

RELIGIOUS SLAUGHTER IN EUROPE

A.Velarde¹, H. Anil², B. Cenci Goga³, J.P. Frencia⁴, B. Lamboojij⁶, K. Von Holleben⁵, M. von Wenzlawowicz⁵ and A. Dalmau¹

¹ IRTA (Spain), ² University of Bristol (UK), ³ University of Perugia, ⁴ ADIV (France), ⁵ ASG Veehouderij (The Netherlands) ⁶ BSI Schwarzenbek (Germany),

ABSTRACT:

Halal and Shechita slaughter were assessed in 135 European abattoirs. Shechita is carried out without stunning in all abattoirs, while 65% of cattle abattoirs, 50% small ruminants and 50% poultry abattoirs use pre-slaughter stunning for Halal Slaughter.

INTRODUCTION:

Stunning before slaughter is a statutory requirement in Europe and is performed to induce unconsciousness in animals so that slaughter could be performed without causing the animals any avoidable anxiety, pain, suffering or distress. In some countries, religious slaughter is exempt from pre-slaughter stunning, but some religious authorities accept certain stunning methods. The DIALREL project (www.dialrel.eu) aims to address issues relating to religious slaughter by encouraging dialogue between stakeholders and interested parties.

An **objective** of DIALREL is to evaluate the incidence and the scale of practices of religious slaughter (Halal and Shechita) in cattle, small ruminants (sheep and goats) and poultry. Data on the incidence of animals being religiously slaughtered, the application of pre-slaughter stunning, the restraining and stunning methods used were collected using questionnaires answered by 19 abattoirs in France, 30 in Germany, 22 in Italy, 42 in Spain, 2 in Netherlands and 14 in UK.

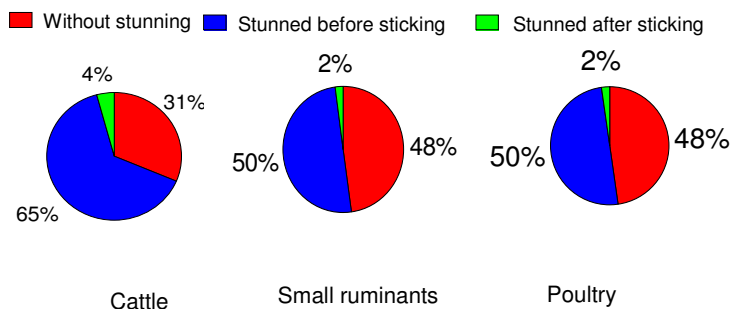
RESULTS:

No official data on the incidence of animals slaughter using for Halal and Kosher methods in Europe are available at present.

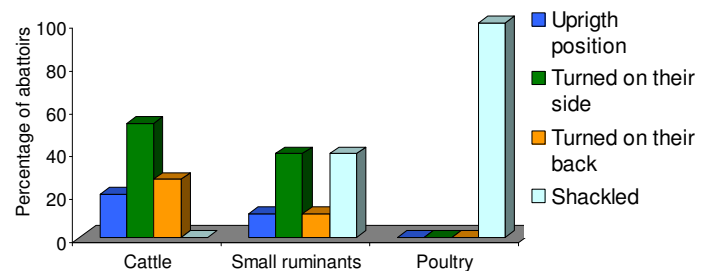
Shechita: Animals are slaughtered without stunning. Before slaughter, all cattle are restrained and mechanically turned on their back and all poultry shackled.

Halal: Survey results show that 65% of cattle abattoirs, 50% of small ruminants abattoirs and 50% of poultry abattoirs carry out pre-slaughter stunning. When stunning is carried out, 75% of the cattle abattoirs use penetrating captive bolt, 85.7% of the small ruminants abattoirs head only electrical stunning, and 90% of the poultry abattoirs use electrical stunning. When slaughter is carried out without stunning, cattle abattoirs restrain the animals in upright position (20%), or turned, either on their side (53%) or on their back (27%). Small ruminants are mainly turned on their side (39%) or shackled, and all poultry are shackled.

Halal slaughter practices in EU abattoirs



Restraining method for Halal without stunning



CONCLUSIONS:

- Shechita is carried out in all the abattoirs without pre-slaughter stunning.
- Certain pre-slaughter stunning methods are accepted by some Islamic authorities, improving welfare of the animals.
- Some restraining methods that may induce stress (turn cattle on their side or back and shackle poultry) are used to slaughter animals without stunning.

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