

# Quality Standard Mark for Halal Sheepmeat

AHDB Beef and Lamb is considering quality standards for Halal slaughtered Sheepmeat [both reversibly stunned and traditional religious slaughter without stunning]. In order to ensure these standards are fit for purpose, an initial draft proposal has been developed, which will form the basis for discussion. Each stage of the potential standard's supply chain is mapped out below and the associated questionnaire allows for comment.

## Farm Assurance

Product approved and accredited to use AHDB's Halal Quality Standard Mark would be processed through a fully assured supply chain. However, it is proposed the farm assurance element would not be mandatory at the initial launch but added at a later date. Where sheep are farm assured and also reversibly stunned, the products could be secondarily labelled as 'Red Tractor' or other scheme, in addition to Halal Assured.

For an animal to be farm assured it must have derived from a farm accredited to one of the following farm assurance modules:

- (RTA) Red Tractor Assurance for Farms – beef and lamb scheme
- (FAWL) Farm Assured Welsh Livestock
- (QMS) Quality Meat Scotland – cattle and sheep scheme
- (NIBL FQAS) Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme

Meeting the on-farm requirements of these assurance modules, allows producers to prove that their husbandry and welfare meet agreed levels of practice. These standards also cover:

- Identification and traceability
- Farm animal management
- Feed composition, storage and use
- Housing and handling facilities
- Medicines and veterinary treatments
- Transport of livestock
- Expansion of home-mixing standards for feed
- Herd/flock health plans
- Waste management plans

It is important that all buyers are able to confirm easily that a producer has a valid certificate. Assured producers could be issued with stickers which they should use on paperwork, accompanying every consignment of assured livestock that is sold.

## Abattoir Assurance

To be accredited to AHDB's Halal Quality Standard Mark, abattoirs must have one of the below site assurances:

- Red Tractor Assurance Meat Processing Scheme (Previously ABM Abattoirs & Cutting Plants)
- Global Food Standard (BRC) + Red Tractor Assurance Meat Processing Scheme (Traceability and Animal Welfare Modules)
- Global Food Standard (BRC) + Welfare & Traceability audited as part of Halal Quality Standard Mark
- International Food Standard (IFS) + Red Tractor
- QMS – Processor
- Assured Meat Processing Scheme (AMPS) – AIMS Standard
- Safe and Local Supplier Approval (SALSA) – For small scale cutting plants and processors

## The standards cover:

- Welfare
- Transport/deliveries
- Lairage
- Restraint
- Stunning (pre-slaughter or post-slaughter-where applicable)
- Slaughter
- Dressing
- Classification
- Chilling
- Storage
- Maturation
- Cutting and packing
- Further processing
- Labelling
- Hygiene and food safety
- Traceability

Each site would be required to have a written Halal Policy, including how much of the site's production is intended to be Halal-compliant, Halal production controls, segregation of non-compliant products and a Halal Compliance Officer or Halal management team who maintains overall responsibility for implementation and operation of the policy.

Criteria regarding pork or ingredients of porcine origin

- Abattoirs slaughtering pigs are not permitted to slaughter halal animals under this scheme
- Pork carcasses/meat cannot be kept in close proximity during storage with halal meat, physical segregation is required to separate pork meat/carcasses from halal meat through the use of dedicated Halal storage facilities
- Where pork is transported with halal meat, both sets of meats must be packed and segregated to avoid any contact
- Equipment used to process pork or ingredients of porcine origin cannot be used to process halal. Deep cleaning of equipment after pork processing is not permitted as part of this scheme.
- Sporadic porcine DNA testing may be carried out by the appointed auditing body based on risk assessment

## The Standards for Halal Slaughter

Two main Halal Quality Standard Marks will be available:

- One for pre-stunned animals using stipulated and approved stun-recoverable methods which have been objectively tested and transparent to the market place.

The standards should require:

1. No mechanical stunning
2. Head-only electrical stunning. Specifically excluding electric stunning that spans the heart (e.g. head-to-back stunning)
3. Minimum current of 1.0 amp with maximum current as set by EU law and independently verified to be recoverable.
4. Maximum duration of stun application of 4 seconds
5. Frequency of 100 Hz minimum, with higher frequencies reducing meat quality issues
6. Maximum voltage 450 V
7. Recording requirements to ensure the key stun parameters have been met over the audit period within stun equipment or a suitable additional stun assurance monitor i.e.

Maximum constant current (A or mA).

Maximum voltage (V).

Minimum frequency (Hz).

Maximum time of exposure

- One for traditionally slaughtered animals using the best practice of slaughter without stunning. A 'Best Practice' guide will need to be developed with industry to include a description of the slaughter process, optimal methods of restraint, knife optimisation recommended bleeding-out duration, training of slaughtermen/animal handlers and procedures for intervention in the case of an ineffective cut to minimise welfare compromise.
- A third method of slaughter, the stunning of animals after neck incision (post-cut stunning) would be accepted under the scheme. Post-cut stunning would be a standalone method or may be used where there is delayed loss of sensibility during traditional halal slaughter. Where a stun is applied after traditional Halal slaughter due to the latency of the onset of unconsciousness, such carcasses/meats cannot be labelled as traditional Halal slaughtered. The following are the proposed methods of stunning to be applied during post-cut Halal slaughter:
  - Electrical head-only stunning
  - Mechanical stunning

The wording 'stun / without stunning' will not be used in the primary branding of either mark but detailed in sub-branding enabling consumers to get the additional information they require on the actual process.

To enable export potential, the marks could be linked to the future Country of Origin regulations. European Regulations dictate that ruminants slaughtered without stunning should be individually and mechanically restrained to avoid unnecessary suffering and distress. It will be necessary to inspect and verify compliance with this regulation during audits. During the abattoir audit, the appointed Certification Body will undertake the inspection to verify compliance with all requirements for product to be classed as assured.

Where applicable, bolt-on audits will be undertaken by the appropriate authorities to verify compliance with all requirements for product to be classed as Halal assured.

The scheme will require participants to have a Halal Policy and to nominate a Halal Compliance Officer (or a halal management team) with overall authority & responsibility for implementing the Policy and the Halal Quality Standard Mark requirements.

## Monitoring

AHDB will appoint appropriate certification bodies to audit the scheme. Plants will be audited once a year or on a risk based assessment. AHDB would withstand the initial basic audit costs; any additional continuous audit by the Halal Certification Body would be covered by each individual plant. Sites would need to remain with the same certification body for one calendar year. Each assessment should be undertaken by Muslim personnel or in the presence of a suitably experienced Muslim to verify the process (e.g. scholar or technically competent individual).

*Halal Quality Assurance: pre-stunned*



*Halal Assurance: traditional*



## Scheme Management

The scheme will be operated by an independent external agency who will work closely with the certification bodies to co-ordinate plant audits and marketing support.

## Marketing Materials

Each company will need to sign up to the Halal Quality Standard Mark via a declaration form. On receipt and verification of the declaration form, the Halal assured plant will be issued the following marketing materials:

- Certificate
- Carcase tags and stamps
- Box stickers
- Vehicle vinyls

## Database (Internal use only)

A specific database will be developed to register Halal assured plants. Membership details & contact history will be logged on this database and the scheme will be free to join.

Customers of Halal assured plants will also be asked to sign a declaration form to confirm they are sourcing Halal assured product. Customer details will be logged on the database against the relevant supplier. 25% of these customers will be audited annually.

Consumer facing marketing materials will then be made available to these registered customers.

### These could include:

- Stockist sticker
- Cut charts
- Recipe leaflets
- Key date promotional activity – particularly linked to key dates within the Muslim communities

Foodservice sector members would be able to access marketing materials on request eg. tent cards, menu highlighters etc.