

# Assurance Standards for Halal Sheepmeat

EBLEX proposes to introduce assurance standards for Halal slaughtered Sheepmeat (both stun and non-stun). In order to ensure these standards are fit for purpose an initial draft proposal has been developed, which will be the basis for industry consultation. The consultation will open on 24th October 2013 and close on 14th January 2014, after which EBLEX will review all responses before formally launching the Halal Standard Marks. Each stage of the proposed standard's supply chain is mapped out below and the consultation questionnaire at the back of the pack allows for comment. The questionnaire is also accessible online at: [www.eblextrade.co.uk/halal](http://www.eblextrade.co.uk/halal)

## Farm Assurance

Product approved and accredited to use EBLEX's Halal 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 stunned the products can be secondarily labelled as 'Red Tractor' 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.

By 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 are issued with stickers which they should use on paperwork, accompanying every consignment of assured livestock that is sold.

## Abattoir Assurance

To be accredited to EBLEX's Halal 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 Standard Mark
- International Food Standard (IFS) + Red Tractor
- Assurance Meat Processing Scheme (Traceability and Animal Welfare Modules)
- QMS – Processor

### The standards cover:

- Traceability
- Cutting and packing
- Lairage
- Labelling
- Processing
- Storage
- Slaughter
- Maturation
- Dressing
- Transport/deliveries
- Classification
- Welfare
- Chilling
- Hygiene and food safety

Processors must not process Halal products in the same batch as any non-Halal production.

## The Standards for Religious Slaughter

Two Halal 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 captive-bolt stunning
2. Head-only stunning. Specifically excluding electric stunning that spans the heart (e.g. head-to-back stunning)
3. Maximum current of 1.2 amps with minimum current as set by EU law of 1A
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 450v
7. Recording requirements to ensure the key stun parameters have been met over the period of the audit 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 non-stunned animals using the best practice of slaughter without stunning.

The wording 'stun / non stun' 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 mark could be linked to the future COOL 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 with overall authority & responsibility for implementing the Policy and the Halal Standard Mark requirements.

## Monitoring

EBLEX will appoint three UKAS registered certification bodies to audit the scheme. Plants will be audited twice a year or on a risk based assessment. EBLEX would withstand the basic audit costs; any additional continuous audit 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 / technically competent individual).

## Examples of Suggested Branding

*Halal Assurance: pre-stunned*



*Halal Assurance: non-stunned*



## 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 be needed to sign up to the Halal Standard Mark via a declaration form. On receipt and verification of the declaration form, the Halal assured plant will be able to source the following marketing materials:

- Certificate
- Carcase tags
- 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.