
ONR 142000

Halal food Requirements for the food chain

Halal-Lebensmittel — Anforderungen an die Lebensmittelkette

Aliment Halal — Exigences pour la chaîne alimentaire

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Preface

In Islam, “halal” (pure, permitted) refers to all objects and actions allowed or permissible under Islamic law. Its opposite is “haram” (forbidden). There is a grey area between halal and haram that is referred to as “makruh”. Everything that is not explicitly forbidden, but tends towards haram is makruh (“offensive” or “disliked”). Muslims should also avoid this grey area as a precaution. This classification pervades the entire sphere of life of a Muslim. In the field of nutrition, however, a distinction is essentially made between halal and haram.

Dietary rules are laid down in the Koran and Sunna. On principle, all foodstuffs are permitted except for those that have been explicitly or unambiguously forbidden. Muslims are not permitted to ingest alcohol and blood. Likewise, food of animal origin pigs and other animals that are haram are also forbidden. It is only permitted to eat food of animal origin that originates from permitted animals that were slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law and did not die a natural death. The consumption of sacrificial animals of other religions is also forbidden.

Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs has made HACCP the standard to be followed in food hygiene.

In the Codex Alimentarius, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations made the food safety rules contained therein mandatory for all food businesses — on all levels of the food chain. Additionally, reference is made to the Recommended International Code of Practice — General Principles of Food Hygiene.

The main responsibility for the safety of a foodstuff now lies with the food businesses themselves. As the Regulation considers the food chain in its entirety, the requirement of food hygiene and product safety from primary production to distribution, including sales, is in line with the demand of those consumers who look for the “halal” product quality. Because more and more companies active in the food chain address this issue also in Austria, it makes sense to combine the two aspects.

The Gulf Standard GCC 993:1998, e.g. implemented by the U.A.E. Standard 993:2000, for imported meat products essentially describes the requirements applying to correct ritual slaughtering in accordance with Islamic law (halal certificate ratified by the missions of the concerned GCC states or their representatives) and defines rules for the branding of halal meat; it also contains provisions on the marking of fresh meat like the one commonly used in Europe (stamp, food dye).

The framework conditions for consumer-oriented halal products are no longer limited to this low number of aspects, but primarily have to comply with the EU criteria for food safety. They give priority to health, prevention and product quality.

In order to reach the EU objectives, companies have to establish, continuously monitor and maintain a comprehensive system that combines hygiene management (Good Hygiene Practice — GHP) and process management in production (Good Manufacturing Practice — GMP) that are both oriented to the best practice approach.

An HACCP process for food complemented by halal requirements neither supersedes nor replaces the provisions laid down in the relevant Gulf Standards.

The purpose of the present ON Rule (ONR) is to provide guidance on the measures demanded in the context of the food safety requirements from the halal perspective and to complement them by appropriate monitoring and control criteria.

Given the mandatory introduction of HACCP, a comprehensive ONR on halal food does not focus on the voluntary application of processes relevant for food and product safety, but rather has to build on the HACCP concept as a secure basis.

Religious and ethical demands for qualitative product safety have to be taken into account just like the consumers' demands based on taste, health (or diseases) or ecological convictions.

At the heart of all those considerations is the demand for the products' purity as understood by the relevant consumers. In a system of unadulterated quality, the product characteristic "halal" stands on an equal footing with other characteristics (see [Figure 1](#)).

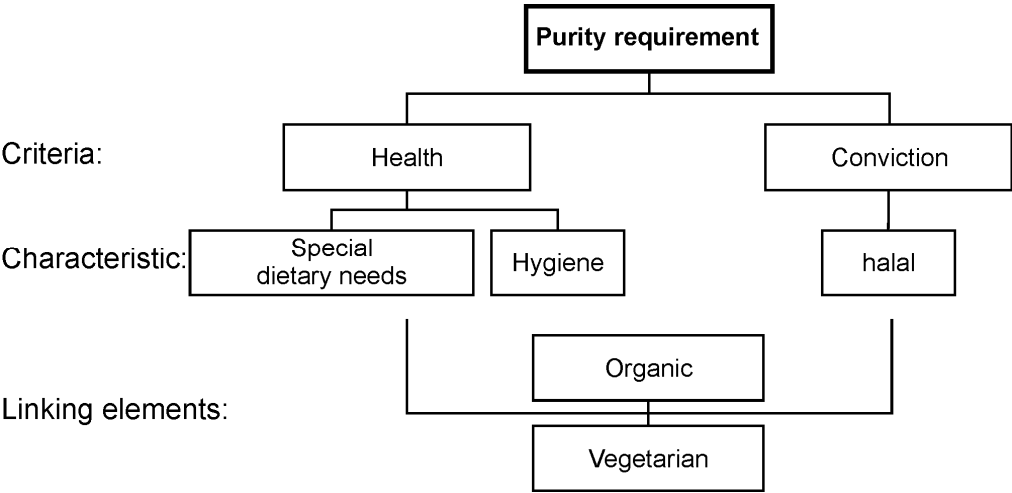


Figure 1 — Product purity from the consumer's perspective (simplified)

At present, consumers tend to associate "purity" with the aspects of hygiene and health, while "halal" additionally demands that products comply with the Koran's scriptures where everything allowed or permitted in Islam is referred to as "halal".

The health aspect is included therein — halal is recommended as "good and healthy"; "healthy", however, does not only address the rigorous elimination of potentially dangerous carriers of diseases, such as flies or rats, or known (intermediate) hosts, such as pigs, dogs and cats (worms), from the human food chain, but also extends to "mental health" through high social values of morality and ethics — as represented by religion.

In the HACCP concept for food safety, hygiene and health are covered by limit values for wholesomeness and acceptance that are considered to be safe. The purity of halal products, however, requires 100% safety so that the entire chain from the origin via production and distribution to sales has to be monitored without any gaps.

In line with the rules of Koran, even a single impurity means that the product has to be classified as haram and, as a result, rejected from the halal process by all means. Therefore, products that are not halal compliant cannot be commercialised in the relevant markets. When, in addition, the interrelations between supply and demand are taken into account, producers of non-halal food will find it very difficult to find buyers.

If the halal product quality requirements as well as the provisions of food legislation are complied with, halal-labelled products can be safely consumed by Muslims.

The present ON Rule (ONR) was developed by the experts listed below in the ON Workshop 1143 “Halal products and services”:

- Dr. Davud Bajramovic, Islamisches Informations- und Dokumentationszentrum Österreich (Islamic Information and Documentation Centre in Austria),
- Ing. Gebhard Fidler, management consultant,
- Salem Hassan, Islamic experte, Shiite,
- Ing. Dr. Axel Kutschera, CSR Experts-Group,
- Richard Löffler, MBA, CSR Experts-Group,
- Stefan Pilz, Raps GmbH,
- Günther Ahmed Rusznak, Islamisches Informations- und Dokumentationszentrum Österreich,
- MinR Ing. TA Dr. Peter-Vitus Stangl, Federal Ministry of Health,
- Dipl.-Ing. Agnes Steinberger, Wiberg GmbH.

Moreover, Dr. Ahmir Bayati, Islamic expert, Roland Marsch, management consultant, Dipl.-oec.troph. Henriette Bednarzsky and Richard Roscher, Managing Director of RoWi Fleischwarenvertrieb GmbH, contributed as advisors to the development of the present ONR.

The draft of the present ONR was submitted for comments to the following organisations:

- Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich (Islamic Community in Austria),
- Islamic Federation,
- ATIB (Turkish Islamic Union for Cultural and Social Co-operation in Austria),
- Ahlul Bayt, the umbrella organisation of Shiites in Austria,
- Union for Islamic Cultural Centers in Austria, Avusturya İslam Kültür Merkezleri Birliği,
- Umbrella organisation of Alevi associations in Austria,
- Umbrella organisation of Bosnian sports clubs, cultural and religious associations
- Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority, Abu Dahbi, U.A.E.,
- Dubai Municipality, Public Health Dept., Dubai, U.A.E.,
- General Secretariat of Municipalities, Dubai, U.A.E.,
- Albanian Institute of Islamic Thought & Civilization, Tirana, Albania,
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka, Bangladesh,
- Bahagian Kawalan Makanan Halal, Brunei,
- Majlis Ugama Islam Negara Brunei Darussalam, Brunei,
- Cambodian Islamic Charity Progressive & Development, Kompong Chhnang Pro., Cambodia,

- State Unit of Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind, Mumbai, India,
- Takushoku University, Japan, Sharia Research Institute, Kohinata, Bunkyo-ku, Japan,
- Darul Ehsan, Malaysia,
- Department of Standards Malaysia, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia,
- Halal HUB Development Services, Jahor, Malaysia,
- HDC Halal Industry Development Corporation SDN BHD, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,
- Jabatan Memajuan Islam Malaysia, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia,
- World Halal Council (WHC), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,
- Pharmanz, Wellington, New Zealand,
- The Federal of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (Inc.), Wellington, New Zealand,
- Office on Muslim Affairs, Quenzon City, Philippines,
- University Putra Malaysia, Institute Penyelidikan Produk Halal, Selangor,
- Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, Singapore,
- Warees Halal, Singapore,
- Faculty of Andalusian Studies, Granada, Spain,
- South African Hajj & Umrah Council, Gatesville, South Africa,
- South African National Halal Authority, Johannesburg, South Africa,
- Taipei Grand Mosque, Taipei, Taiwan,
- The Halal Standard Institute of Thailand (HIT), Bangkok, Thailand,
- Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America, Chicago, Illinois, USA,
- Islamic Services of America, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA,
- Islamic Relief Worldwide, Birmingham, UK,
- Islamic Community Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Gender-related statements in the present ONR shall be understood resp. interpreted for both sex due to gender mainstreaming.