

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: HALAL

IS HALAL SLAUGHTER REGULATED IN NEW ZEALAND?

Yes. New Zealand has developed regulatory standards for Halal meat production. These standards are administered Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), which is the Government regulatory agency that also administers New Zealand's food safety regulatory framework. All New Zealand processing plants, including those that undertake halal slaughter, have MPI veterinarians on-site who monitor slaughter and processing operations.

WHAT DO THE HALAL REGULATORY STANDARDS COVER?

The Halal regulatory framework for Halal meat production sets out the standards and requirements for:

- Halal auditing and certification agencies (Approved Halal Organisations)
- Halal Slaughtermen
- Halal systems at processing plants

Approved Halal Organisations (AHOs) that undertake halal auditing and certification must be approved by MPI, and their auditing and certification staff must meet a number of competency requirements including NZQA unit standards.

Anyone who undertakes halal slaughter (halal slaughterman) must also meet a number of competency requirements including NZQA unit standards that cover knowledge of Shariah Law; knowledge of stock recovery; knife handling and sharpening skills; hygiene and food safety and work safety.

Plants that undertake halal slaughter must be listed by MPI and operate under halal programmes that set out how the plant will undertake halal processing. The plants must ensure that the halal programmes are consistent with all other regulatory requirements, including those covering food safety and animal welfare. Halal programmes must be approved by an AHO and must be registered with MPI.

WHAT ARE THE ANIMAL WELFARE REQUIREMENTS FOR ANIMAL SLAUGHTER IN NEW ZEALAND?

It is compulsory for all animals to be stunned before commercial slaughter in New Zealand. Stunning ensures an immediate loss of consciousness to prevent animals from feeling any pain during the slaughter process. The requirement for animals to be stunned prior to slaughter is contained in the [Animal Welfare \(Commercial Slaughter\) Code of Welfare 2018](#), which is available on the Ministry for Primary Industries website.

WHAT ABOUT EXEMPTIONS FOR HALAL SLAUGHTER?

In New Zealand there is no exemption to the requirement for pre-slaughter stunning, unlike in some other countries. Halal slaughter requires that the animal dies from the "halal cut" to the throat, i.e. that the pre-slaughter stun is not powerful enough to kill the animal. In premises that undertake halal slaughter in New Zealand, reversible

electrical stunning is used to ensure that animals are rendered unconscious instantaneously and remain unconscious at the time of slaughter, thus complying with both animal welfare and halal requirements.

HOW MUCH NEW ZEALAND MEAT IS "HALAL", AND WHY?

While there are no official statistics on halal production in New Zealand, nearly all of New Zealand's red meat export slaughter premises are certified to undertake slaughter in compliance with halal requirements. This gives the New Zealand red meat industry the flexibility to export different cuts from a single carcass to the best-returning markets. The industry currently serves some 120 markets worldwide.

WHO DECIDES IF NEW ZEALAND MEAT IS LABELLED "HALAL"?

There are two main reasons for New Zealand companies to obtain halal certification and labelling of meat before it is exported:

1. the importing country (typically in the Middle East and South East Asia) requires it as a compulsory market access condition, or
2. the end-customer requests it for their own commercial reasons.

In countries where halal certification and labelling is not a compulsory requirement, the decision is often the retailer's, as New Zealand meat is often not exported in 'retail-ready' form. The final packaging is generally done by the retailer in the market. Whatever the labelling of New Zealand lamb or beef, consumers can be assured that the animal will have been stunned before slaughter and die without pain.