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The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead,
Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK
www.ufaw.org.uk

Animal Welfare 2022, 31: 269-276
ISSN 0962-7286
doi: 10.7120/09627286.31.2.010

An update on halal slaughter: Current methods and ongoing research on halal meat production techniques and their implications for animal welfare

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Abstract

The ethical and economic significance of slaughtering animals for consumption by people of faith cannot be underestimated. On one hand, there are concerns for the welfare of animals during rearing, transport and slaughter, on the other, the market for halal meat products continues to grow at an exponential rate which has attracted the attention of independent and mainstream retailers. This paper considers the slaughter methods approved for the main animal species slaughtered for consumption by Muslims: beef, lamb, goats and poultry. It further examines the rationale for approving and rejecting certain methods of stunning and the implications this has for the welfare of animals. Areas where further research is needed to improve animal welfare during halal slaughter are also highlighted, and the authors have argued why a dialogue between animal welfare researchers, Islamic scholars and halal certification or accreditation bodies is vital in creating knowledge exchange between key stakeholders with a view to improving animal welfare during halal meat production.

Keywords: animal welfare, blood loss, halal slaughter, meat, stunning and slaughter, slaughter without stunning