

HALAL news

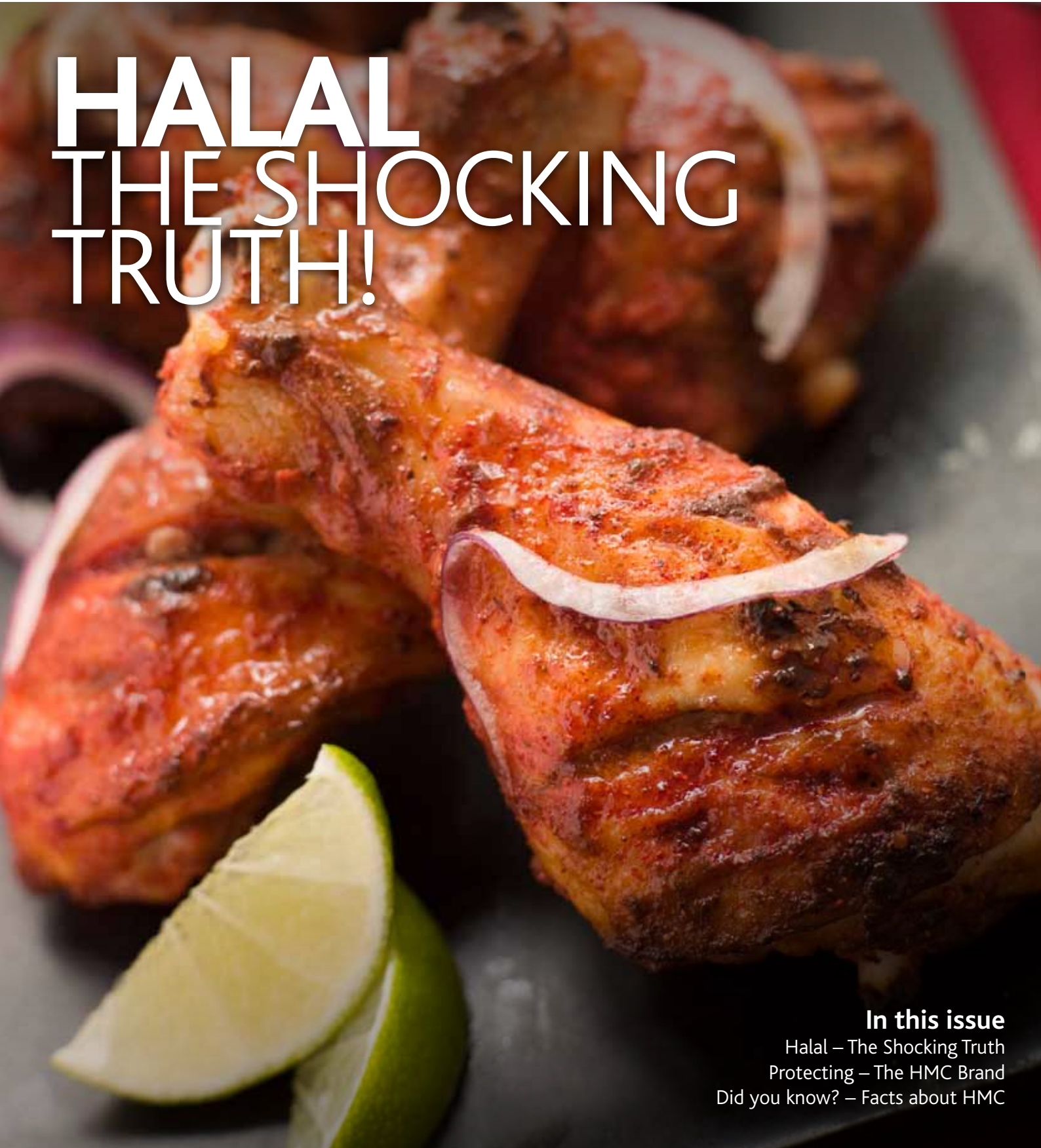


Your Seal of Assurance!

Issue 14 | September 2011

the official newsletter of the Halal Monitoring Committee

HALAL THE SHOCKING TRUTH!



In this issue

Halal – The Shocking Truth
Protecting – The HMC Brand
Did you know? – Facts about HMC

HALAL THE SHOCKING TRUTH!

With so much controversy about Halal meat, this article attempts to shed some light on why the move away from the prophetic method of slaughter has been causing so much debate within the Muslim community and further afield.

It exposes the, shocking truth about electrical stunning and mechanical slaughter. This article also explains what the industry does not want you to know about these new practices.

Firstly, amongst Muslims there is a unanimous view that the prophetic (unstunned) method of Halal provides for the highest standards in animal welfare and quality, a point of view also supported by science. So why change and introduce all the controversy?

As-salamu 'Alaykum w.w, on behalf of HMC, I would like to wish all our readers and supporters a blessed Ramadhan and one that brings us closer to our Creator.

Although we fast during the days, the food we eat during the evening and night is extremely important to help us in our spiritual journey to become closer to Allah, as a morsel of Haram can be detrimental to the hours of worship and effort that we make.

Let us make Iftar with Halal, make sehri with Halal and wishing you all a happy Eid with beautiful nourishing Halal food.

Please remember all HMC personnel in your duas and continue to make dua for the success of this organisation. Your support and prayers are greatly appreciated.

Wassalam

Yunus Dudhwal
Chairman

editorial

The Halal Controversy

Haji Mohammed Siddique, HMC's Plant Controller explains that the Halal controversy in the UK has been caused by two very different events:

'Advances' in Slaughter Methods

The Halal meat industry has introduced new systems of slaughter management including: electrical stunning; mechanical blades and more recently the use of gas stunning. Primarily, these systems have been introduced to improve speed of meat production and lower unit costs. Additionally arguments are often presented that these methods improve animal welfare and quality. The uses of these systems have sparked raging debates within the Muslim Community.

The Wider Political Debate – "Halal Under Attack"

Additionally, animal welfare groups and the far Right have waded into the debate surrounding Halal, proclaiming it a cruel and in-humane act that must be abolished. In April 2011 Holland called for the banning of the prophetic method of slaughter. Science and research are often quoted to support these claims, but this is driven by a highly Islamophobic agenda.

It is therefore not surprising how this cocktail has led to the average person being confused as to what is and is not Halal. People also do not understand what is acceptable and what is true about the controversy surrounding Halal.

So Let's Get Back to Basics

Halal meaning "Permissible" is a basic yet significant element of worship in the lives of Muslims. A requirement that dictates the way we live and act and one that sets the standards for ethical, moral and spiritual beliefs.

It is also most famously recognised for its rules regarding food and especially Halal meat. For Muslims there is no choice but to consume food that meets the Halal criteria.

Table 1 - The Importance of Halal

Quaran verses	Importance of Halal
"O Messengers, eat from the pure foods and work righteousness" (Holy Quran 23:51)	Abu Baker RA narrated that Allah's Messenger PBUH said
"O you who have believed, eat from the pure things which we have provided you" (Holy Quran 2:172)	"That body will not enter Paradise which has been nourished with Haram" (Baihaqi)
"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth (that is) lawful and pure" (Holy Quran 2:168)	S'ad RA relates: Allah's messenger PBUH said
"So eat of that (meat) upon which Allah's name has been mentioned, if you are believers in His verses" (Holy Quran 6:118)	"O S'ad purify your food (and as a result) you will become one who's supplications are accepted. I swear by He in whose hands the soul of Muhammad PBUH lies, verily a servant (of Allah) tosses a Haram morsel in his stomach (due to which) no deed is accepted from him for 40 days" (Tabarani)
"And do not eat that upon which the name of Allah has not been mentioned, for indeed it is a grave disobedience". (Holy Quran 6:121)	

Basic Criteria for Halal

- Animal is alive and healthy prior to slaughter (also correct species of animal)
- Mandatory recitation of Tasmiah by a Muslim slaughter man (blessing) of each animal
- Swift and humane incision rendering the animal insensible to pain (the slaughter)
- Compliance ensuring 3 or 4 main vessels are cut

Full criteria for Halal can be found on www.halalmc.org (Under Resources Section - What is Halal ?)

However, there are several methods by which Halal is now produced, so let's look at each.

The Prophetic Method of Slaughter (Un-Stunned)

The prophetic method of slaughter follows the same method of slaughter today, as was the case fourteen hundred years ago. Today, it has become synonymous with un-stunned Halal and this practice followed by Muslims and Jews is allowed as an exemption in UK Law [Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1991) FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL].

This method remains a universally accepted standard for Halal accepted by all Muslims globally. The prophetic method of Halal continues to demonstrate compassion towards animals and is supported by science explaining how it promotes animal welfare and quality outcomes.

Some remarks of the non-Muslim scientists:

"the Islamic way of slaughtering is the most humane method of slaughter and that captive bolt stunning, practiced in the West, causes severe pain to the animal" [1978, Professor Wilhelm Schulze]

"It is interesting to ask why, if this [Halal/Kosher] method of slaughter can render an animal unconscious immediately, it is treated as an exemption to the requirement of [Law] humane slaughter" [1994, Dr Freeman Boyd]

Muslims naturally accept this already, as it is part of the teachings of the Qur'an and our Prophet Muhammed SAW (peace be upon him).

Electrical Stunning

The use of Electrical Stunning was introduced in the meat industry as an aid to help improve speeds and reduce costs. An electric shock or stun makes an animal immobile instantly and hence improves the handling of the animal beyond this point.

There are various types of stunning used in the preparation of Halal food. These include:

- The captive bolt pistol (used for cows/cattle)
- Electric stunning (used for sheep)
- Electrified water bath (used for poultry)

There are many research papers that purport evidence that stunning immobilizes animals and makes them insensible to pain [1985, University of Bristol in 1985 Fourth, N Gregory and S Wotton]. However, there are several controversies and debates, which include:

- Stunning can kill the animal and carrion is impermissible (slaughtering an animal that is already dead)
- Stunning causes significant stress for animals – it induces an epileptic seizure and this stress results in the release of many toxins into the body (diseased animals are prohibited in Islam)
- There are many issues with stunning – in fact [10%] of animals are said to be mis-stunned causing pain [FAWC 1982 and 1984]
- In stun trial in Spain [2010, EBLEX] evidence was collected that sheep that were stunned recovered came back to consciousness. However, Trial Attendee, explains "that the unedited DVD would actually show the animals defecating and urinating caused by the electric shock. The animals 'recovering' remained in a paralysed and disorientated state for several minutes, it convinced me to the horrors of stunning".

The shocking thing is that the views of stunning presented tends to support a one sided picture – the benefits to animal welfare and a humane alternative that meets the requirements for Halal.

The controversies are often omitted and not explained – it has led to confusion within the Muslim community.

Human Free Slaughter – Mechanically Assisted Slaughter

Mechanical Slaughter significantly increases the speed of slaughter in poultry slaughter houses. A rotating mechanical blade is used to apply the cut to chicken at speed, hence removing the need for human action'. Some slaughter houses employ Muslims (to add a human touch) to 'pray' the Tasmiyah on the animal as it passes over the mechanical blade.

Mechanical slaughter is always preceded by electrical stunning (usually water bath electrical stunning with the issues already highlighted).

There are several Muslim countries who have standards that accept Mechanical Slaughter although many have removed this from their standards in recent years [Malaysia Halal Standard Revision 2, 2009]

There are some additional controversies with Mechanical Slaughter:

- A Muslim (human) does not conduct the act of slaughter (95% of 282 scholars in the UK Halal survey rejected this method of slaughter [Halal Survey 2009])
- The mechanical blade decapitates 1-2% of the poultry [an act that is not permissible for Halal] – it is argued that these birds are removed although this is disputed by industry insiders as an impractical process with no transparency
- The mechanical blade is not always capable of assuring a frontal cut [a requirement for Halal].

Mechanical Slaughter is widely disputed in the UK and in many countries however the majority of poultry in this country is slaughtered this way and remains unlabelled to the average Muslim consumer.

Conclusion

The prophetic method of slaughter provides for the highest standards in animal welfare and quality – a view supported by science. The pursuance of Halal and Kosher using un-stunned is permitted and protected under UK Law. Most importantly it is universally accepted by all Muslims in the UK and globally.

Over the past two decades, new slaughter systems have been introduced including stunning and mechanical slaughter in the UK and globally. These have been introduced silently, without consent of the Muslim community and its leaders. It has apparently benefited the Muslim community with cost improvements and speed with the shadow of Halal controversy.

It is time the Muslim community took control of its destiny and ensured that its prophetic method of slaughter remains protected (before bans on Halal are called for as has been the case in Holland).

The debate is one for the learned to interpret based on the best of science, but more importantly interpretation of Quaranic scriptures and Hadith and not silently introduced without our knowledge.

HMC is leading the debate in the UK on protecting the prophetic and the most humane method of Halal. It has given the Muslim community the choice to continue to eat genuine Halal without fear and also provide a voice to put a stop to the silent implementation of these new systems ("not in our names"). Please continue to support HMC and say no to these changes. Insha-Allah.

*1 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1374825/Netherlands-vote-law-banning-slaughter-meat-halal-kosher-methods.html>

PROTECTING THE HMC BRAND

by Rafique Patel, Bond Adams Solicitors

The HMC logo and seal has become a hallmark of recognition for genuine Halal in the UK. It is used by many of our consumers to gain confidence that what they are eating is genuinely Halal.

The HMC branding is protected under UK trademark laws and is used to identify and protect genuine Halal products by HMC. Regrettably, the Arabic word "Halal" has no definition according to law enforcers and can be displayed and abused without any legal recourse in UK.

Despite this, HMC encounters companies who claim to be HMC approved when they are not, and who are not subject to the strict audit system implemented by HMC.

So how does HMC respond? Rafique Patel from Bond Adams explains...

As Legal advisers to HMC, we have dealt with a number of situations where restaurants, takeaways or butchers have attempted to:

- Directly use the HMC logo without permission
- Subtly claim association with HMC when there is non (claims of association include statements such as "HMC available", "HMC approved meat").

In either case the outlets are obtaining benefit from trading off the HMC branding either directly or indirectly by "passing off association" when there is none.

Rafique explains, "We will always ask outlets to remove HMC branding in an amicable way, it is not our intention to use legal recourse as first priority. In most circumstances, companies had not realised their mistake and are happy to acquiesce".

However, in several cases we have companies who have refused to remove the HMC branding, in which case we have issued and used patent laws to enforce removal. In all cases removal has been achieved".

BOND ADAMS LLP
SOLICITORS

ARE PROUD TO BE ADVISERS TO HMC

Copyright, Patents and Trade Marks	Insolvency
Commercial Property	Landlord & Tenant
Debt Collection	Leases
Employment Cases	Litigation & Dispute Resolution
Family & Matrimonial	Property Disputes
House Sales & Purchasing	Wills, Trusts & Probate

Free initial consultation also available

Contact us for a competitive and specialist approach

AWARD WINNING EXPERTISE

Contact Us:
Rafique Patel, Partners and the team
Richmond House
One Zero Five London Road
Leicester, LE2 0PF
T: 0116 285 8080
E: lawyers@bondadams.com
W: bondadams.com

Yunus Dudhwala, Chairman HMC states "HMC will always protect HMC's branding, so that it does not fall into the same category as the unprotected word Halal. Consumers trust HMC and we must continue to protect that trust".

Rafique Patel and Partners at Bond Adams Solicitors have acted as Solicitors for HMC for the past three years. The company specializes in all aspects of dispute resolution, including copyright, patents and trademarks (<http://www.bondadams.com/>).

Did you know?

The Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC) is an independent, non-profit, registered charity organisation whose main aim is to certify the production of genuine Halal food. HMC complies with the UK Laws for food production as well as Islamic dietary compliance Laws.

Things you may not know about HMC:

- 1 HMC has the highest branded recognition and is the most trusted brand in the UK
- 2 HMC has grown by over 110% year on year - a signal of its support
- 3 Our monitors visit 500+ shops almost daily on a national basis!

- 4 The HMC system costs the industry on average less than 2p per chicken/kilogram of meat
- 5 HMC operates in over 35 towns & cities in the UK nationally on a daily basis
- 6 HMC certifies production at over 55 abattoirs and processing plants in the UK, Ireland and abroad
- 7 On a weekly basis over 750+ hours are donated by staff and public free in support of HMC
- 8 HMC employs over 135+ staff including inspectors and monitors nationally
- 9 The elected National Executive Board (NEC) consists of over 15 unpaid volunteers
- 10 The NEC include Islamic Scholars (Muftis and Imams) and representatives from industry

- 11 HMC membership is varied and includes people from diverse Muslim denominations
- 12 HMC is supported by a network of Local Area Groups (LAGS) throughout the country
- 13 The LAGs number over 150 volunteers in 35 towns and cities in the UK
- 14 HMC is a member of the Halal Steering Group on the FSA (Food Standards Agency) and Halal Steering Group at EBLEX (English Beef and Lamb Executive).

All to bring you Halal to your doorstep with confidence! Alhamdu-Lillah.

For a full listing of our certified plants and outlets please refer to the HMC website - www.halalmc.co.uk



Your Seal of Assurance!