



QUALITY HALAL MEAT

from BRITAIN



Foreword



In an ever-changing global halal marketplace, the UK meat industry is continually evolving and striving for excellence in farming and meat processing techniques with a view to producing meat to the highest animal welfare standards and meat quality attributes, with minimal impact on the environment in compliance with the rules and values of halal meat production. UK meat processors are better equipped to meet the requirements of different halal markets due to their many years of experience in serving key halal markets and segments around the UK, Europe and the Middle East.

There are several industry-led initiatives aimed at assuring halal consumers of the compatibility of meat produced in the UK following strict halal rules. AHDB's creation of a halal sector manager's role highlighted the levy body's commitment to developing the halal sector and ensuring market access to a growing list of halal markets, particularly the Middle East market. AHDB also created a UK halal stakeholders' group with a view to bringing together opinion leaders from the Muslim community and meat processors to exchange ideas on how to drive the halal sector forward. There is also an annual halal stakeholders farm visit programme that involves visiting farms across the UK with halal meat processors, Islamic scholars, and halal certification bodies to interact with farmers on issues around supply chain trading, animal welfare and husbandry. UK Animal Welfare Minister, Lord Goldsmith, launched the Demonstration of Life (DoL) assurance scheme in April 2021. The DoL assurance scheme seeks to provide assurance to halal meat processors that head-only electrical stunning of small ruminants does not result in the death of animals prior to bleeding, an important requirement for halal meat production.

Dr. Awal Fuseini – Halal Sector Manager





The UK halal brand

The UK meat industry has catered for the dietary needs of the rapidly growing UK Muslim population for decades. With a population of just under three million according to the 2011 population and housing census, meat forms an important component of the diet of Muslims, with evidence showing that Muslims in the UK account for over 20% of UK domestic sheep meat consumption. Aside from the domestic market, UK processors have years of experience exporting halal meat to countries within the EU with large Muslim populations, including France, Germany, the Netherlands, and others. Consumers of UK halal meat usually associate it with high eating quality, rolling grassland hills and high animal welfare. Our farmers are proud of what they do, and they strive to produce animals under the best conditions to meet the expectations of consumers.

As the third-largest global exporter of sheep meat, UK meat processors are well-positioned to supply high-quality products to consumers in Muslim-majority countries outside the EU. In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the volume of UK halal sheep meat exported to the Middle East, and UK processors are working diligently to sustain this trend. Our processors understand the needs of different markets and strive to meet specific requirements of importers in terms of carcass conformation, weight, and fat cover. There are measures in place for UK processors to trace products back to the farms where animals came from, giving consumers an extra layer of confidence and peace of mind.

Halal assurance lies at the heart of UK halal meat production. There are several UK halal certification bodies that are approved and accredited by authorities in the Middle East to certify meat for export to the Middle East. Depending on customer requirements, UK meat processors fully comply with the requirements of the GCC halal standard (GSO993), Malaysian halal standard (MS1500/2009), Indonesian halal standard (MUIS HAS 23000) and others.

Engagement with the Muslim community

AHDB has a dedicated halal sector manager who works closely with farmers, abattoir operators and the Muslim community to create a better understanding of the requirements of different halal markets. The UK has a thriving Muslim community in all parts of the country. AHDB has created a halal stakeholders' group, which is made up of Islamic scholars, halal certification bodies, farmers, and abattoir operators to exchange ideas on good management practices. The halal stakeholder group is a platform for the exchange of ideas between all players, with a view to improving halal meat production practices in the UK. There is also an annual halal stakeholders' farm visit scheme which enables farmers to improve their knowledge on halal while halal stakeholders gain an insight into different systems of farming, feeding and husbandry procedures.



Cambridge Mosque, UK

AHDB has produced several resources that are available to UK halal meat processors to improve their procedures and enable them to penetrate the growing halal market. Some of these resources have included a dedicated halal cutting guide, educational materials on different methods of slaughter, a guidance booklet on Qurbani or Udhiya and hundreds of recipes to encourage halal consumers to try different dishes.

Farm excellence

The UK farming industry is one of the most regulated industries in the world. These regulations are in place to ensure that our farmers produce animals to the highest animal welfare standards with minimal impact on the environment. Our farmers understand the importance of animal welfare and environmental sustainability in halal meat production and continue to produce animals that meet the strict halal requirements in terms of the type of feed and husbandry procedures they employ.

Weather conditions in the UK support the growth of vast areas of grassland that is then utilised by our farmers to feed their livestock, resulting in meat that is of superior eating quality. The UK has more registered breeds of sheep than any country in the world; farmers are therefore able to select commercial breeds dependent on their target market, customer expectations and local climatic and grassland conditions. We regularly provide opportunities for halal stakeholders to visit farms and observe excellence in action.



Scan here to view a video of a halal farm visit



Halal abattoirs

The UK is the largest producer of sheep meat in Europe and has served halal markets around the world for decades. With an increasing population of Muslims in the UK and abroad, UK meat processors have the capacity to service the domestic and increasing list of global halal markets, including the Middle East. UK abattoir operators operate in line with UK animal welfare and food safety legislation, in addition to compliance with halal slaughter rules supervised by several reputable halal certification bodies. To enhance halal compliance, the UK recently launched the DoL assurance scheme, which is aimed at safeguarding the integrity of halal products in UK abattoirs. The scheme was launched by UK Animal Welfare Minister, Lord Goldsmith, and seeks to ensure that any stunning method used to produce halal products does not result in the death of animals before they are slaughtered to comply with the strict halal rules.





The halal slaughter process and certification

There is a legislative requirement for slaughter operatives in the UK to hold a Certificate of Competence (CoC). This ensures that they understand the slaughter process and the implications of their role on animal welfare and public health. In addition to holding a CoC, halal slaughter operatives are also expected to meet the religious requirements. Halal certification bodies carry out the necessary due diligence to ensure that halal slaughter operatives meet the religious criteria. For instance, slaughter operatives must be practicing Muslims who have attained the age of discretion.

The slaughter operative must recite the *Tasmiyyah* (mentioning the name of God All-Mighty) before each slaughter. To facilitate bleeding, the slaughter line must be designed in such a way that it allows sufficient time for blood to fully drain out of the carcass because the consumption of flowing blood is prohibited in Islam. Strict hygiene and segregation procedures are followed during carcass dressing, evisceration, chilling, and transport.

Food businesses that export their products to the Middle East have halal slaughter operatives and supervisors who oversee the whole process to ensure it complies with the strict Shariah requirements for halal meat production. Consignments destined for the Middle East are accompanied by halal export certificates and relevant documents issued by reputable halal certification bodies to attest to the halal status of products. Export health certificates are also issued by the UK competent authority for all meat consignments to the Middle East.

The UK has several halal certification bodies that are recognised by ESMA, SASO, SFDA and authorities in other Middle East countries to issue halal export certificates.



Udhiya/Qurbani

The UK is a market leader in the practice of Udhiya for Muslims – known locally as Qurbani, meaning sacrifice in Urdu. Qurbani can be viewed as the Muslim thanksgiving. UK meat processors have many years of experience in selecting the right animals for Qurbani. High-quality animals of the right age and condition are critical when making a thanksgiving offering to God All-Mighty. These are slaughtered at the right time after the Eid-al-Adha prayers have been performed. After the sacrifice, local charities collect donations of meat to distribute to food banks in the UK as well as skin monies to provide for the poor and needy locally and internationally. Over the years, UK meat processors have also served Qurbani customers within the EU, particularly in France, Germany, and Holland.



Scan here to view our Qurbani video





Lamb carcass classification

Whatever your specifications are, UK halal meat processors can supply halal sheep meat products that meet your expectations. With most importers in the Middle East indicating preference for smaller lamb carcasses (between 12–16 kg), UK exporters can meet this requirement in addition to meeting additional criteria around carcass conformation and level of fat cover.

The UK and countries within the EU use a system of carcass classification, which employs the EUROP grid for conformation, and fat level is classed between 1 and 5. Halal importers looking for UK lamb can use the chart below as a guide.



Market signals

- Red:** Little or no demand
Discount prices
Poorest returns
- Yellow:** Medium demand
Average prices
Moderate returns
- Green:** High demand
Premium prices
Best returns

Conformation Class ↑ Improving conformation

Conformation is determined by a visual appraisal of shape, taking into account carcass profile and fullness of legs. No adjustment is made for the influence of fat on overall shape

		Fat Class → Increasing fatness						
		1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5
Conformation Class	E							
	U							
	R							
	O							
	P							



Fat is determined by visual assessment of external fat cover. There are five main classes. Classes 3 and 4 are subdivided into L (leaner) and H (fatter)

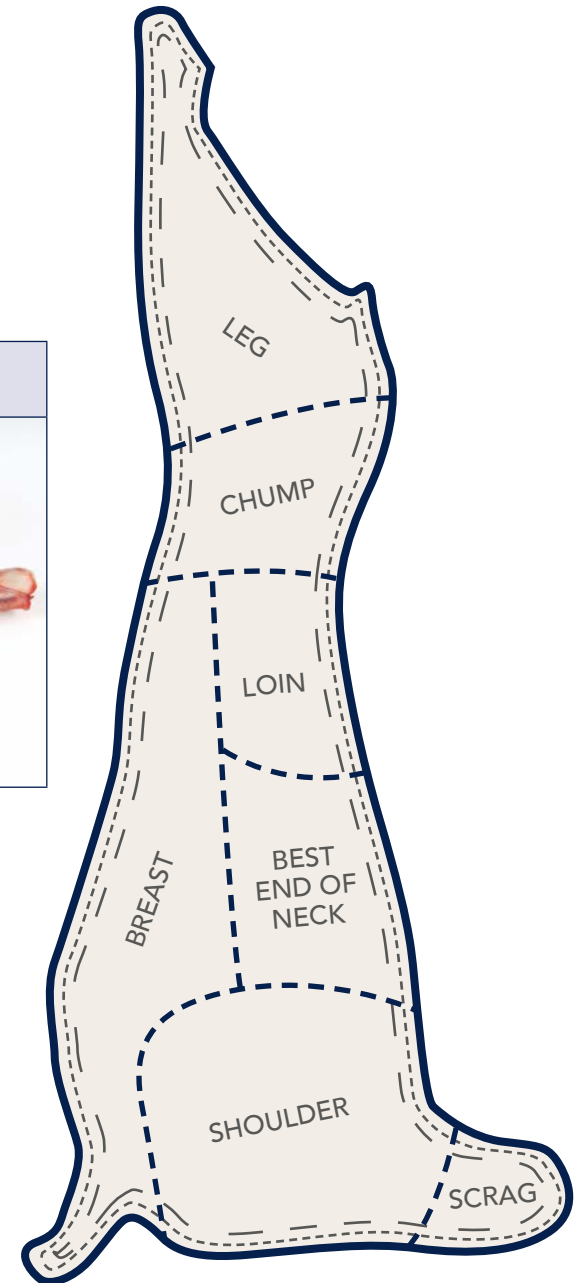
Cuts of lamb

In addition to supplying whole carcasses to the Middle East and other key halal markets, UK processors can cut and pack different cuts of lamb and mutton to meet importer specifications. Whether you want your products shipped by sea or airfreight, our processors can supply a consistent product that fully meets your requirements.

Below are some of the popular cuts of meat UK exporters send to the Middle Eastern market; bespoke cuts can also be processed to meet importers' specific needs.

Leg and chump	Middle	Forequarter
		

Carvery lamb leg	Rack of lamb
	



Further information

Importers looking to import halal meat from the UK should contact the following for a full list of UK meat exporters:

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AHDB is a statutory levy board, funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain. Our purpose is to inspire our farmers, growers and industry to succeed in a rapidly changing world. We equip the industry with easy-to-use, practical know-how which they can apply straight away to make better decisions and improve their performance. Established in 2008 and classified as a non-departmental public body, AHDB supports the following industries: meat and livestock (cattle, sheep and pigs) in England; horticulture, milk and potatoes in Great Britain; and cereals and oilseeds in the UK. AHDB's remit covers 72% of the total UK agricultural output. Further information on AHDB can be found at ahdb.org.uk

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