

**Public Law 95-445**  
**95th Congress**

**An Act**

To amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act to require that meat inspected and approved under such Act be produced only from livestock slaughtered in accordance with humane methods, and for other purposes.

**Oct. 10, 1978**  
**[S. 3092]**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That this Act may be cited as the "Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1978".

SEC. 2. Section 3 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 603) is amended by inserting "(a)" immediately before the first sentence and adding at the end thereof a new subsection (b) as follows:

"(b) For the purpose of preventing the inhumane slaughtering of livestock, the Secretary shall cause to be made, by inspectors appointed for that purpose, an examination and inspection of the method by which cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, and other equines are slaughtered and handled in connection with slaughter in the slaughtering establishments inspected under this Act. The Secretary may refuse to provide inspection to a new slaughtering establishment or may cause inspection to be temporarily suspended at a slaughtering establishment if the Secretary finds that any cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equines have been slaughtered or handled in connection with slaughter at such establishment by any method not in accordance with the Act of August 27, 1958 (72 Stat. 862; 7 U.S.C. 1901-1906) until the establishment furnishes assurances satisfactory to the Secretary that all slaughtering and handling in connection with slaughter of livestock shall be in accordance with such a method."

SEC. 3. Section 10 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 610) is amended by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively, and inserting after subsection (a) a new subsection (b) as follows:

"(b) slaughter or handle in connection with slaughter any such animals in any manner not in accordance with the Act of August 27, 1958 (72 Stat. 862; 7 U.S.C. 1901-1906);"

SEC. 4. Section 20(a) of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 620) is amended by inserting after the first sentence a new sentence as follows: "No such carcasses, parts of carcasses, meat or meat food products shall be imported into the United States unless the livestock from which they were produced was slaughtered and handled in connection with slaughter in accordance with the Act of August 27, 1958 (72 Stat. 862; 7 U.S.C. 1901-1906)."

SEC. 5. The Act of August 27, 1958 (72 Stat. 862; 7 U.S.C. 1901-1906) is amended by—

(a) inserting before the period at the end of section 2(b) "and handling in connection with such slaughtering";

(b) repealing sections 3, 4(c), and 5;

(c) striking out "for purposes of section 3 hereof" in section 4(b);

(d) inserting "and" after the semicolon at the end of section 4(a); and

(e) striking out the semicolon at the end of section 4(b) and inserting a period in lieu thereof.

**Humane  
Methods of  
Slaughter Act  
of 1978.**  
21 USC 601 note.

7 USC 1902.

Repeals.

7 USC

1903-1905.

7 USC 1904.

21 USC 603 note.

SEC. 6. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit, abridge, or in any way hinder the religious freedom of any person or group. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, in order to protect freedom of religion, ritual slaughter and the handling or other preparation of livestock for ritual slaughter are exempted from the terms of this Act. For the purposes of this section the term "ritual slaughter" means slaughter in accordance with section 2(b) of the Act of August 27, 1958 (72 Stat. 862; 7 U.S.C. 1902(b)).

"Ritual slaughter."

Effective date.  
21 USC 603 note.

SEC. 7. The provisions of this Act shall become effective one year after the date of enactment. However, such provisions shall not apply to a person, firm, or corporation for such additional period of time, not to exceed eighteen months, as may be determined by the Secretary, if the Secretary, upon application, finds that compliance with the provisions of this Act on its effective date would cause undue hardship on such person, firm, or corporation.

Approved October 10, 1978.

**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:**

HOUSE REPORT No. 95-1336 accompanying H.R. 1464 (Comm. on Agriculture).  
SENATE REPORT No. 95-1059 (Comm. on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry).  
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 124 (1978):

- Aug. 7, considered and passed Senate.
- Sept. 19, H.R. 1464 considered and passed House; passage vacated and S. 3092, amended, passed in lieu.
- Sept. 28, Senate concurred in House amendments.