



INSTITUTIONAL STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GASES IN HALAL SLAUGHTER

Position on Controlled Atmosphere Stunning in Poultry Slaughter

Instituto Halal de Junta Islámica, in its commitment to safeguarding the religious principles of halal slaughter, ensuring compliance with international standards, and protecting the rights of Muslim consumers, considers it necessary to publicly state its position regarding the use of gases as a stunning method prior to poultry slaughter.

Instituto Halal expressly rejects the use of gas stunning systems in halal slaughter, as they do not provide the required guarantees that animals remain alive and that stunning is reversible, and because they are incompatible with the requirements established by major international halal certification standards.

1. Halal Slaughter and Its Fundamental Requirements

Halal slaughter (dhabihah) is a religious procedure subject to specific requirements derived from Islamic principles and established in international halal certification standards.

One of its fundamental principles is that the animal must be alive at the time of ritual slaughter and that its death must result from the slaughter itself, rather than from any prior stunning procedure.

Animal welfare is equally an essential principle of Islamic ethics. The Prophetic tradition establishes the duty to treat animals with compassion and to avoid causing them unnecessary suffering, as stated in the hadith recorded in Sahih Muslim (1955). Therefore, respect for animal welfare and compliance with the religious requirements of slaughter must be ensured simultaneously, without either replacing or overriding the other. Where certain halal standards exceptionally permit stunning, they require that it be reversible and that it neither cause death nor inflict injuries incompatible with the animal's recovery.

2. What Is Gas Stunning in Poultry Slaughter?

Gas stunning, technically known as Controlled Atmosphere Stunning (CAS), is an industrial procedure used primarily in poultry slaughterhouses to induce unconsciousness in animals before slaughter.

The system involves placing birds collectively into the process while they remain in the same transport crates in which they arrive at the slaughterhouse, without first removing birds that may have died during transportation, unlike the procedure followed in live-bird shackling systems.

The birds are subsequently transported into chambers or tunnels where they are exposed to controlled concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrogen (N₂), argon (Ar), or mixtures of these gases. **Exposure to these gases alters the animals' physiological functions, ultimately causing loss of consciousness and/or death.**

3. Risks and Incompatibility with Halal Slaughter Requirements

The objective of gas stunning is to induce unconsciousness in the animal. **However, achieving this effect does not demonstrate that the animal remains alive or that it would be able to regain consciousness if slaughter were not performed. Indeed, tests conducted in poultry slaughterhouses have shown that birds subjected to this stunning method do not regain consciousness when left to rest on the floor before slaughter.**

From the perspective of halal certification, this procedure presents three fundamental concerns:

- **Risk of death before slaughter:** Exposure to certain gases, concentrations, and exposure times may cause the animal's death before the ritual cut, thereby compromising one of the essential requirements of halal slaughter: that death must result from the slaughter itself.
- **Lack of guarantees of reversibility:** Under the practical operating conditions of industrial slaughterhouses, there is insufficient conclusive technical evidence to establish, individually and systematically, that gas stunning is reversible in every bird exposed to the process. This limitation prevents assurance of compliance with the conditions of stable life (ḥayāt mustaqirrah) required by religious interpretations and halal standards that establish this requirement.
- **Difficulties in monitoring and supervision:** The simultaneous treatment of large numbers of birds makes it difficult to verify each animal's physiological condition individually and to ensure that none has died before slaughter.

These limitations prevent the conformity of industrial gas stunning procedures from being considered adequately demonstrated under halal standards that require guarantees of life and reversibility or expressly prohibit their use.

4. Compliance with International Halal Standards

The rejection of gas stunning is not a criterion exclusive to the Instituto Halal. Rather, it reflects requirements established in major international halal standards and certification systems.

Among the principal international standards that do not recognise gas stunning as an authorised method for halal poultry slaughter are:

International Halal Standards:

- OIC/SMIIC 1:2019
- SNI 99002:2016
- MS 1500:2019
- GSO 993:2015
- UAE.S 993:2022

Furthermore, organisations and authorities involved in halal regulation, certification, accreditation, or recognition, including **BPJPH** (Indonesia), **JAKIM** (Malaysia), **MUIS** (Singapore), **EIAC** (United Arab Emirates), **SFDA** (Saudi Arabia), **HAK** (Türkiye), and **GAC** (Gulf countries), establish or apply requirements whose compliance must be verified for the relevant certification processes and access to their respective markets.

A distinction must be made between the religious permissibility of certain procedures under specific conditions and their acceptance under a technical halal certification standard.

The existence of religious rulings that contemplate conditional forms of stunning does not constitute a general authorisation to use gases in poultry slaughter, nor does it exempt operators from complying with the requirements established by the applicable standards and competent authorities.

The exceptional acceptance of certain reversible electrical stunning systems under some standards cannot be interpreted as authorisation to use gas stunning systems.

Where a country's halal regulations or mandatory requirements for the recognition of halal products exclude a particular slaughter method, its use is incompatible with those requirements and may constitute a violation of applicable legal or regulatory provisions, in addition to preventing certification or acceptance of the affected products.

Halal conformity must be determined by effective compliance with the applicable requirements, rather than solely by the existence of a certificate issued by a certification body.

5. Consumer Protection and Market Transparency

Muslim consumers have the right to receive products whose halal status is supported by slaughter procedures that comply with the relevant religious principles and regulatory requirements.

The certification of products obtained through procedures not permitted under the applicable halal standards may undermine consumer confidence, distort competition among market operators, and give rise to significant commercial and regulatory consequences.

Slaughterhouses, producers, distributors, importers, and certification bodies have a responsibility to ensure that the slaughter methods employed comply with the applicable halal standards and legal provisions required in each destination country.

Failure to comply with these requirements may jeopardise the acceptance of certificates, prevent access to certain markets, and lead to consequences under their respective regulatory frameworks.

No halal certificate can justify the use of procedures that contradict the requirements established by the competent authorities.

6. Commitment of Instituto Halal

Instituto Halal reaffirms its rejection of gas stunning in halal poultry slaughter and its commitment to upholding the religious principles and technical requirements upon which its certification activities are based.

In this regard, Instituto Halal will continue to promote:

- Strict compliance with the slaughter requirements established by applicable international halal standards.
- Effective verification that animals remain alive and that stunning is reversible whenever prior stunning methods are permitted.
- The protection of animal welfare and the reduction of avoidable suffering through procedures that simultaneously respect the religious and technical requirements of halal slaughter.
- Transparency and traceability of the procedures employed in slaughterhouses.
- Cooperation with religious authorities, standardisation organisations, and competent bodies to preserve the integrity of halal certification.

FINAL DECLARATION

Halal certification constitutes a guarantee of compliance with religious principles and the standards that implement them. It must not be subordinated to commercial interests, productivity considerations, or industrial procedures that fail to ensure compliance with these requirements.

The Instituto Halal calls upon companies in the meat industry, certification bodies, competent authorities, and international operators to ensure the rigorous application of halal slaughter requirements and to prevent the acceptance of procedures that are incompatible with the applicable standards.

The protection of Muslim consumers, respect for the principles of Islamic slaughter, and the credibility of the halal market must take precedence over any commercial interest.



Instituto Halal de Junta Islámica

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