

# CARCASS BUTCHERING(I)

ENGLAND & WALES  
BEST PRACTICE GUIDES



## Introduction

The aim of this guide is to provide a basic introduction to venison butchery covering the primal breakdown of a venison carcass. Note that once a carcass is skinned, it is no longer a "primary product" but becomes venison and is subject to different legislation with respect to processing and supply, see <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/wildgameguide1oct08.pdf>. This guide is linked to the Carcass Preparation series of guides.

## Skinning and storage

Ideally the carcass should be skinned while warm, or as soon as it has been lardered. The carcass may still be warm after skinning, if possible allow it to cool without chilling for 6 hours or so to ensure the full and rapid onset of rigor mortis and prevent 'cold shortening' of the soft muscles. The carcass should then be chilled at 1° to 4° C and could be stored for up to 10 days to ensure tenderness and maturation, depending on age. There should be no contact with other carcasses, skinned carcasses should be hung separately from any that are in skin. Whether primary cuts are made with the carcass suspended (as

- A: neck
- B: shoulder
- C: forequarters
- D: saddle
- E: haunch
- F: flank

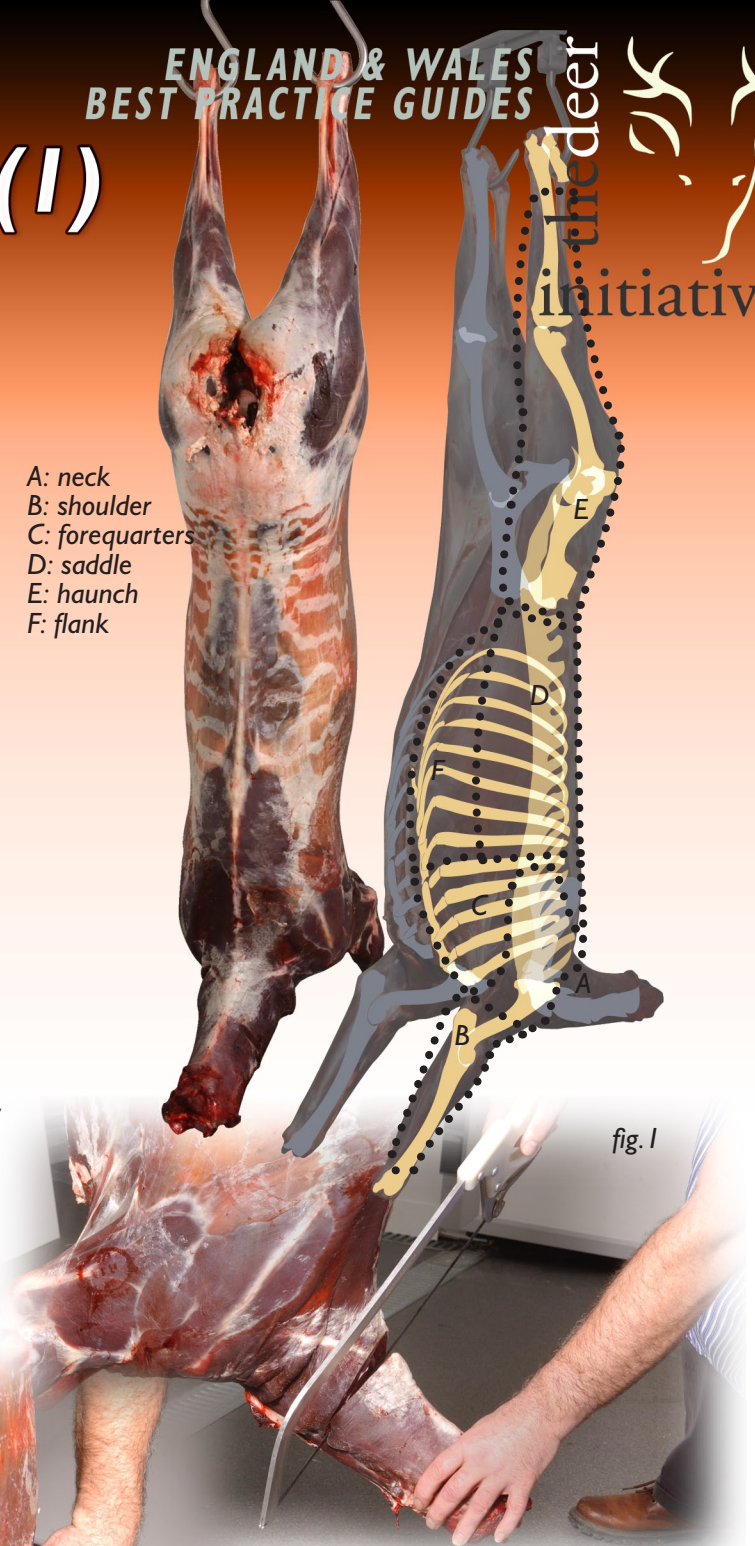


fig. 1

**Equipment:** potable water (ideally hot) | meat saw | steak knife | boning knife | chain-mail glove and apron | good quality cutting board or block | freezer bags | roasting bands

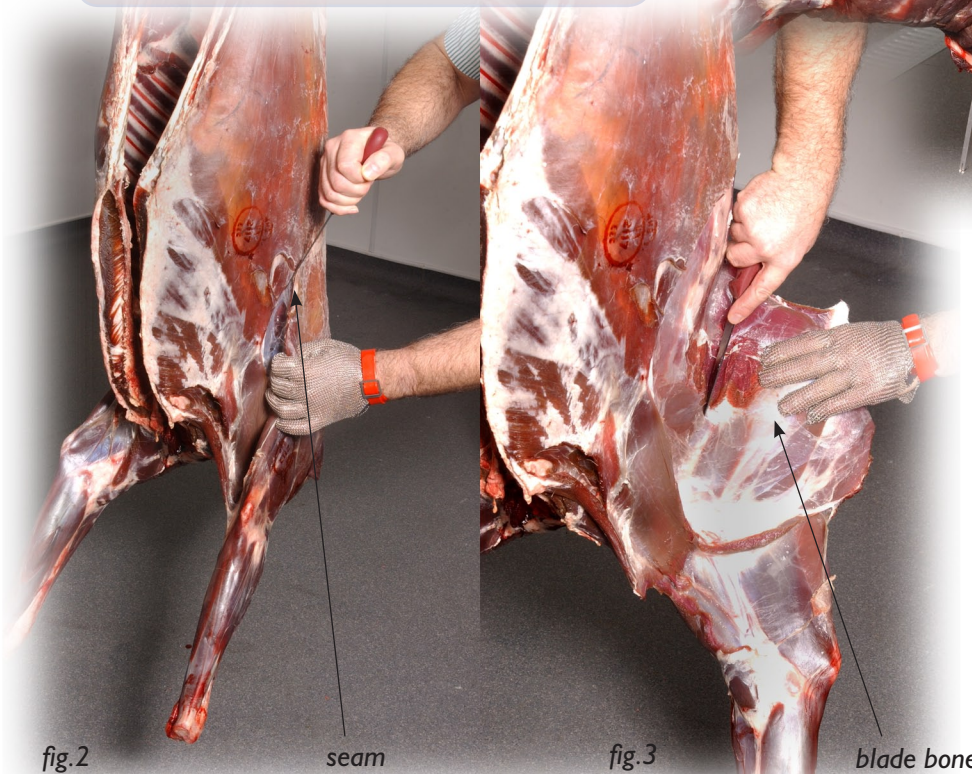


fig.2

seam

fig.3

blade bone

(fig.1 above) neck removal: any bloody meat should be removed from under the neck at this stage as this will be discoloured and deteriorate quickly if left on the neck

(fig.2 far left) shoulder block removal: open the seam by gently pulling away the fore leg and the seam will open to allow better access. Care should be taken not to cut into underlying muscles

(fig.3 left) the underside of the shoulder blade bone is now visible under fingers





fig.4 shoulder block muscle group: A: inner blade – diced; B: feather – diced and casserole; C: blade – diced and casserole; D: thick rib – braising steaks; E: clod – mince; F: fore shin – shin and mince; G: flat blade – diced and mince



(fig.5 above) boning out the shoulder

shown) on a cutting table will be down to individual experience and preference. Before cutting, ensure that all work areas, equipment and hands are clean, see Basic Hygiene guide.

## Neck removal

To remove the neck make a square knife cut just below the fold of the shoulder and neck and then saw through the neck bone (fig.1). Clean all bone dust from both surfaces.

## Shoulder block removal & preparation

The shoulder blocks are removed from the main part of the carcass by opening the seam indicated (figs. 2 & 3) and following the shape of the blade bone.

The shoulder block consists of three sections containing the blade bone, humerus bone and the fore leg. To prepare the shoulder, these are removed separately starting with the blade bone (fig.5). Once completed the process is repeated on the other side of the carcass. The shoulder block can be further broken down into smaller cuts (fig.4).

## Forequarter removal

Make an incision between the 5th and 6th rib (counting from the neck end) sliding the knife against the 5th rib. Repeat on other side. Saw through the sternum bone (fig.6). Make a square cut to the backbone on both sides, lining the cuts up across the back. Saw through the backbone keeping the saw in line with the ribs. If the carcass is hanging make sure that the detached forequarter does not touch the floor. All bone dust must be removed from both surfaces. Trim out any bullet damage. The meat from each side of the forequarter can be removed in one piece and rolled into a joint, or cut into stewing meat. Any trim can be used for mince.

continued in Butchering(2)

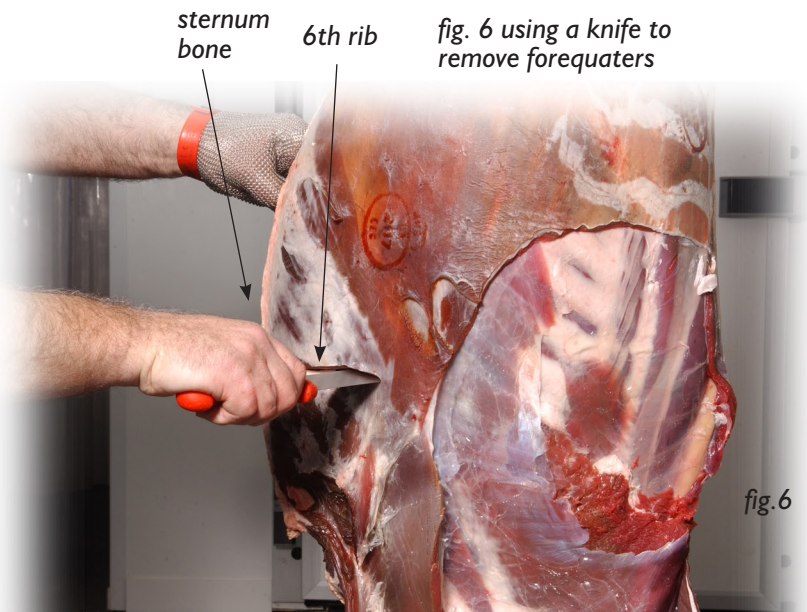


fig. 6 using a knife to remove forequarters



fig.7 continuing with a knife after sawing the backbone