

Chief Rabbis Repeat Promise To End Slaughter Method

By Nathaniel Popper

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After [an article in the Forward](#) detailed a controversial kosher slaughtering method, the Israel's Chief Rabbinate has repeated an earlier promise to do away with it.

A spokesman for the Chief Rabbinate told The Jerusalem Post this week that "we are doing everything to improve" the process known as "shackle and hoist" — a practice widely used in South American slaughterhouses, where a majority of Israeli kosher meat and a growing portion of kosher meat consumed in America originates. The method involves pulling the cattle up into the air by its hind legs and then dropping it onto the ground where it is restrained by workers and slaughtered.

The current assurances from the Chief Rabbinate come two months after Israel's Ashkenazic chief rabbi, Yona Metzger, privately promised American kosher-certification authorities that the Chief Rabbinate would end the practice, according to a letter that was given to the Forward.

In the letter from December 25, Metzger wrote that "the chief rabbinate will consult with experts and invest considerable energy in finding additional appropriate practical solutions which will reduce the claims regarding cruelty to animals."

Metzger wrote the letter to Rabbi Menachem Genack, CEO of the Orthodox Union's Kashrus Division. The O.U. has been quietly pressing the Israeli Chief Rabbinate over the last year to do away with "shackle and hoist" slaughter. The American kosher market has been rocked by a series of recent scandals involving allegations of inhumane treatment of animals.

Given the earlier assurances made by Metzger, Genack told the Forward that he is not expecting any immediate change in "shackle and hoist" slaughter.

"They made a conceptual decision to do this, but the implementation is something different, something that is going to take a long time," Genack said,

One of the primary difficulties is that Israeli meat importers do their slaughter in plants that are rented from South American companies — making capital improvements more difficult.

Metzger's letter to Genack came after the chief rabbis met with kosher authorities in Israel, including a leading veterinarian, Rabbi I.M. Levinger. Levinger told the Forward that at that meeting the chief rabbis talked about doing away with "shackle and hoist," but without a definite timetable.

"I came to the meeting, and I was ready to do something, but they didn't move in between," Levinger said.

"They said they wanted to get the feedback from the field," Levinger added. "If you give the feedback to

the slaughterhouses, it's not so easy to get the right answers, because the slaughterhouses are interested in the business and not in the treatment of animals."

Since that meeting, the Forward has published an article detailing "shackle and hoist" slaughter and the animal-rights group PETA released a video of the slaughter method from a plant in Uruguay.

The spokesman for the Chief Rabbinate told The Jerusalem Post this week, "We plan to meet soon with importers and slaughterhouse owners who use the method in an attempt to reach an agreement."

The Chief Rabbinate did not respond to requests for comment from the Forward.

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