



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST**

**Tenth Session**

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*Comments of Algeria*

**AGENDA ITEM 12**

**Discussion paper on the development of a standard for halal products**

1. Introduction:

We suggest that the text should be amended as follows:

*"These Guidelines set forth general criteria that must be met for food products to be deemed "halal". Such food products must comply with the principles and provisions of Islamic law that are accepted by all Islamic schools of thought, irrespective of any differences among them. Those criteria shall ensure food safety and shall reflect technical standards and regulations issued in that regard."*

A second paragraph should be added, which should read as follows:

*"As unsafe foods are not deemed to be halal, compliance with quality standards, including those relating to food safety and traceability, should be a prerequisite for application of the term."*

2. Scope of the term:

A second paragraph should be added, which should read as follows:

*"All criteria that must be met for the term to be applied are universal and mandatory. Those criteria must be met by all organizations operating in the food production process, irrespective of their size or complexity or whether they are involved in only one or in several stages of the food production process."*

3. Terms and definitions:

Point 2.2. Non-halal (haram): an Islamic term referring to that which, under Islamic law, may not be used or consumed.

Points 2.11 and 2.12 in the section on definitions should be incorporated into point 3 regarding general criteria for use of the term "halal".

Point 2.11.1 on halal animals: subpoint (c) should be amended to read: Aquatic animals (fish, crustaceans, molluscs) and their products are halal provided that they are not poisonous or harmful to health, unless the relevant poisonous or harmful substances have been removed.

Point 2.12: Non-halal animals and birds:

- Point 4 on squirrels: there is a lack of consensus in this regard. The prevailing opinion is that, in the absence of a prohibition on the consumption of squirrels, decisions in that regard are made by each Islamic school of thought. In Algeria, the Maliki school of thought permits their consumption.
- Point 6 on snails: there is no prohibition on the consumption of snails in certain Maghreb countries, including Algeria and Tunisia. We suggest that the classification of snails be reviewed. This issue was reviewed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation-affiliated Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), which, following its consideration of a request submitted by Maghreb countries, removed snails from the list of non-halal animals.

4. Points 2.10 and 3.8 on genetically modified foods

Scientific research has confirmed that the consumption of genetically modified foods is detrimental to human health. Those foods have been prohibited by numerous countries. We therefore propose that the term halal should not be used with any genetically modified foods.

5. Point 8.1 on evaluation and verification. We suggest that the text should be amended as follows:

Inspections shall be carried out in order to evaluate non-halal sources and ingredients. Those inspections shall make use of reliable scientific methodologies that have been approved at national and international levels.

6. We propose that the following new clause should be incorporated into the text:

Legal requirements:

In addition to the criteria that must be met in order to be considered halal, a product must comply with national and international technical laws and regulations.

7. General comments:

- We suggest that the term "Islamic law" should be replaced with the term "Islamic religion";
- These criteria do not address how and under what circumstances food may be provided to halal wild animals;
- As most Islamic and Arab countries are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which has recommended that its member countries adopt the General Guidelines on Halal Food, which were formulated by the Institute of Standards and Metrology (SMIIC), the formulation of new guidelines in that area is unnecessary;
- The term "halal" is regulated by the following:
  - General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal" (CAC/GL 24-1997)
  - General Guidelines on Halal Food (Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC))