Australia is one of the world’s great food producing nations. Our meat, grains, dairy products, fruit and vegetables enjoy a reputation for excellence throughout the world. Each year Australia exports approximately 730,000 tonnes of beef and veal, 62,000 tonnes of lamb and 137,000 tonnes of mutton to more than 70 countries throughout the world. As many of these countries have a significant Muslim population, most of the product is Halal and with an estimated 1.4 billion Muslims worldwide, this represents an important market for Australian product.

Australia itself also caters for a local Muslim population of about 300,000 and has become a world leader in the processing and preparation of Halal meat and meat products.

The word Halal is an Arabic word meaning “lawful” and is one of the key religious terms used in the Holy Qur’an. For meat to be identified as Halal, the animals must be slaughtered by a Muslim in accordance with the requirements of Islamic law. Muslim consumers purchasing Australian meat need assurances that the meat they purchase is not only safe and wholesome but has also been slaughtered and handled in accordance with Islamic law and is therefore considered to be Halal. The Muslim market is very important to most Australian meat companies and each company has documented procedures to ensure Halal slaughtering and processing requirements are implemented at all stages of production. Australia is now renowned for this commitment to the strict standards required for producing Halal meat and meat products and along with the involvement and expertise of the Islamic organisations registered to supervise and certify the production processes, Australia is recognised as a world leader in this field.

**Halal Meat Process**

1. Processing operations must have an Australian Government Supervised Muslim Slaughter (AGSMS) program.
2. Processors must have a Halal program to comply with the AGSMS requirements.
3. Facility must be inspected and be suitable for Halal slaughter and/or production. All inspections are carried out by AQIS and recognised Islamic organisations.
4. Processor must only employ registered Muslim slaughtermen.
5. Haram (unlawful) product must not be processed in the same area used for Halal product.
6. Halal and Non Halal product must be adequately separated and identified at all times.
7. Equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and washed if Non Halal meat has been in contact.
8. Additives and ingredients used in any meat product must be Halal.
9. Only recognised Islamic organisations can certify Halal meat and meat products, for all exports.
Halal Production

In 1983, The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) introduced the Australian Government Supervised Muslim Slaughter (AGSMS) program to control the production of Halal meat and meat products. AQIS controls the AGSMS program and has recognised a number of Islamic Organisations that are responsible for the provision of Halal inspection, supervision and certification services for meat and meat products. As well as ensuring only practising Muslim slaughtermen are employed to perform the slaughtering and supervisory work, these organisations provide guidance and expertise on Islamic Shari’ah and interpretation of Halal principals.

Halal Certification and the AGSMS

The AGSMS program is controlled by legal requirements in the Export Meat Orders under the Export Control Act 1982, and applies to red meat, edible offal and meat products.

The AGSMS program ensures identification and segregation of meat derived from animals slaughtered by a registered Muslim slaughterman, in accordance with Islamic rites. Muslim slaughtermen must be registered with AUS-MEAT, and be authorised by a recognised Islamic organisation. AUS-MEAT issues the Muslim slaughterman with an identity card, which must be shown to an authorised AQIS officer upon request.

Application for AGSMS program approval can only be made by those establishments registered for export under the Export Control Act 1982. Application must be directed to AQIS in accordance with the relevant requirements contained in the Export Meat Orders and after approval from a recognised Islamic organisation. The application must address the necessary procedures that will identify and maintain the integrity and segregation of Halal meat from Non Halal meat during all stages of production, storage and transport.

Halal meat is identified by the application of an official Halal stamp to carcases or cartoned products. Halal meat must be described on official Meat Transfer Certificates used by the export meat security system when transported between export establishments. Halal meat loaded for final export receives an official Halal meat certificate signed by both an AQIS authorised officer and a representative of a recognised Islamic organisation.

Halal meat must be identified by legible impressions of an ‘Australia MS’ stamp. The stamp must be applied to the meat as soon as practicable after slaughter.

The ‘Australia MS’ stamp to be applied must be the official Halal stamp of the recognised Islamic body that has authorised the Muslim slaughterer.
Recognised Australian Islamic Organisations

Recognised Islamic organisations are listed by AQIS for the purpose of certifying meat and meat products under the AGSMS program. Each Islamic organisation must have a system in place to ensure that each registered slaughterman is considered acceptable (on religious grounds) to be employed as a registered slaughterman. This involves developing a code of conduct outlining the religious roles, duties and observances expected of a practicing Muslim, and a regular review of each slaughterman.

Islamic organisations also provide supervisory, inspection and certification services under the AGSMS. Certification can cover use of the general Halal certificate or the organisation may be listed for a specific country, where required by the Islamic authority of that importing country. AQIS maintains a list of all recognised Islamic organisations and the specific countries they are listed for.

All Halal certificates are endorsed by the Islamic organisation responsible for the processing establishment under the AGSMS. Some Islamic organisations also issue their own certificates, which are often used to advertise and promote the authenticity of the product. The Australian production and certification system (under the AGSMS) provides all Muslim consumers the assurance the product is truly Halal.

For further information about AUS-MEAT or Australian Halal Meat Products, please contact...