



Halal Slaughtered Poultry – The Facts

While consumers may have questions about the process for Halal poultry slaughter, the fact is that there is no difference in the humane handling, food safety or quality between Halal and traditional slaughter methods. The commercial slaughter and processing of all poultry in the United States is done with the same high standards regarding these three principle areas of concern.

This fact sheet hopes to answer some questions surrounding this issue.

What does “halal” mean?

In the Islamic faith, the word 'halal' literally means permissible - and in translation it is usually expressed as lawful.

What is the difference between Halal poultry slaughter and traditional poultry slaughter?

Halal slaughter is no different than traditional slaughter except that a religious blessing is provided during the process - either in person or by a pre-recorded tape. Just like traditional slaughter, halal slaughter must comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) poultry slaughter regulations relating to sanitation, food safety, finished product standards and humane handling.

Is Halal poultry inspected?

Consumers can be confident that FSIS, the public health agency in the USDA, ensures that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged. Under the Poultry Products Inspection Act, FSIS inspects *all* raw U.S. poultry sold in interstate and foreign commerce, as well as imported products. Halal poultry bearing the USDA mark of inspection must meet the regulatory requirements mandated by the [Poultry Products Inspection Act](#), including sanitation, food safety, finished product standards and humane handling.

How widespread is Halal slaughter in the U.S. poultry industry?

According to FSIS, there are approximately 65 out of more than 300 poultry slaughter plants in the United States that are eligible to perform Halal slaughter. The number of eligible establishments that, at any given time, may actually be producing halal products can vary.

In order to ensure that poultry companies can export products to international customers and provide for a niche market in the United States, a traditional Islamic blessing is administered at these plants when they wish to package halal products (i.e. for export to the Middle East and Southeastern Asia, etc.). However, all of the products produced from those birds may not be certified by the plant as “Halal.”

Is Halal slaughter inhumane?

When slaughtering poultry for halal purposes it is mandatory that the birds incur as little pain as possible, just as in traditional slaughter. Therefore, immobilization of birds on the slaughtering line is permitted, usually by means of stunning, to render each bird insensible to pain, to avoid bruising of the carcass and avoid injury to all concerned.