



OIA26-0390

6 July 2026

Mohammed Khan
fyi-request-34722-ab97203d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mohammed,

Thank you for your email of 18 May 2026, requesting information relating to oversight of Shechita slaughter of poultry in New Zealand. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

On 12 June 2026 the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) extended the time limit to respond to your request to 6 July.

The killing of animals for meat and food products in New Zealand must be conducted according to the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act). The Act makes it an offence to kill an animal in a way that causes unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress. The code of welfare for commercial slaughter was last amended in 2018. It contains minimum standards and recommendations for best practice for the slaughter of animals in New Zealand. Specialist veterinarians are hired by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) as part of an active verification programme to ensure that animal welfare is maintained and the Animal Welfare Act and codes of welfare are complied with at slaughterhouses across New Zealand.

Section 15A of the Code of Welfare: Commercial Slaughter which regulates shechita slaughter of poultry for domestic consumption was introduced in 2010. The introduction of the standard gives oversight of kosher slaughter of poultry which was not previously recorded separately. This has enabled high standards of animal welfare to be kept while upholding kosher observance for New Zealand's Jewish population.

You requested the following:

*I have some questions regarding how the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and subsequently MPI has acted to perform its duties regarding said regulation:
1: Section 15A provides that "The number of poultry that will be subject to shechita will not exceed the number necessary to meet the needs, within New Zealand, of the local Jewish community and kosher observant visitors to New Zealand".*

Question 1a) What actions has MPI taken to ensure that the inhumane slaughter of poultry under Section 15A does not exceed those needs? A summary of any actions by year is fine.

Section 15A(d) concerning shechita of poultry under the Code of Welfare Commercial Slaughter identifies the estimated poultry consumption needs in New Zealand as no more than 5000 birds each year. As shown in Table One below, no more than half the estimated maximum requirement has been slaughtered in a year since the minimum standard was introduced in 2010.

MPI continues to engage with the Auckland Hebrew Congregation and Wellington Jewish Community Centre to review permitted numbers of kosher-slaughtered poultry required to meet the domestic consumption needs of New Zealand's Jewish community.

Representatives from these organisations provide the certification of Shochets (kosher-certified butchers) as required under Section 15A, as well as monthly slaughter reports provided by the commercial entities performing the shechita slaughter. These requirements ensure MPI has frequently updated information on who is slaughtering chickens under shechita requirements and the volumes processed.

Question 1b) Please provide the number of chickens and/or other poultry that have been slaughtered under Section 15A, by year, since 2010.

The annual totals for chickens slaughtered following Shechita protocols since 2010 are provided in Table One:

Table One: Annual total kosher chicken slaughters since 2010

Year	Total	Year	Total
2010	446	2018	2000
2011	400	2019	0
2012	2501	2020	2000
2013	808	2021	0
2014	1243	2022	808
2015	564	2023	2216
2016	2096	2024	0
2017	2408	2025	0

Question 1c) Since 2010, has MPI at any point provided approval for the export of any kosher chicken meat or chicken-based products, which is to say, for the export of inhumanely slaughtered poultry products that were killed for a purpose specifically other than "to meet the needs, within New Zealand, of the local Jewish community and kosher observant visitors to New Zealand"?

The export of any kosher-slaughtered animal products has been prohibited since the implementation of Minimum Standard 15A. The standard is implemented explicitly for domestic needs only.

2: Section 15A that "The Minister and the Auckland Hebrew Congregation and the Wellington Jewish Community Centre will from time to time discuss the number of poultry required to meet the needs of the local Jewish community and kosher observant visitors to New Zealand."

Question 2a) I appreciate that there will have been a lot of initial discussion around this in 2010 and possibly 2011. As such, to ensure that MPI can answer this OIA request efficiently and promptly, please provide all details held by MPI, in their original form, about any such discussions since January 2012.

A search for correspondence between MPI and the Auckland Hebrew Congregation or Wellington Jewish Community Centre concerning this part of your request returned a large amount of information. To identify the actual correspondence in scope of your request from this search would require substantial research and collation. Consequently, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA - *the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.*

Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Ministry for Primary Industries at Official.InformationAct@mpi.govt.nz. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143 or at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Trish Mead', written over a faint circular stamp.

Trish Mead

Acting Director Animal Health and Welfare