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**FARM ANIMAL WELFARE AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:
MAKING SLAUGHTER VISIBLE?**

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Until relatively recently, the slaughter of animals for human consumption was almost invisible: many of us consumed meat but chose to remain ignorant of its origins. From the late 20th century onwards a series of crises raised concerns about farm animal welfare (FAW) within industrial food production systems, but the slaughter of animals was rarely discussed. A series of complex global processes have since pushed the underlying issues back into public consciousness and political debate, with animal slaughter now being discussed more openly than at any time over the last two centuries. However, while corporate retailers and large supermarkets are making FAW a central feature of corporate social responsibility strategies, slaughter still remains a largely invisible issue.

The Business Benchmark for Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW) epitomizes this situation. Lunched in line with the increasing recognition of the business case for improving FAW at the global level, BBFAW was designed to improve corporate reporting on FAW management and performance in order to stimulate good practice by corporate retailers and supermarkets. One of the BBFAW assessment criteria relates to the position of companies on the avoidance of meat from animals not subjected to pre-slaughter stunning. While most developed countries have legislation that requires animals to be stunned prior to slaughter, there are often exceptions that allow slaughter to be practiced without pre-stunning under certain conditions. However, despite the emergence of halal and kosher meat markets and their associated controversies in a number of EU countries, the BBFAW found that almost 75% of the companies assessed do not provide any information on animal slaughter in their corporate reports and policies.

This paper assesses the reasons for this omission and the continuing invisibility of animal slaughter in corporate food policy discourse.