



08 May 2023

AFIC ASSURES THE COMMUNITY THAT CAS PROCESSED CHICKEN IS HALAL

We assure the community that the chicken certified by AFIC is halal and safe for consumption. AFIC implements a rigorous halal control system that all suppliers certified by us must adhere to, including ongoing audits and inspections to ensure compliance. As a certifier with a profound religious obligation, AFIC takes its responsibility seriously and has utmost confidence in its certification processes. We encourage you to verify that your supplier's chicken comes from an AFIC certified site for your peace of mind.

AFIC is aware of a report dated 1 May 2023 issued by ANIC in relation to the use of Controlled Atmospheric Stunning (CAS) for the slaughtering of chicken in Australia. We wish to declare that the site in question is NOT certified by AFIC.

AFIC's concern in this matter is primarily from the community's perspective. The ANIC report contains a fatwa that has declared **all** CAS stunned poultry impermissible for Muslims to consume and have declared **all** certification of CAS stunned poultry invalid. We find the conclusions drawn in the fatwa to be problematic on many levels and did not expect to see such a fatwa from an organisation that is aware of the standard operating procedure in this field.

We raise the following points for the community's consideration and for ANIC to clarify:

1. CAS is currently used in many sites across the country. Accepting ANIC's report at face value, they inspected 1 site on 1 day. The only conclusion that ANIC could have made was in relation to this 1 site. How can they declare **ALL** chicken from **ALL** sites as haram on



this basis? This ignores all basic understanding of audit processes. All other sites have been declared haram by ANIC when they have not inspected them in any way, nor do they have any knowledge of their operations.

2. In relation to this specific site, ANIC visited this 1 site on 1 day and tested 29 birds. These suppliers process 1000s of chickens every day. From a sampling perspective this number of birds, regardless of the outcome of the tests, is insufficient to draw any conclusions in relation to ALL birds produced at this site let alone in relation to all chicken across the country that use CAS. We note that the sample did not even include birds from different shifts but were all from the same shift. Without a more comprehensive testing methodology they could not even discount the possibility that any problem that existed was in fact limited to this one shift on this one day.
3. From the report it appears the only issue considered by ANIC has been the state of the birds after the stunning process. There is no analysis of what the documented parameters of this process are meant to be e.g., what is the gas mix meant to be and how long are the birds meant to be within the gas environment. In the absence of this consideration the ONLY conclusion to be made is the production at that time may be a problem. Such a cursory examination cannot rule out that the standard operating procedures may have failed on this day but were correct before and after this. It is reckless at best to draw such broad conclusions on such a cursory and singular inspection.
4. The ANIC report does not refer to any other halal control points, other than stunning. Anyone with a basic understanding of halal control procedures would be aware that there are multiple points in the process where issues can be identified, and birds removed from the line. We point out that all halal poultry processing has Muslim slaughtermen physically present who are trained to use other indicators to identify potentially dead birds and remove them from the



line. ANIC has ignored this completely and so has, firstly, brought into question the good name of these Muslims by implying that they are permitting dead birds to be processed and, secondly, has failed to consider any control mechanisms that are designed into the production process to reduce the likelihood of dead birds passing through the production line. How can it then draw a universal conclusion that all chicken at these sites is haram?

5. The ANIC statements about CAS slaughtering are misleading. No one form of stunning is more contentious than any other. Such a statement shows a profound lack of understanding of risk management, auditing, and the basics of halal control systems. Regardless of the method of stunning, the requirements for the animal to be alive at the time of slaughter are the same. On this point electrical stunning is no different to CAS stunning in relation to poultry. To make a determination of whether any particular CAS stunning site is halal or not one has to start with an analysis of the specific parameters used at that site in terms of the gas mix, the classification of the birds into categories based on size BEFORE stunning, the length of time spent by birds of different sizes in the gas environment etc. This is an assessment of the proposed technical process and must meet the requirements of the standards set by the certifying body. Where an inspection then identifies failures, a proper audit can consider whether those failures are evidence of failure in the approved process; a failure in implementing the approved process or an aberrant failure due to some exigent circumstances. The failure by ANIC to consider any of these matters is grossly negligent.
6. We note that the ANIC inspection of this site took place in March 2022 -14 months before they publicly revealed their findings. If they were so concerned about the certification of these birds, then what actions did they take with either the supplier or the certifying body in that 14 month period to address these concerns? Or did they simply allow the community to continue to consume what they consider to be haram



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meat for all that time? What led them to release this report now after 14 months?

While AFIC does NOT certify this particular site it does certify other sites that use CAS. AFIC has a comprehensive halal control system that suppliers must comply with and an ongoing audit and inspection program to ensure these controls are implemented and maintained. AFIC takes its obligation as a certifier with the utmost seriousness as is required of something that relates to such a profound religious obligation. AFIC is confident in its certification processes and can assure the community that AFIC certified chicken is halal.

We call on ANIC to withdraw its Fatwa on all chicken supplied from CAS sites based on such ill-considered evidence. ANIC has failed the community in this matter with the potential to cause significant harm to many Muslim businesses and impose unnecessary hardship upon the community. It is at best reckless on their part and potentially grossly negligent.

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