

Reference Number: DAERA/26-484



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

**Veterinary Service Animal Health
Group**
Information Communications Branch

Via E-Mail:

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12 August 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your email received by the Department on 20 July 2026 which you sought the information in bold below. Please note that points 8-9 of your request will be answered as business as usual and points 1-7 have been dealt with under the terms of the above legislation.

Information to the following questions: -

- 1. How many halal abattoirs are there in NI?**
- 2. Do the halal abattoirs use animals from NI?**
- 3. How many animals were stunned before slaughter?**
- 4. How many animals were not stunned before slaughter?**
- 5. What was the total number of animals that were processed through halal abattoirs in NI in 2025?**
- 6. How does the Department for Agriculture approve halal abattoirs?**
- 7. How does the DfA process and monitor halal abattoirs?**

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds the information you requested in relation to question 1-7.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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1 How many halal abattoirs are there in NI?

This information is not held.

DAERA does not categorise or register Northern Ireland abattoirs as being halal.

2 Do the halal abattoirs use animals from NI?

This information is not held.

There is no mandatory requirement under UK or EU legislation for meat to be labelled as halal. As such, DAERA does not categorise or register Northern Ireland abattoirs as being halal.

3 How many animals were stunned before slaughter?

All animals in Northern Ireland abattoirs are stunned before slaughter.

4 How many animals were not stunned before slaughter?

Zero. All animals in Northern Ireland abattoirs are stunned before slaughter.

5 What was the total number of animals that were processed through halal abattoirs in NI in 2025?

This information is not held.

There is no mandatory requirement under UK or EU legislation for meat to be labelled as halal. As such, DAERA does not categorise or register Northern Ireland abattoirs or animals as being halal.

6 How does the Department for Agriculture approve halal abattoirs?

In order to operate, all abattoirs (slaughterhouses) in Northern Ireland must be officially approved by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), with Official Control functions performed by DAERA. Approval does not extend to categorising or registering abattoirs as being halal.

7 How does the DfA process and monitor halal abattoirs?

DAERA veterinary officials are present in all Northern Ireland slaughterhouses on a continual basis to carry out compliance checks relating to food safety, hygiene, and animal welfare. This does not extend to categorising Northern Ireland abattoirs as being halal.

DAERA has responsibility for enforcement of the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (NI) 2014 (WATOK). The WATOK Regulations requires animals to be stunned prior to slaughter, except when slaughtered according to religious rites. As at question 3 & 4 response, all animals in Northern Ireland abattoirs are stunned before slaughter.

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

With regard to question 8 and 9 please see responses below:

Q8. Has the public ever been consulted on the practice of halal in NI?

In 2012, the former Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DARD) undertook an 8-week public consultation, seeking views on domestic legislation, which was being brought forward to implement Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. This consultation was carried out between 10 July and 3 September 2012.

Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009, which continues to be directly applicable in Northern Ireland, under the Windsor Framework, permits the use of non-stun slaughter methods in instances where religious rites necessitate them. The consultation, which took place at that time, stated that DARD would cater for religious slaughter in any resulting domestic legislation.

The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made in April 2014 to enable non-stunned slaughter in these specified circumstances, mirroring the position across the UK and Ireland.

However, there are currently no approved slaughterhouses performing non-stunned slaughter in Northern Ireland and no discussions have been held with DAERA on any potential future provision here.

Q9. Does the DfA in NI condone the barbaric practice of halal?

There are currently no approved slaughterhouses performing non-stunned slaughter in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

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