf, does not carry out unannounced inspections in slaughterhouses on a routine basis. Slaughterhouses are subject to audits and a permanent presence of FSA staff. Unannounced inspections are carried out in cutting plants only.

In addition the FSA has a Welfare Assurance Team to carry out unannounced inspections of welfare standards in slaughterhouses in England and Wales in order to verify that welfare standards at the slaughterhouse are maintained in full compliance with EC1099/2009 and WATOK England and Wales. These unannounced inspections began in February 2017. Prior to this there were not specific unannounced inspections in slaughterhouses. Our records show that there have been 136 completed visits at 123 different establishments in England and Wales. Of these completed visits 13 were marked as religious slaughter.

You may find useful that the FSA publishes the current audit reports for slaughterhouses. If, at the time of audit, religious slaughter is undertaken this will be included as part of the audit. The audits can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/meat/audit>. Please be aware that religious slaughter is not necessarily halal and both the audits and unannounced inspections only reflect what was happening at the time of the visit. Furthermore, religious slaughter is carried out with prior stunning in some premises.

In Northern Ireland DAERA are responsible for animal welfare at slaughterhouses on behalf of the FSA. As in England and Wales, DAERA's official veterinarians maintain a permanent presence in approved slaughterhouses during the hours of slaughter and routinely monitor standards to verify that operators fulfil their obligations under both meat hygiene and animal welfare legislation. Compliance is also assessed as an integral part of the regular audit of Food Business Operators, as well as by periodic surveys of welfare controls in all slaughterhouses. DAERA are confident that the systems in place provide assurance that welfare standards are being met in Northern Ireland and do not currently carry out unannounced inspections with respect to animal welfare.

As mentioned above you will need to contact Food Standards Scotland directly for information regarding Scotland.

vii) *Total number of unannounced slaughterhouse inspections carried out by the FSA, or on the FSA's behalf, where slaughterhouse visited is/was using non-stun or reversible stun methods, either in part or full, during the calendar year in question.*

Please see the above response, the FSA does not carry out any additional unannounced inspections as a result of differing stun methods.

viii) Percentage of slaughterhouses in the UK that are Halal/Kosher.

As mentioned above, 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 and the FSA does therefore not routinely capture this information.

In relation to your general comment about the FSA previously responding to this, or something similar, in an FOI, I understand you to mean that we have previously acknowledged that we hold this information. I note that you have referred to the FOI question on stunning and whether slaughterhouses are Halal/Kosher. For clarity, the section you copied in your request was the requesters question, the FSA response is in the link included in that page. The response states that we do not record statistics regarding Halal or Kosher slaughterhouses (para 3).

Background

The following information may also be useful as general background information to your request.

The FSA produces a Multi-Annual National Control Plan Annual Report which provides data on our approvals and meat premises, you may find this useful and these can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/regulation/europeleg/feedandfood/ncpuk>.

The data in these reports usually covers the financial year (April to March) and focuses on all meat premises (so will include cutting plants for example), not just slaughterhouses.

The FSA is responsible for the delivery of official controls in approved meat establishments (slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments) subject to veterinary control within England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This work is carried out for the FSA by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland through a Service Level Agreement.

The FSA monitors and enforces welfare compliance in approved slaughterhouses on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in England and Wales through a Service Level Agreement. The FSA has a zero tolerance approach to animal welfare breaches and all staff are instructed to take prompt and proportionate enforcement action where breaches are identified. This means that we apply the enforcement hierarchy in a way that allows us to take informal enforcement action where breaches are minor and where we believe that this will be effective in avoiding future non-compliance, and take formal action, such as serving of notices in cases where non-compliance falls into the most severe categories which may have caused pain or suffering or where informal enforcement has not resulted in subsequent compliance by the business operator.

FSA official veterinarians and meat hygiene inspectors, either employed by the FSA, or supplied through an approved contractor, are typically present during processing of animals. They carry out a range of duties, including ante-mortem and post-mortem checks (checks on live animals and carcasses and offal) which include checks on the health and welfare of animals presented for slaughter. These official control duties ensure that food businesses operators have produced meat in accordance with regulatory requirements, with a health mark applied to show that meat is safe to enter the food chain.

At the FSA Open Board meetings on 21 September 2016 and 20 September 2017 the FSA approach to animal welfare was discussed and you may find the following links useful for more information.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/our-board/meetings/2016/010116/board-meeting-agenda-21-september-2016>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/our-board/meetings/2017/010117/board-meeting-agenda-20-september-2017>

During those meetings the animal welfare assurance programme was explained and is based on the principles of “Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce” in line with good practice in wider law enforcement. This Welfare Assurance Programme, sponsored in partnership with Defra, clearly sets out the FSA ambition and approach enabling tracking of FSA and industry performance.

Delivery of this programme of activities can be summarised under four key themes:

- a) Strengthening verification of compliance
- b) Clarifying accountability and improving collaboration
- c) Improving education and instruction
- d) Better analysis and reporting