

# Stun animals before kosher slaughter, rabbi says

Posted: Mon, 18th Jul 2022

A rabbi has recommended that animals slaughtered for kosher meat be stunned first to reduce suffering.

An internal report from Reform Judaism [concluded](#) "on balance, pre-stunning is better" for animal welfare when slaughtering animals according to the *shechita* (traditional Jewish slaughter) method.

The findings are in line with the government guidance on animal welfare at time of slaughter. Legislation requires all animals to be stunned before slaughter to minimise suffering.

But [exemptions](#) are granted for religious communities to meet Jewish and Muslim religious dietary preferences for kosher and halal meat.

No kosher certification authorities in the UK currently accept meat from animals stunned before slaughter.

## **Rabbi Dr Romain: 'Animals suffer less if they are prestunned'**

The report was produced by a working party set up by the Assembly of Reform Rabbis and Cantors to explore the issue of non-stun slaughter as it is increasingly questioned by Jews and non-Jews alike.

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain, who chaired the working party, said in [The Jewish Chronicle](#): "It quickly became clear that the vast majority of scientific opinion has no doubt that animals suffer less if they are pre-stunned.

"Shechita — involving the use of a razor sharp knife by a trained expert — is certainly very good, but not as good."

Dr Romain said if rabbis refuse to adopt prestunning, Jews who wish to reduce animal suffering but keep a kosher diet "face a dilemma" because at present, "it is simply impossible to do both".

He argued that Jewish authorities now accepted the ban on hoisting cattle upside down for slaughter, despite initially resisting the practice and insisting it was essential.

He said most Muslim imams had shown "religious flexibility" and accept halal meat from stunned animals despite some Islamic teachings being opposed to prestunning.

He added that it would be a "mistake" to suggest the campaign to end non-stun slaughter is led by antisemites, when the motivation for most people "is to lessen the pain felt by animals being killed for our benefit".

Dr Romain's article was [condemned](#) by religious slaughter lobby group Shechita UK, who called for its withdrawal.

## **NSS: 'Time for religious slaughter to be brought in line with animal welfare laws'**

The National Secular Society welcomed the report's findings.

NSS head of campaigns Megan Manson said: "It is encouraging to see non-stun shechita slaughter coming under increasing scrutiny within the Jewish community.

"As Dr Romain has acknowledged, religious practices evolve with the times. This is particularly important when those practices come into conflict with science, law, social attitudes and the welfare of others – including animals.

"It's therefore time for religious slaughter to be brought in line with animal welfare laws.

"We hope these findings will prompt kosher authorities to accept meat from animals that have been stunned before slaughter, and so meet the UK's slaughter standards as well as a rising demand for ethically-sourced kosher."

### **Notes**

- Reform Judaism is a national umbrella organisation of 43 synagogue communities.
- The government's advisory body the Farm Animal Welfare Council has said animals slaughtered without pre-stunning are likely to experience "very significant pain and distress" before they become unconscious.
- RSPCA, Compassion in World Farming and the British Veterinary Association all support an end to non-stun slaughter to improve animal welfare at the time of death.
- A 2015 YouGov poll [found](#) almost 80 per cent of the UK wants an end to non-stun slaughter.

*[Image by Peggy und Marco Lachmann-Anke from Pixabay](#)*

## **End non-stun religious slaughter**

We campaign to end religious exemptions to animal welfare laws.

- [Find out more](#)
- [Write to your MP](#)

- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Slaughter](#)

### **Related Campaigns**

-

## **End non-stun slaughter**

No more religious exemptions from animal welfare laws.

[Read More](#)

## **Related Articles**

### **NSS slams government for backtracking on non-stun slaughter labels**

Defra consultation on "fairer food labelling" omits slaughter, despite 97% supporting labels for slaughter method. [Read More »](#)

### **Ritual slaughter: is the government about to renege on its commitment to consult?**

Stephen Evans criticises the government's U-turn on animal welfare and says food labelling policy should serve consumers rather than religious interests. [Read More »](#)

### **Wales Green Party drops pledge to ban non-stun slaughter**

Members vote to monitor slaughter "without prejudice towards minority religious and cultural groups". [Read More »](#)

### **Clear support for mandatory labels for non-stun meat, report finds**

There is significant support for mandatory labels for meat from animals slaughtered without stunning, a government... [Read More »](#)

### **Policy could drive up non-stun meat in public sector, NSS warns**

Policy changes could lead to more meat from animals slaughtered without stunning supplied in the public sector, the NSS has warned. [Read More »](#)