

End religious non-stun slaughter

We campaign for an end to the religious exemption that allows animals to be slaughtered without pre-stunning.

Whilst we support the right to religious freedom, this is not an absolute right, and we do not think that exemptions should be made on religious grounds to animal welfare regulations intended to ensure that farm animals are slaughtered under the most humane conditions possible.

What's the problem?

Animal welfare legislation requires all animals to be stunned before slaughter in order to minimise suffering. The only exemption is for religious communities to meet Jewish and Muslim religious dietary preferences.

The scientific consensus is clear that it is more humane to stun an animal prior to slaughter than not to do so. The slaughter of animals without pre-stunning is permitted in the UK despite a recommendation by the Government's own advisory body, the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC), that the practice should be banned. The FAWC have concluded that animals slaughtered without pre-stunning are likely to experience "very significant pain and distress" before they become unconscious.

Likewise, the EU's Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) have stated that: "Due to the serious animal welfare concerns associated with slaughter without stunning, pre-cut stunning should always be performed."

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) have stated: "FVE is of the opinion that the practice of slaughtering animals without prior stunning is unacceptable under any circumstances".

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.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board have recommended new quality standards for halal sheepmeat, but as yet the distinction between stunned and non-stunned slaughter is unclear.

What are we doing?

- We're pressing for law changes to end the exemption that permits animals to be slaughtered in the UK without prior stunning.
- In the meantime, we are campaigning for meat produced from animals not stunned before slaughter to be clearly labelled to allow consumer choice. We [responded](#) to a [consultation](#) launched by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board over its proposed new quality [standards](#) for halal sheepmeat, expressing our support for their goals to add transparency and boost customer choice, but also our concern that the proposed labels are not clear enough for consumers to make an informed choice.
- In January 2018 we responded to a Consultation on the draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill, raising the point that the outcome of recognising animals as sentient beings and the need to protect them from pain and suffering should result in the end to religious exemptions to animal welfare laws regarding slaughter.
- In February 2018 we responded to a consultation launched by Lancashire County Council on

their proposal to only supply stunned meat to schools. We expressed our strong support for the proposal on animal welfare grounds. As a result of objections raised by ourselves and other groups and individuals, the council decided in October 2018 to [stop](#) supplying unstunned halal meat to schools, with the exception of poultry.

What you can do:

[I support the NSS campaign to remove religious exemptions from animal welfare laws that allow animals to be slaughtered without pre-stunning for kosher and halal meat.](#)

[Click to tweet](#)

Take action

Please consider supporting our petition on this issue, or writing to your MP.

- [Petition](#)
- [Letter to MP](#)

More information

- [Religious Slaughter Of Animals Briefing](#) (PDF, 712 Kb)

Halal, kosher and pre-stunned. What do religious rules mean for animal welfare?

- [Response to Lancashire County Council's halal meat consultation 2018](#)

The county council is considering its current policy for the supply of halal meat to schools. The council currently provides both stunned and un-stunned halal meat in a small number of schools, providing this service for school meals where there is the demand for it. The county council is considering the proposal to provide only stunned halal meat to schools.

The NSS responded strongly supporting the proposal to provide only stunned halal meat to schools.

[Read More](#)

- [Response to the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board](#)

Our August 2017 response to the consultation launched by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) over its proposed new quality standards for halal sheepmeat.

[Read More](#)

- [‘Halal hysteria’: Religious exemption from animal welfare law is the real issue](#)

[Read More](#)

- [Religious slaughter of animals FAQs](#)

Halal, kosher and pre-stunned. What do religious rules mean for animal welfare?

[Read More](#)

While you're here

Our campaigns, policy and casework cover a wide range of areas where religious privilege intrudes on people's rights. Please consider a donation to help support our work.

- [Support us from just £1 a month](#)