HALAL, Halal Certification & the Halal Market

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Halal is an Arabic word meaning lawful. It refers to things or actions permitted by Shariah law without punishment imposed on the doer. It is usually used to describe something that a Muslim is permitted to engage in, e.g. eat, drink or use. The opposite of halal is haram, which is Arabic for unlawful or prohibited *(Malaysian definition)*.

Halal Certification started in the United States in the mid '60s by Muslim food and technical experts. It did not actually start in the Muslim countries but it came as a necessity for Muslims living in non Muslim society such as the United States, Europe and in some parts of Asia and the Pacific.

This practical safety measure of Muslims living in non-Muslim societies to preserve their Muslim identity and fulfill their religious obligation became a useful tool to guarantee that the products produced in non-Muslim countries are acceptable to the Muslim world.

Halal Certification expanded rapidly and took shape in the 1980s and 1990s.

In the US it was observed that the Jewish people who are fewer in numbers than the Muslims were enforcing their religious requirements on products to be acceptable to them through their certification and accreditation called the "kosher".

So Muslims in the United States started to follow the precedent established by the Jews in the U.S. - so the establishment of the halal logo, although different from what we have now. The "halal" logo has therefore become a marketing advantage for the products marketed to the Muslim world and among Muslim communities, including the Jewish communities. *(in the US it is reported that for every single halal certificate there are over 75 Kosher certificates issued).*

Halal was included into the United Nations Codex Alimentary in the year 1998.

With the enforcement of globalization as a method now acceptable among all countries in the world for trade and business practices, Muslim countries have started to be concerned on processed foods; hence, the necessity of halal certification of all processed foods.

As a matter of fact, in some countries in Asia like Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei, halal certification on drinking water is already a requirement because there are always critical issues on every product which have to be addressed by a credible body.

Halal Certification did not stop on the food products. It is also important in non-food products including personal care, utensils, fashion and clothing's, shoes and the like and lately halal certification is now made mandatory to animal and poultry feeds, packaging materials such as tin cans, drums, plastic bottles and the like which are in contact with the halal quality products.

This is because the halal quality products have to be safeguarded from contamination and the principal contaminant of the product other than the raw materials and ingredients, if any, would be the packaging materials which come in contact with it; even the storage facilities, delivery vans and the like.

Halal Certification is the processes of having a qualified independent third party supervise the production of consumables, attesting that they were produced in conformity with the preparation and ingredient standards of the halal lifestyle. After successful adoption and performance of halal productivity procedures, the supervisory third party then issues Halal Certification to the producer attesting to halal conformity on a per product basis.

A Halal certificate issued, is an assurance that a particular product has been thoroughly investigated and found to conform to the Islamic Shariah Laws and therefore is suitable for use by Muslims.

Benefits of Halal Certification

There are many benefits of Halal Certificatiion. Knowing a product is halal-certified means he or she does not have to bother checking all the ingredients. The consumer can purchase the product with the assurance it does not contain anything that is haram or doubtful.

A producer gets the expertise of the staff in reviewing its products, the ingredients, the preparation and processing and the hygiene and sanitation procedures that are requisite in manufacturing said product Halal certification provides an independent third party quality assurance step valued by conscientious consumers.

There is assurance that dead carcasses and substitution of meat does not take place.

Halal Market

Today, there are nearly two billion halal consumers worldwide. **Halal foods comprise one of the fastest developing consumer markets in the United States of America.** Halal consumers spent $15 billion on food items and related services in 2011. This phenomenal growth is reflected in the **number of stores selling halal meat - from 10 outlets in 1970 to over 2300 in 2012.** In addition, **there are now over 6900 restaurants serving halal consumers.** The halal market has created tens of thousands of American jobs, according to research (*based on data compiled by Zabihah.com and the White Pages*).

The global Halal food industry is worth US$667. 20% of global food trade is Halal.

There is increasing acceptance of halal as the meat of choice, by those of other faiths. The non Muslim halal consumption growth rate can be attributed to the demand for safe, hygienic and humanely produced foods and the realization that halal certified products meet those needs.

Halal Certification Countries

Increasing number of countries has established Halal Certifying Organisations/Authorities which are recognized by the respective governments and accepted by Muslims. Among them –

Australia - Halal Australia is accredited by A.Q.I.S- *Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service*

Canada – Halal Certifying Agency with Halal Monitoring Authority - a department of the Jami'yyatul Ulama Canada, Canadian Council of Muslim Theologians (CCMT), which is a federally Canadian registered, non-profit organization.

Singapore - Majils Ugama Islam Singapura (Muis), also known as the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, is the highest Islamic authority in charge of Muslim affairs in Singapore. *Muis was established as a statutory board in 1968.*

In 2009, Muis certified more than 2,600 premises and has played an important role as the custodian of Halal food assurance for Singapore's 15% Muslim population.Mc Donald's, KF C and Taco Bell are some international brands that have gone 100 % halal in Singapore

America - The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) is a non-profit Islamic organization.

UK - the services are provided by The Muslim Food Board.

Malaysia - the Department of the Advancement of Islam Malaysia (JAKIM)

South Africa – *Muslim Judicial Council HALAAL TRUST is registered as a Trust with the South African Government since 1986.*

Also the South African National Halal Authority

India – Halal India is an independent Halal Certification body which is *recognised by the Government of India*

Thailand – Thailand Halaal Certification and Standard, Bureau of Livestock Standard and Certification, Department of Livestock Development

Switzerland - Halal Certification Services Switzerland (HCS) is a Halal quality assurance company whose aim is to ensure that Muslims consume Halal and products which comply with the Islamic dietary standards, as prescribed in the Qur'an and Sunnah.They are officially recognized by JAKIM (Malaysia), MUI (Indonesia) and MUIS (Singapore).

Growing Halal Markets

China is one of the world's most eye-catching halal food markets, as Muslims there total more than 30 million, or 2.3% of China's population **The European Supermarkets** are now aggressively pursuing the Halal food retailing. **The** *Port of Rotterdam* is currently creating a "Halal DistriPark " to serve 30 Million Muslims in Europe.

Thailand, known as World's Halal Kitchen, is currently the fifth largest halal food exporter and recognized as Halal Centre of Excellence in science and testing.

United Kingdom - *The proposed £150m Super Halal Industrial Park (SHIP) at South Wales, would make UK the landmark Halal centre for the region.*

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