



Survey on the halal certification agencies - Year 2009

Summary

1 – Introduction	1
2 – Methodology	3
3 – Observations	4
4 - Conclusion and recommendations for the consumer	7
5 – References	8
6 - Summary tables of certification body information	9
A) – Certification bodies that kindly responded to or met with ASIDCOM	9
B) - List of certification bodies identified on "halal" products sold in the French market	11
B-1) List of “halal control” organizations for which information is “easy” to access by consumers	11
B-2) List of “halal control” organizations for which information is difficult to access by consumers	13

1 – Introduction

Over the past 20 years, the halal market has developed rapidly. The halal market is estimated to be worth U.S. \$580 billion per year worldwide (source: World Halal Forum) and 9 billion in Europe with 3.5 to 5 billion Euros spent in France. France is Europe's largest country with regard to both the size of the market and the number of Muslims in the community.

In France, halal market development has become chaotic, resulting in the proliferation of both products claiming to be "halal" and to an increasing number of halal certification organizations. These organizations, which are in the form of associations or societies, do not have a common definition of "halal" nor agreed upon control procedures and traceability. Note that the controls implemented by individual agencies are all very different: it can go from an annual audit of the slaughterhouse or an occasional analysis for porcine materials at the certified establishment, to checking each production with permanent controls in place and on-going independent auditing of the company that manufactures the halal product. As discussed later in this investigation, this difference leads to very different human resources being employed from some organizations just having a secretariat to manage the "paperwork" of the “halal certification” to others having real controls in place with trained controllers in the field.

Several attempts have been made to produce common specifications. These include a formal definition developed by Dr. Hamidullah that was ratified in 1982 by 60 French Muslim associations. More recently, following the recent creation of the CFCM (Muslim Council of French) in 2003 by the French government, a commission was created to establish standards for halal meat. But faced with the many different financial interests of the various stakeholders, the commission failed to establish a common specification, agreeing only for now on the spelling of the word "halal" [1].

The consequences of this unchecked development have been and are almost always detrimental to consumers leaving the marketplace with major gaps:

- A multitude of definitions of the requirements for religious slaughter.
- A lack of traceability of products.
- Lack of real control over the actual halal religious slaughter.

In addition to this lack of clarity, the consumer may find himself facing serious food safety problems. This has been well illustrated in the news recently with the discovery of the resale of halal meat that was cleaned with acid [2], the dismantling of an illegal meat distribution operation that was doing slaughter in the absence of a veterinary check [3] and the sale of meat unfit for human consumption involving several slaughterhouses in the Bouod case in 2007 [4].

The Association of Muslim Consumers (ASIDCOM) conducted its first survey of the halal certification bodies in France in 2008 [6]. This survey aimed to identify existing organizations and to inform consumers about the halal certification organizations. Indeed, when the consumer wants to buy halal products, the consumer discovers that there are two types of products in the market:

- **The “self-certified” products**, i.e., those without any controls by an external body. The company itself certifies its production as "halal" or "according to Muslim ritual" at the time of slaughter.
- **The “certified” products**, i.e., those where there is an external body that certifies the product as halal, preferably with a trademarked and unique symbol.

With respect to the “self-certified” products, **ASIDCOM recommends strongly that consumers not buy such products** because there is nothing that can bring real guarantees with respect to the quality of the slaughter unless the Muslim consumer verifies all the information personally and observes the process to determine that the slaughter is consistent with the consumer’s standards.

ASIDCOM strongly advises to move towards purchasing all products with halal certification. This means that there is evidence on the product that an independent body is auditing the process and is taking responsibility that the "Islamic ritual requirements have been correctly applied”.

However problems still remain. **There are a multitude of organizations, each with**

its own degree of “seriousness.” The definition of halal is not shared among agencies and the means used to assure the integrity of the product are not all equivalent. So consumers still have to know something about each agency whose symbols they purchase. The present survey of the various agencies aims to inform consumers about some of the market realities.

Finally, it is important to remember that there is a difference between the person or group that does the religious slaughter and the certifier who is responsible for assuring that all goes properly. It is important that these be completely separate jobs. However, the certification body can employ the slaughtermen to assure full control over them. This is not always the case according to the certification bodies. For example, as mentioned on the web site for the Casino Group’s halal products, those in charge of supervising the slaughter can be employed by the slaughterhouses [7]!

Those doing religious slaughter in France are reminded that they must be in possession of a licence given by the great mosques of Lyon, Paris and Evry to practice religious slaughter [5]. However, **the possession of the card by the slaughterman does not assure that the final product is halal, since there is no independent monitoring during the slaughter.**

2 – Methodology for the ASIDCOM survey

Just as was done in the 2008 survey, ASIDCOM called each of the agencies and asked them to complete a questionnaire. This year, 4 new agencies have responded. Note also that the association AVS told us that the number of employees in this large organization grew to 140 people involved directly in certification, up from 69 as we quote in the 2008 survey.

To complete the study, additional information searches were conducted, mainly from the certifier’s websites and press statements.

In addition to the formal comparisons summarized in the tables at the end of this document, ASIDCOM also made additional observations and remarks on actual "practices" that were identified in the French market.

To better understand the halal certification market at this time, it seems important that consumers pay attention to two points:

1. The certifiers do not all have the same definition of halal and differences of religious opinions exist on the permissibility of any specific method of stunning (i.e., mechanical or electrical stunning) prior to religious slaughter. Some agencies also permit mechanized slaughter, especially for poultry. It is important that the method used be disclosed to consumers and that methods are in place to assure that the animal or bird was alive at the time of the halal slaughter.
2. There are obvious differences in the controls employed by each certification agency. Note in particular that the certification bodies that are most serious

ensure the **continuous presence of independent inspectors** (or controllers), i.e., employees of the certification agency that are present during halal religious slaughter. Others may only audit sites quarterly, bi-annually, or even annually. Agencies also differ on the traceability of certified products: some agencies establish procedures to monitor the product from the slaughterhouse to the commercial shop while **others rely on a copy of the slaughterhouse's halal certificate.**

Thus, starting with these two main findings, ASIDCOM is particularly interested in the following points:

- If the "halal" standard of the certifying body was "more or less" accessible to consumers.
- To identify the methods of slaughter used, knowing that an organization may accept a mechanized method or stunning before and/or after bleeding for halal religious slaughter.
- Know the number of controllers employed by the organization.
- Collect the contact details for each agency so that each consumer can on their own ask questions related to the agency's halal standards and the amount of auditing and other control systems employed.

ASIDCOM invites each Muslim consumer to adopt such an approach before buying a product: please check the halal standards, especially the slaughter procedures to assure they meet the consumer's standards and then also verify that the organization has sufficient independent controllers and control systems in place to assure the integrity of the products being purchased.

3 - Observations

As in the previous survey, six to seven certifiers have taken the time to respond or communicate with ASIDCOM with respect to the questionnaire. It is currently estimated that the number of halal certification firms operating in France is close to 50. Unfortunately, only some of the certifiers have developed communication tools available to consumers. When such tools exist, **they often lack crucial information such as if stunning is used or not for religious slaughter or the number of full time equivalent controllers at the certifying agency or the number of plants being certified.** To judge whether enough controllers are available, one does need to know the number of food plants and slaughterhouses being supervised by the agency, the number of employees (controllers) alone does not tell the whole story.

Given the emphasis of ASIDCOM, the questionnaires focused mainly on the process used for slaughter (e.g., stunning or mechanical slaughter) and the number of independent controllers/employees of the certification organization. The data are summarized in the final part of this document in two tables:

- Table A: Certifiers that have filled out the questionnaire or met with us.
- Table B: List of certification bodies identified by having "halal" marked on products in stores located in France. This table is further subdivided into two parts with the first part containing a list of certifiers where data are "more or less"

accessible to consumers and with the second part containing a list of certifiers where almost no information is available to consumers.

Note that the data presented are based on information from the certifiers, and ASIDCOM has not been able to verify the accuracy of information independently. However, these tables are useful because they give an overall summary of "halal certification" from the perspective of the consumer. In addition, it may be interesting to compare these results with similar studies, such as the "certification indices" prepared by the Casino Group [7].

Also, please note with respect to the agencies that responded this year that:

- The organization "Qualité France SA" provides carcasses markings, halal labels and accounting checks, and the organization also does check the approval cards of the slaughtermen. The agency told us that the stunning of animals is not practiced for beef and calves.
- The organization ALTAKWA responded to our survey but has not specified the number of controllers employed. Moreover, the official activity of this organization at the time of this study is still declared as the "processing and preserving of meat 1011Z" which suggests that this organization is practicing self-certification (as already reported in 2008, see [6].)
- The company KARAMA specifies that it sells only products that it certifies! So it is also a producer that seems to self-certify.

In light of the data in these tables, ASIDCOM extracted the following observations to help consumers understand the tables better:

➤ **No systematic and independent control:**

Some organizations do only one or very few checks per year. They look only on the day of the visit if there is really "halal" production. A certificate or contract is then established, but without systematic monitoring.

We can therefore divide the halal certification bodies into two major groups:

- Organizations having continuous supervision at the time of religious slaughter.
- Organizations that do random checks. These agencies also say that they use controllers, but these people are employed by the slaughterhouses, thus creating a serious doubt about the independence of the controllers.

Note that the "indicators of certification" of the Casino Group gives the controller's employer (the company managing the slaughterhouse or the certification body) [7]. In this case, the consumer can easily identify those slaughterhouses that are not using independent controls.

To summarize, a serious halal certification body must carry out checks independent of the company and of the slaughtermen. The slaughtermen take care of the religious slaughter. Controllers ensure the smooth running of the slaughter process, provides independent marks/labels/stamps on the resulting carcasses, and monitors the processing phase.

- If the controllers are employed by the slaughterhouse, will they remove any doubtful products? Note that two major organizations (by volume of meat certified) are ACMIF (a service of the Evry mosque) and SCFCH (an affiliate of the Paris mosque) have controllers that are a part of the slaughterhouses' staff (observed in [7]).

- The slaughterman may also be used by the certifying body. ASIDCOM remains concerned about the relationship between the slaughtermen and the controllers, but recognizes that employing the slaughtermen gives the certifying body better control of the process.

➤ **A poorly detailed "religious slaughter" process**

Often processes are so poorly explained in the specifications that they may induce a breach of trust for consumers.

For example, AVS is careful to specify in its charter "without prior stunning" while the association practices post-cut stunning [7], [9]. Another example is ARGML (a service of the Lyon mosque), which accurately labels poultry products as having "Manual Sacrifice" while not specifying on the label that the birds had been "pre-stunning" (i.e., electronarcosis was performed using an electric water bath). The ARGML website, however, does indicate the use of previous stunning for poultry. What might be the situation for those certifiers who do not even provide this amount of information?

Indeed, when the standards of the majority of certifiers are examined, the use of prior stunning, mainly for poultry, is quite common but generally not identified. The use of stunning before slaughter is not clearly identified on product labels, but is practiced by such organizations as SFCVH (approved by the Paris mosque Paris), ACMIF (the Evry mosque) and Junta Islamica.

Also, Table B-2 contains the many certifiers who do not care to explain their methods to consumers, despite the presence of their products on the marketplace shelves. In addition to the issue of stunning, the lack of information raises the question of whether such organizations use mechanical slaughter like in the case of AFCAL; a concern that is regularly raised, by Muslim community websites. Note that the agency AFCAL is also in the business of documents translation! [12].

➤ **Advocating on animal welfare to justify the use of stunning**

This is a complex issue and each Muslim will need to make his own decision. ASIDCOM, after reviewing the scientific research believes that these practices raise the issue of whether the animal is actually alive at the time of religious slaughter [11]. ASIDCOM also recommends the creation of small slaughterhouses devoted to Muslim religious slaughter and to create killing facilities that are managed locally. ASIDCOM also supports improving the scope and strengthen of the training of halal religious slaughtermen.

It should be noted that there are companies that have developed restraining devices

dedicated to the specifics of religious slaughter (including companies in the United Kingdom and the USA). ASIDCOM believes that more effort towards the development of devices specifically for religious slaughter might be beneficial rather than trying to adapt the existing secular arrangements.

Finally, it should be noted that some halal certification agencies use visual shields so that animals awaiting sacrifice will not see another animal being sacrificed. Even if this is not always systematically assured in practice, this approach should be encouraged.

4 - Conclusion and Recommendations

Many certification organizations of halal meat, under pressure from animal welfare advocates and from slaughterhouse management agree to permit the use of electrical stunning causing the proliferation of halal meat products from stunned animals. This practice is often hidden from or poorly detailed to Muslim consumers. Moreover, in France and worldwide, certification bodies, which have multiplied in recent years, have different procedures and degrees of control over the processes they are certifying. Also note that when reading the tables and examining the comparative study [7], there is a correlation between organizations that use electrical stunning and agencies that are not independent.

Given all this, consumers must remain vigilant and buy products with a "serious and independent halal certification" so as not to encourage the unbridled development of the halal market.

Thus, ASIDCOM recommends as a result of this investigation that consumers:

- Avoid all products that are self-certified.
- Identify the differences between certification marks and move towards only buying products from serious and independent halal certifying agencies. ASIDCOM also believes that stunning and mechanical slaughter may compromise the halal status of meat products.
- Ask the certification bodies for information. Contact them for more details on their traceability, their ways of working, their staff, etc.

ASIDCOM remain at your disposal for any comments or requests for additional information.

5- References




- [1] : Les Musulmans de France : courants, institutions, communautés : un état des lieux - Bernard Godard et Sylvie Taussig (2005)
- [2] : Affaire de la viande « halal » nettoyée à l'acide : une mise en examen - SAPHIRNEWS - (2009) http://www.saphirnews.com/Affaire-de-la-viande-halal-nettoyee-a-l-acide-une-mise-en-examen_a9967.html
- [3] : Halal : un réseau d'abattage clandestin démantelé - SAPHIRNEWS (2009) - http://www.saphirnews.com/Halal-un-reseau-d-abattage-clandestin-demantele_a10109.html
- [4] : Nouvelle alerte à la viande avariée - M.-C. TABET - Figaro - http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite/2007/01/22/01001-20070122ARTFIG90386-nouvelle_alerte_a_la_viande_avariee.php
- [5] : Aïd El Adha : où sacrifier ? Association ASIDCOM (2009) - <http://www.asidcom.org/spip.php?article19>
- [6] : Enquête sur les organismes de contrôle de viande halal - Association ASIDCOM (2008) - <http://www.asidcom.org/spip.php?article10>
- [7] : Indicateurs de certification halal - Site Internet de Wassila (Groupe Casino) - <http://www.wassila.fr/Indicateurs-de-certification-HALAL-.html>
- [8] : Le nouveau règlement en six questions et réponses - Site de la Commission Européenne - http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/slaughter/proposal_6_ganda_fr.htm
- [9] : Grenelle de l'animal : l'étourdissement post-mortem dans l'abattage rituel envisagé - Saphirnews - http://www.saphirnews.com/Grenelle-de-l-animal-l-etourdissement-post-mortem-dans-l-abattage-rituel-envisage_a8994.html
- [10] : Indicateurs de Certificateur pour AVS - Wassila.fr - <http://www.wassila.fr/AVS.html>
- [11] : Les bénéfices de l'abattage rituel sans étourdissement pour les animaux et les hommes Rapport bibliographique sur l'abattage rituel et le bien-être animal - Association ASIDCOM - <http://www.asidcom.org/spip.php?article40>
- [12] : KFC, halal ou non halal ? - Al-Kanz (2008) - <http://www.al-kanz.org/2008/02/04/kfc-halal-2/>
- [13] : « L'abattage rituel en France » - S. M-T. Pouillaude-Bardon - thèse de l'Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire de Toulouse, 1992 (Veterinary PhD 1992, National Veterinary College of Toulouse, France)




6 - Summary Tables of Certification Bodies

Note: The text in blue refers to Internet links, click on it to access

A) - Certification bodies that kindly responded to or met with ASIDCOM

Important note: This information has been provided by the certification bodies



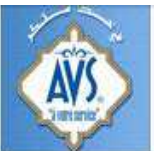


Name	Logo	Halal charte r/standards	Stunning		Mechanical slaughter	Number of controllers	Contact	Details
			Prior to cut	Post cut				
ALTAKWA		yes	NO	NO	NO	?	ALTAKWA 5 Quai de Malakoff 44000 NANTES Tél : 00332 40 47 41 47 Mail : contact@altakwa.fr http://www.altakwa.fr	- No communication on the number of employees and supervisors - Use protective visual screen - Certification of 11 sites in France and 5 abroad
ECCH European Certification and Control of Halal		yes	NO	NO	NO	3	Eurohalal Rue de la Victoire, 158 1060 Bruxelles – Belgique Tél : +32 (0) 486 331454 Mail : info@eurohalal.be Site : http://www.eurohalal.be	- Approximately 10 sites in Belgium - Use protective visual screen - The organization has set up a blog for information on halal for Belgium http://infohalalbelgium.lalibreblogs.be/
ARGML Association rituelle de la grande mosquée de Lyon		yes	yes Poultry	NO	NO	20	Tél : 00334 78 76 00 23 http://www.hallal-mosqueedelyon.org	- A meeting took place between ASIDCOM and the Grand Mosque to discuss the halal certification and to complete the questionnaire - The organization has 20 employees of the agency that are inspectors - The agency may authorize slaughter with stunning for poultry before bleeding






Name	Logo	Halal Charter/Standards	Stunning		Mechanical slaughter	Number of controllers	Contact	Details
			Prior to cut	Post cut				
Qualité France SA		yes	NO	NO	NO	85	Qualité France SA Immeuble "Le Guillaumet" 60, avenue du Général de Gaulle 92046 PARIS La DEFENSE Cedex Tél : 00331 41 97 00 74 contactagro@fr.bureauveritas.com http://www.qualite-france.com/	- 6 industrial sites monitored - Control on beef and calves: Provides marking of carcasses, labeling and material control and accounting accreditation - They have 85 employees out of 150 employees to meet staff who are responsible of monitoring the Agribusiness Department Bureau Veritas
AVS A votre Service		See next table				140	See next table	-AVS provided the number of employees; the 2008 survey data was based on a chart provided by AVS
Halal Control (UE) Allemagne				?		?	Tél : 0049 6142 171283 Fax : 0049 6142 171284 Mail : info@halalcontrol.info http://www.halalcontrol.de	-Waiting, sending an English version questionnaire
EHZ Europäische Halal Zertifizierungsinstitut				?		?	EHZ Böckmannstraße 51 20099 Hamburg ALLEMAGNE Tel: 0040 415 422 53 Tel : 00179 815 11 11 Mail : ycalkara@eurohalal.eu Site : http://www.eurohalal.eu	-The head of the agency referred us to the website in German, but informed us that a translation is available in English, Turkish and Arabic. A questionnaire was sent in English. As it stands, there is no information in French on this organization despite the presence of products on the French market. (Gateway reference to the European Institute of Halal certification)
The following organization responded to our survey, but knowing that they sells products they certify, it is difficult to consider this as a halal certification body								
KARAMA Bureau Européen de contrôle et certification Halal		yes	Yes Poultry	NO	yes Poultry	2	KARAMA 38 , Bd de la République 92210 Saint-Cloud Tél : 0033689337704 Mail : info@karama.fr http://www.karama.fr	- The company says KARAMA sells products that it self certifies! - Use protective visual screen

B) - List of certification bodies identified on halal products sold in the France market

Important note: This information can be found on the websites of the organizations or their press statements



B-1) List of “halal control” organizations for which information is easy to access by consumers (including Internet)

Name	Logo	Halal charter	Stunning		Mechanical slaughter	Number of controllers	Contact	Details
			Prior to cut	Post cut				
ACMIF Certification Hallal de la mosquée d'Evry Courcouronnes		yes	yes (*)	?	?	?	Tél : 01 60 77 14 19 Tél : 06 08 34 62 45 Mail : mosqueevrcour@wanadoo.fr	(*) From agency's website -According to [7]: no independent checks and permit the use of stunning
ARRISSALA		yes	NO	NO	NO		http://www.arrissala.org Tél : 01 48 34 70 30 Benhachim29@free.fr	- Data provided during the ASIDCOM 2008 survey
AVS A votre Service		yes	No	yes volaille (**)	NO	140 employés	AVS 70/92; Bd Anatole France 93200 St Denis Tél : 01 49 22 09 70 Site : http://www.halal-avs.com	-AVS informed us of the number of employees, the 2008 survey is based on data from the chart of the association AVS (**) According to the statement of Mr. BELATOUI Saphirnews (Article 23/05/2008)
EIHC - European Islamic Halal Certification		yes	?	?	?	?	BELGIQUE Tél : 0032 486987838 Mail : secretariat@eihc.be Site : http://www.eihc.be/	
HALAL CORRECT		yes	yes (*)	?	NO (*)	?	HALAL CORRECT 59 rue Marquillies 59022 Lille Tél : 03.20.49.09.59 Tél : 06 61 14 27 87 Site : http://www.halalcorrect.com/	(*) From the agency's website

HALAL SERVICES (Affilié à l'UOIF - existe depuis 1 an)		yes	NO	NO	NO	4	Halal Services 20, rue de la Prévoté 93120 La Courneuve Tél : 01 43 11 10 61 http://www.halal-services.fr	- Data provided during the ASIDCOM 2008 survey
HMC Halal Monitoring Committee		yes	NO	NO	NO	69	http://www.halalmc.co.uk LEICESTER (Angleterre) Tel : 00870 240 7267 Fax : 00116 251 5450 info@halalmc.org	- Data provided during the ASIDCOM 2008 survey
JUNTA ISLAMICA		yes	yes (poultry, rabbit, cheeps, electric) cattle (*)	?	?	?	ESPAGNE Tél: 0034 902431937 Mail : info@institutohalal.com Site : http://www.juntaislamica.org	(*) From the agency's website -According to [7], no independent checks and use stunning
MCI Muslim Conseil International		yes	Yes poultry [7],	?	?	?	MCI 2, places St Louis 28000 Chartres Tél : 02 37 30 82 37 Tél : 06.85.24.85.81 Mail : halalcontrole@hotmail.com Site : http://www.halal-mci.info	-According to [7], use stunning for poultry
SFCVH Société Française de contrôle de viande Halal		yes	yes (*)	?	?	?	Organisme de Contrôle 20, avenue Clément Ader 94420 Plessis Trevisé Tél : 06 74 68 09 89 Tél : 06 14 89 68 81 Tél : 01 45 76 00 84 Site : http://www.sfcvh.com	- Affiliated with the Paris Mosque Service Halal Mosque of Paris Tel: 00331 45 35 74 72 halal@mosquee-de-paris.net (*) From agency's website -According to [7], no independent checks and use stunning for poultry

B-2) List of “halal control” organizations for which information is difficult to access by consumers

The following organizations have no specifications readily available to consumers via the Internet. Therefore we cannot provide any details.

Name	Logo	Halal chart er/standards	Stunning		Mechanical slaughter	Number of controllers	Contact
			Prior to cut	Post cut			
AL AMANE		?	?	?	?	AL AMANE Le Petit Bois - 44522 MESANGER France - Tél : 0033240967679	
AFCAI Association Finistérienne de la culture Arabo-islamique		?	?	?	?	http://www.afcai.com 3, rue Jean Marie Le Bris 29200 Brest France - Tél : 00332 98 46 92 45 b.kamel@afcai.com	
CIAR Conseil Islamique d'abattage rituel de Marseille		?	?	?	?	9, avenue Camille Pelletan 13003 Marseille France - Tél : 00336 73 26 91 83	
CPH société de Conseil et de Promotion du Halal		?	?	?	?	145, avenue de Marechal Foch 94000 Créteil France Tél : 00331 48 55 39 92	
CSCIARI Centre Saoudien pour le Contrôle International de l'Abattage des Animaux selon le Rite Islamique		?	?	?	?	CSCIARI 27, rue Plessis Gontrond 44100 NANTES FRANCE Tél : 003340582570	
Institut Islamique des viandes et de l'agro-alimentaire		?	?	?	?	Avenue de Turven 1150 Bruxelles - BELGIQUE Tél : 0032 2779 94 590	
Fondation islamique de Prague		?	?	?	?	http://praha.muslim.cz Republique Tchèque Tel.: 00 281 918 876 Email : praha@muslim.cz	
HALAL POLSKA Product and certification		?	?	?	?	http://www.halal.biz.pl/ POLOGNE Tel/fax 0048 61 8778283 halal@halal.biz.pl	