

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

Date released: 26 July 2017

### Annex – Request & Response

#### Request

*I am not allowed to eat halal meat but a lot of it is sold to the general unsuspecting population unlabelled despite it being against the law as religiously slaughtered meat should be sold to religious minorities only. I feel that halal slaughter is so widespread that I have so little choice. Therefore I always check the abattoir where the meat comes from and also check with supermarkets. Sometimes it is very difficult. As an example I can give you Tesco's reply re their chickens. They can only guarantee Tesco Finest, British Organic and Willow Farm as being 100 per cent non halal. Otherwise they don't know. The Red Tractor or the Soil Association also do not guarantee that the meat is not halal and is sold not properly labelled. So I can't trust those labels either. This is very unfair as the religious minorities have their meat properly labelled whereas the general population doesn't and is being deceived by buying unlabelled halal meat from all supermarkets.*

***Would you provide me with a list of UK abattoirs***

***1) which are 100 per cent non halal***

***2) which do both and sort by***

***a) slaughtering animals using reversible stunning***

***b) slaughtering animals without stunning***

***3) which are only halal and sort by***

***a) slaughtering animals using reversible stunning***

***b) slaughtering animals without stunning***

#### Response

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is not responsible for determining whether meat is halal. 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.

The criteria for what is considered halal, is set by a number of different halal accreditation bodies. These bodies recognise and give accreditation to premises that operate in line with their criteria. Food businesses can choose to be associated with these bodies on a voluntary basis.

I can confirm that at the time your request was received, the FSA had completed a survey of slaughterhouses carrying out slaughter without prior stunning and a list of all plants carrying out non-stun slaughter (not just for halal meat) was drawn up for this purpose. The FSA therefore currently holds information on non-stun premises

but not which of these produces halal meat. This information is being withheld from disclosure under the exemption provided by section 38(1)(a) and (b) of the FOI Act.

With regard to labelling, the Government is aware that there is public concern about meat from animals slaughtered in accordance with religious beliefs being sold to consumers who do not require their meat to be prepared in this way.

The Government believes that consumers should have the necessary information available to them to make an informed choice about their food. Defra is the Government Department which has responsibility for labelling products of animal origin and it is considering this issue in the context of the UK's exit from the EU and possible introduction of national labelling.