

7 November 2017

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe
Leader, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
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Dear Councillor Hinchcliffe,

Non-stun halal meat in school meals

We are writing to urge you to review Bradford's policy on supplying halal meat from animals that have not been stunned prior to slaughter for meals in schools and other establishments.

As you may be aware, Lancashire County Council voted in October cease supplying non-poultry meat unless the animals were stunned before slaughter, on the grounds that non-stunned slaughter is unnecessarily cruel. We now urge Bradford to amend its policy for the sake of animal welfare.

As you will be aware, 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 and that slaughter without pre-stunning causes avoidable pain and distress. The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) has said that the practice should be banned, concluding 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, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, RSPCA, Compassion in World Farming and the British Veterinary Association have all spoken out in opposition of non-stun slaughter.

It should be noted that halal is not synonymous with non-stun slaughter. In the production of halal meat, pre-stunning is common, both in Muslim majority nations and in the UK. Whilst there is no consensus regarding what constitutes halal, the majority of halal meat sold in the UK is from animals stunned before slaughter, indicating that the most Muslims accept electrical pre-stunning prior to the cut as being consistent with halal requirements.

Other councils acknowledge that non-stun slaughter is unnecessary and cruel, and for this reason they only supply stunned halal meat to schools. Regarding its halal policy, Aberdeen City Council says:

"Our suppliers take animal welfare very seriously. All farmed animals which are slaughtered for their products are done so humanely, in accordance with EU and UK law... Traditional Halal slaughter, which forbids the stunning of animals, is a practice which is not accepted by our suppliers on animal welfare grounds."

We urge City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council to consider adopting a similar policy for halal meat, and to phase out the supply of non-stunned halal meat to schools and other establishments.

Thank you for your time on this matter. We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Evans
Campaigns Director