

Joint media statement from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Meat Industry Association, Meat & Wool New Zealand, New Zealand Islamic Meat Management and the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand.

22/7/05

The New Zealand High Commission in Malaysia has today received a letter advising of the preliminary findings of an audit in May.

The letter raises concerns over consistency with certain new Malaysian halal standards, and resulted in the suspension of many New Zealand meat premises.

The decision is preliminary. The Malaysian Committee for Accreditation of Overseas Abattoirs and Processing Plants will make its final decision and will inform us accordingly.

Further clarification for the reason and implications of the preliminary findings will be sought in a teleconference next week.

In addition, it is anticipated that New Zealand Government officials will meet directly with the appropriate Malaysian authorities as a matter of priority.

New Zealand understands that product produced at the suspended meat premises after July 20 will not be accepted for import by the Malaysian authorities.

New Zealand's halal certifying authorities (the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand and New Zealand Islamic Meat Management) emphasise that products produced in New Zealand in accordance with the halal standard fulfils the requirements of the Islamic Shariah (law).

New Zealand officials and New Zealand's halal certifying authorities will be striving to resolve the matter and seeking to obtain further clarity on the Malaysian halal standard.

Ends

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