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Halal certification standards published

Food processors are increasingly becoming familiar with kosher certification of their products, but they are not as familiar with halal certification for Muslims. The word halal means proper and permitted. Foods not prepared or processed using halal standards are forbidden to be consumed by Muslims, just as alcohol or pork are. A company does not have to be owned or operated by Muslims to produce halal products, but any product destined for halal labeling must be produced under the supervision, assistance, counsel, and participation of trained Muslim production inspectors.

To help food processors understand halal standards and how to comply with

them, the Islamic Food & Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) and My Own Meals, Inc., have published a handbook entitled *Halal Industrial Production Standards*. Topics covered include halal supervision and inspection, slaughtering and meat processing requirements, types of foods and packaging, and standards for cleaning, producing, shipping, storing, documenting, and labeling products. A listing of food additives and their halal status is also included.

IFANCA, based in Bedford Park, Ill., is a halal-certifying organization whose mission is to promote the understanding of

halal in North America and elsewhere. Its symbol is the letter M in a crescent circle. My Own Meals, based in Deerfield, Ill., is a producer of shelf-stable products for the retail, institutional, and military markets. It produces halal meat meals under the *J&M™* brand name and kosher- and halal-certified vegetarian meals and kosher meat meals under the *My Own Meal®* brand name. The company was awarded a \$5-million defense contract in 1996, becoming the first supplier of halal and kosher rations to the U.S. military.

The 28-p handbook is available for \$10 to cover handling and shipping from My Own Meals, Inc., P.O. Box 334, Deerfield, IL 60015 (phone 847-948-1118, fax 847-948-0468). ●

