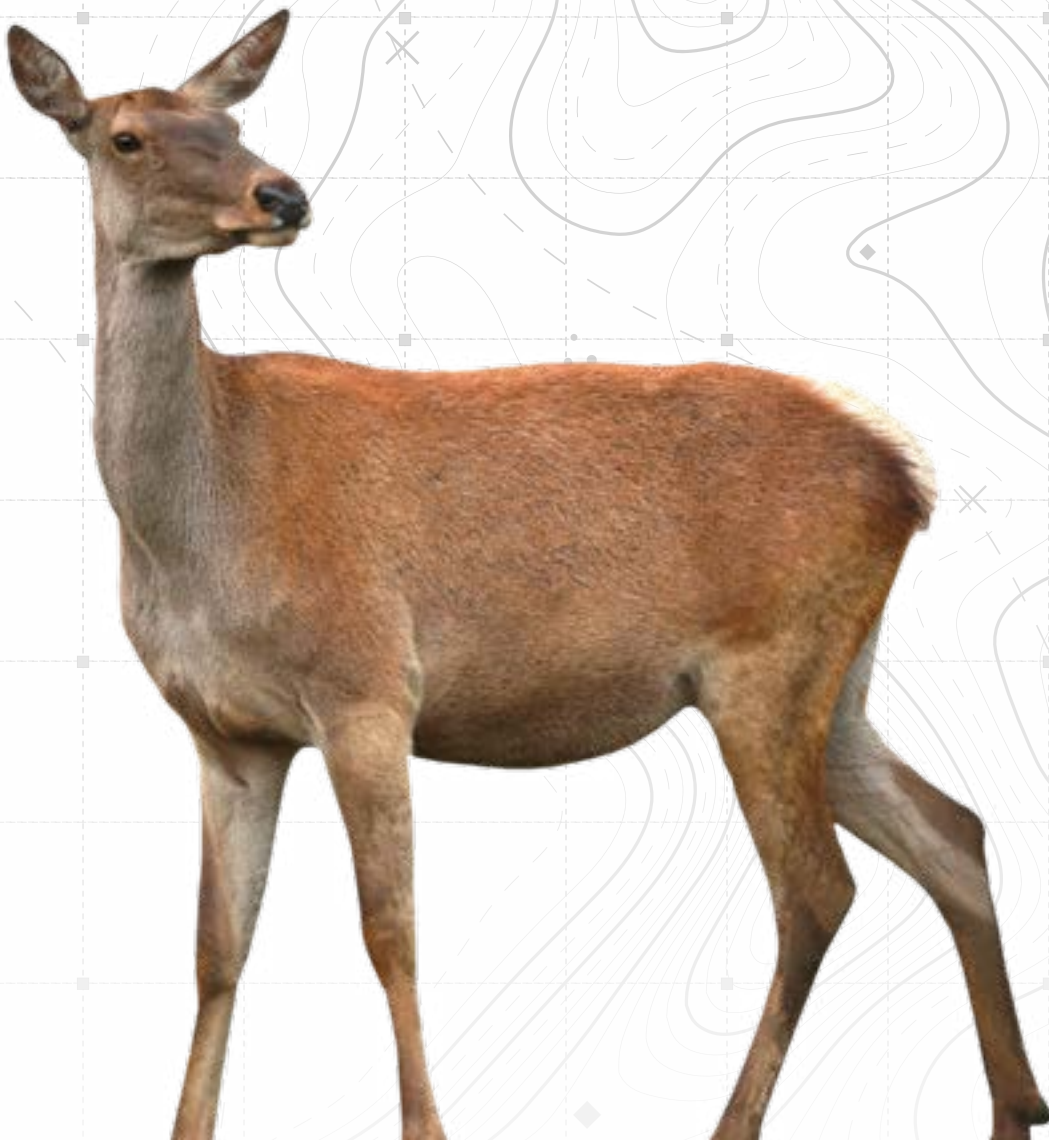


ENGLAND &  
WALES **BEST  
PRACTICE  
GUIDES**

# Supply of venison.

Meat Hygiene Guides





# Introduction

**T**his guide helps identify regulations and requirements for deer managers looking to supply their carcasses or venison through various outlets. “The Wild Game Guide”, developed by the Food Standards Agency, should be considered as essential reading on this subject. Please note that many of the terms used in the text (**highlighted in bold**) are explained in the “Definitions” section at the end of this guide.

This guide is linked to the Carcass Preparation series of guides and the Larder Design and Legislation guides.

## Legislation

The key aim of any food legislation is to ensure that all food for human consumption is safe to eat.

There are a number of different pieces of legislation that those dealing with wild game meat should be aware of. These include:

- The Food Safety Act 1990 (as amended)
- The General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002
- The General Food Regulations 2004 (as amended)
- Regulation (EC) No-853.2004

For more information on any of these acts, please visit the FSA website.



## Different scenarios for the supply of venison and deer carcasses

The following table is based on the table featured in the FSA Wild Game Guide (2022) and outlines the requirements for the most common routes of supply encountered by deer managers.

Scenario	Restrictions on supply	Trained hunter status needed	Food business Registration needed	HACCP plan needed	Record keeping and Traceability
Keeping wild deer carcasses for private, domestic consumption	In this case, wild game can be kept to eat yourself or given to family and friends for them to eat. They cannot supply it further	No	No	No	Not required
Direct supply of deer carcasses to the final consumer or to local retailers who sell to the final consumer (eg. Butchers or restaurants)	A stalker can sell deer carcasses (in-skin) to the final consumer or to businesses who sell to the final consumer. This must be done locally (see definitions below)	No	No	No	Yes, records and details for traceability are required
Supply of processed (skinned and/or butchered) venison to the final consumer or local retailers who supply the final consumer	Stalkers can sell small quantities of butchered venison or processed (skinned) carcasses to the final consumer or to businesses selling to the final consumer. Again, this must be done locally	No	Yes, you will need to register with your local authority (council) as a food business	Yes, you will need a food safety system plan in place	Yes, you will need to keep records and details for traceability
Supply of deer carcasses to Approved Game Handling Establishments (AGHE's)	Stalkers can sell deer carcasses to an AGHE, who then processes and distributes the venison to a wider market	Yes, you will need to be a trained hunter (Either the DSC1 before April 2021, the DSC2 after April 2021 or a standalone large game meat hygiene certificate	Yes, you will need to register with your local authority (council) as a food business	Yes, you will need a food safety system plan in place. You will also need to comply with any requirements of the AGHE receiving your carcasses	Yes, you will need to keep records and details for traceability

Further explanations can be found below

### Private Domestic consumption

The regulations specifically relevant to wild game meat do not apply to private domestic consumption. Although the regulations are not applicable, the hygiene standards implied are relevant and it is recommended that they are still followed.

### Supplying in-skin carcasses to the final consumer

■ A primary producer can supply in-skin carcasses, in small quantities directly to the final consumer or to local retailers that supply direct to the final consumer, under the “primary producer exemption”.

- You are not a food business under the regulations, but you are nonetheless responsible for supplying safe food under Regulation 178/2002.
- Carcass records should be kept to ensure traceability and it is recommended that carcasses are initially inspected by a trained person before being supplied.
- Temperature controls should be maintained and premises should comply with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004.
- Note: A business which buys up carcasses from shoots and then sells them on to retailers cannot use the primary producer exemption, even if the quantities are small and the retailers local.

## Supplying venison (butchered/processed game meat) direct, in small quantities, to final consumers or local retailers that supply direct to the final consumer

- A deer carcass becomes classed as game meat once it has been skinned. This is the start of processing, so anything including and after that involves different requirements.
- As with the primary producer exemption, only small quantities may be supplied, either direct to the final consumer or to local retailers that supply direct to final consumers (but not to retailers for supply to other retailers).
- It is the premises where you prepare meat that have to be local to the retailers you plan to supply and not the place(s) where you shoot. So you can shoot on other people's estates and then bring the game back to your own premises.
- It is recommended that carcasses are initially inspected by a trained person before being further processed.
- You must be registered with your Local Authority as a food business (this includes your deer larder if you use it to store carcasses and any vehicles you use when you are supplying venison).
- You must comply with general hygiene requirements and have in place a food safety management procedure based on HACCP principles.
- Temperature controls and the cold chain must be maintained, with large game meat requiring a maximum of 7 degrees C for storage.



- Processed meat and any in-skin carcasses must be kept separate, either by having separate storage and processing areas or by only working on one type at a time.
- Records must be kept to ensure traceability.
- Premises must comply with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004. Advice on larder construction standards is in the Wild Game Guide and the best practice guide “Larder Design”.
- Note: Businesses which buy in or use carcasses from elsewhere cannot make use of this exemption and must become an AGHE.

## Supplying in-skin carcasses to an Approved Game Handling Establishment (AGHE)

- If you supply in-skin carcasses to an AGHE, you need to be registered with your Local Authority as a food business (this includes your deer larder if you use it to store carcasses before they go to an AGHE and any vehicles you use when you are supplying an AGHE).
- You must comply with general hygiene requirements for primary production and associated operations.
- Any carcasses taken to or picked up by an AGHE must normally have undergone an initial examination by a ‘trained person’ and have a declaration attached, regardless of who shot the deer.
- The declaration must include such information as the species, sex, date, time and location shot, together with an identification number and a statement (signed by the trained person) either that the animal was free from any abnormal behaviour, carcass characteristics or environmental contamination, or describing any such features that were found.
- Pre-printed tags are available from multiple places including the British Deer Society, National Gamekeepers Organisation or British Quality Wild Venison (BQVV).
- An AGHE will not normally accept a carcass without a trained person's declaration but may do so if it is accompanied by its head and internal organs. It is advisable to check with the AGHE before collection/delivery.
- A carcass should reach the AGHE as soon as possible.
- Temperature controls must be maintained and carcass records must be kept to ensure traceability.
- AGHEs may have their own specific requirements with regard to how they would prefer carcasses to be supplied.

## Definitions

- **Approved Game Handling Establishment (AGHE)** – An establishment, approved by the Food Standards Agency, for processing wild game for general sale both within the UK and for exports.
- **Food Business Registration** – To protect public health, competent authorities need to be able to identify those who are operating a food business, the address where the business is located and the activities that are carried out. This is known as “registration” and is usually done through your local council.
- **Game meat** – Once the skin has been removed from a “primary product” carcass it becomes “game meat”.
- **Hazard analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP)** – The HACCP system is internationally accepted as the system of choice for food safety management. It identifies any hazards along an entire process as well as how to remove or limit them.
- **Local Supply** – “Local” refers to the supplying establishment’s county, any neighbouring counties or a radius of 30 mile/50km, whichever is greater. Also includes mail order and internet sales to the final consumer, wherever they may be sent.
- **Temperature controls** – Deer managers are responsible for the safety of the food they supply. Freshly shot carcasses should cool to no more than 7°C as soon as possible and kept below this temperature from there on. In-skin carcasses must not be frozen. If transportation of carcasses or meat is to be prolonged, refrigerated transport will be required.
- **Traceability** – Regulation 178/2002 requires details to be kept that allows game meat to be tracked along its journey. Those registered as food businesses are required to have in place systems and procedures that allow for traceability information to be made available to competent authorities on demand. The requirement is that food can be traced “one step back and one step forward” along the supply chain. Copies of invoices and larder records may be sufficient. Key information is the name and address of the supplier/customer, the date and the nature of the products. Final consumers do not have to be individually identified. However, it is useful to record how much game is supplied direct to final consumers.
- **Wild Game** – For the purposes of this guide, wild deer. Note: wild game must only have been killed by hunting. Deer killed by any other means e.g. road traffic accidents, must not be supplied for human consumption.



## Further Information

- **FSA Wild Game Guide**  
<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/V7%20Guidance%20-%20supply%20of%20wild%20game%20for%20human%20consumption.pdf>
- **Food Business Registration**  
<https://www.gov.uk/food-business-registration>
- **Deer Stalking Certificates**  
<https://www.dmq.org.uk/>
- **British Quality Wild Venison**  
<https://britishqualitywildvenison.co.uk/>