Scholars’ opinion on fully chilled offal

UK legislation requires abattoirs to chill carcases and offal to temperatures of 7°C and 3°C, respectively, before despatch. However, during Qurbani, Muslim and meat industry representatives have proposed mitigations to enable the supply of preordered carcases that have not been chilled to the required legal temperature directly to the final consumer or via butchers acting as the consumer’s agents. These mitigations do not apply to offal being supplied to the final consumer via butchers acting as the consumer’s agents, which must be fully chilled to the legal temperature of 3°C. This means that consumers receiving Qurbani carcases/meat that have not been chilled to the required legal temperatures may be given fully chilled offal from animals other than their preordered Qurbani animal.

To understand the religious implications of this, a meeting was convened to get Islamic scholars’ views. The issues were explained to the scholars and carefully discussed. The scholars explained how the essence of Qurbani is the zabiha (slaughter), and eating the resultant meat is a sunnah (recommended practice). Consumer expectations are for the carcase more so than the offal, so after careful deliberation, it was agreed that since the legal procedure is in place to protect the consumer from increased microbiological risks associated with handling and consuming un-chilled offal, the following measures can be taken:

* Consumers collecting their meat or carcases from their agent on the first day of Qurbani (10 Dhul Hijja) may be offered chilled non-Qurbani offal from a previous slaughter, or they could return at a later time or date to collect fully chilled Qurbani offal
* Consumers collecting their carcases/meat from their agent on the second and third days (11 and 12 Dhul Hijja) may be offered Qurbani offal from the previous day’s slaughter

Scholars meeting attended by:

* Sheikh Sulemana Desai (HMC)
* Mufti Amjad Mohammed (Independent)
* Sheikh Dr Abdul Wahab (HFA)
* Haji Siddik Giga (HMC)
* Amir Masoom (HFA)
* Rizvan Khalid (EQL) Naved Syed (Hijaz Group)
* Awal Fuseini (AHDB)