



Halal Meat Production and Market Opportunities

A 21st Century guide to the Halal market

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CONTEXT

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The views and opinions expressed in this book are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the publisher or any institution or organisation where the author is, or has been, employed. The content is the result of many years of experience by the author, gained while working in the Halal sector in various capacities. It also draws on the author's research experience, which resulted in the publication of numerous scientific papers on the subject matter of Halal in various peer-reviewed journals. Expert contributions and information obtained from various other sources are duly acknowledged.

Outline of the book

Chapter 1 of the book gives an overview of the global Halal market whilst chapter 2 defines Halal and draws on the origin of some accepted and prohibited procedures from the scriptures. Chapter 3 outlines business opportunities in the global Halal market highlighting the UK Halal market as a case study and New Zealand's Halal Programme. In chapter 4, the importance of animal welfare in Islam is explored with emphasis on welfare during animal rearing, sustainability of livestock agriculture, stewardship of nature, significance of animal sentience in Islam and the importance of humane slaughter in Islam. Chapter 5 looks at the rules governing Halal meat production. It starts off by looking at how Islamic jurists interpret the dietary laws with emphasis on the three main criteria employed by the jurists. It further considers acceptable and prohibited species of animals and explains the entire Halal slaughter process outlining the requirements with regard to the restraining of animals, the Halal neck cut, the prayer, the slaughterman, stun and non-stun slaughter and the bleeding of animals by manual and mechanical means. Chapter 5 concludes with the concept of hunting in Islam. Chapter 6 considers the influence of the anatomy and physiology of blood flow on the method of bleeding and how this can subsequently influence the latency of the onset of unconsciousness. Chapter 7 looks at the importance of Halal certification to food business operators and provides an outline of the steps to be considered in choosing a Halal certification body. In chapter 8, fraudulent activities in the Halal sector are examined with particular emphasis on livestock theft and the mislabelling of Halal meat.

A number of experts were recruited to complete short questionnaires as commentary to important topics covered in the book, these questionnaires and the experts' comments have formed part of the book.

Expert contributions

The author wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the following experts. Each expert was presented with a short questionnaire to comment on selected topics covered in this book. The author gratefully acknowledges their contribution.

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Table 1. Estimated population of Muslims in some Muslim-majority countries and continents

<i>Region</i>	<i>Estimated population of Muslims (in million)</i>
GCC countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain)	50
Rest of MENA (Iran, Turkey, Egypt etc.)	265
South Asia (e.g. Pakistan, India, Bangladesh etc.)	507
Southeast and East Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore etc.)	257
Sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia etc.)	243

population growth coupled with the fact that Muslims are heavy meat eaters, particularly lamb, mutton and poultry.

3.3.1 Population of Muslims in the UK

According to the UK’s Office of National Statistics (ONS), the population of the UK in 2011 was around 63 million, with Muslims making up 2.7 million (ONS, 2011). When broken down into gender, the proportion of female:male Muslims in the UK is 48%:52% (see Figure 5). The female:male ratio is important in consideration of meat consumption patterns within the Muslim community, females are largely responsible for grocery shopping and meal preparation in most Muslim households, this trend is however changing within the younger Muslim population. It is not uncommon these days for the husband to do the shopping and cook in Muslim family settings.

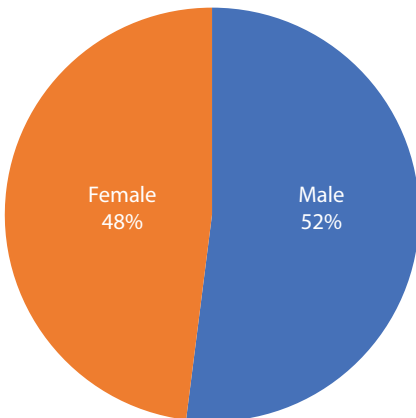


Figure 5. Proportion of female:male Muslims in the UK (Office of National Statistics, 2011).

Figure 9. Set up and display of meat in a Halal butchery concession in Tesco, Hayes, West London. Notice the different options from different cuts, burgers, fresh mince to lamb kebab mince.



In November 2019, Marks and Spencer (M & S) became the first major UK retailer to start selling own-brand Halal meat products. The retailer announced that it was venturing into the growing Halal market with six of its popular ready meals in about 36 stores across the UK. All the meals on offer contain chicken, and they have been independently certified by the UK's Halal Food Authority. The meals include chicken tikka masala, chicken and leek bake, chicken hotpot, chicken jalfrezi, chicken arrabbiata and chicken & mushroom tagliatelle.

The products will all be derived from poultry that have been stunned prior to slaughter with water bath stunning, a procedure approved as Halal-compliant by some Halal certification bodies, this may therefore appeal to some Muslims, and also to non-Muslims who are concerned about how the chicken may have been slaughtered. From his interaction with non-Muslim consumers the author has observed that the majority of non-Muslims are not concerned about the prayer said during Halal slaughter but are more concerned about whether the animal was stunned prior to slaughter or not. Further, there is evidence to suggest that the majority of non-Muslim veterinary students in the UK would consume Halal meat produced from stunned animals (Fuseini *et al.*, 2019). From the findings in Fuseini *et al.* (2019) and feedback from interaction with non-Halal consumers, the author believes Halal meat from stunned animals is acceptable to the majority of non-Muslims. The Halal products offered by M&S may therefore appeal to both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers.

Retailers can add value to their operations by understanding the shopping patterns and lifestyles of Halal consumers. The majority of Muslims prefer to buy their meat from local Muslim butchers despite the apparent lapses in hygiene and the limited options with regard to the cuts of meat on offer (Bonne and Verbeke, 2008; Ahmed, 2008; EBLEX, 2010). As stated above, many Halal



Figure 28. A sheep restrained in an upright position in a v-restrainer prior to stunning (electrical head-only stunning) (Photo Credit: Dr Claire White).

In contrast to the teachings of Islam on the need to protect the welfare of animals, some animal welfare organisations (e.g. Compassion in World Farming and Eyes on Animals) have highlighted abhorrent practices of animal cruelty in mainly Muslim-majority countries. In some of these countries (Egypt as a prime example) animals have been restrained or immobilised by cutting their tendons. It is also common practice in countries like Turkey, Lebanon and others for large ruminants to be restrained by their hindlegs, a procedure shown to compromise the welfare of cattle because of the size and weight of such animals. Figure 29 is an image showing a slaughter operative attempting to cut the tendons in the hind leg of a cow prior to slaughter, a practice commonly used during Halal slaughter in Egypt and other countries. The cut can sever both the superficial digital flexor and deep tendons, a procedure likely to cause severe pain to animals. Figure 30 shows a live cow restrained by hoisting it by its hindleg in a commercial Halal abattoir in Turkey. These methods of restraint are banned in many industrialised countries to protect the welfare of animals during slaughter.

You would expect Halal authorities to have banned the above practices which clearly compromise animal welfare, however, some Islamic scholars tend to turn a blind eye on these practices; this further highlight the perception that many Halal authorities tend to pay particular attention to the point of slaughter whilst ignoring the welfare of the animal prior to the neck-cut. In the case of poultry, the commonest method of restraint during Halal slaughter is by inversion and shackling. Figure 31 shows a chicken inverted and restrained in a metal shackle prior to stunning or slaughter. This method of restraint presents apparent bird welfare issues. Placing the feet of birds in metal shackles can be injurious and painful; broken bones and other injuries. Further, the inversion

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The Halal sector is one of the fastest growing segments of the meat industry due to rapid expansion in Muslim population across Europe, and the fact that Muslims over-index in the consumption of meat. This has resulted in a scramble for a share of the Halal market by the mainstream retail multiples and some independent butchers.

Despite the economic significance of this market, there are welfare concerns regarding traditional Halal methods of slaughter, additionally, the rules of Halal meat production are not well understood by industry due to differences in the interpretation of the dietary laws within the Muslim community. The objective of this book is to highlight the economic significance of the Halal market, explain the different Halal slaughter methods, touch on the significance of animal welfare in Islam, the benefits of Halal certification to food businesses and give suggestions on how the welfare of animals can be improved during Halal slaughter. Further, the acceptability of modern slaughter technologies (e.g. pre-slaughter stunning) based on different markets will be highlighted to enable food business operators understand the market dynamics.

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