

Donated Game Meat

Standards for the Donation of Culled Game Meat

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In Collaboration with:

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Island

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Definitions

Animal – is defined in the Meat Inspection Regulation as “an animal raised for food.” This definition does not apply to wild game animals or their meat.

Cull – means the hunting or humane killing of game animals as a means of population management or control that is authorized by a permit obtained from the Ministry of FLNRO.

Food bank – means a non-profit organization that

- a) operates with the exclusive intent of feeding the hungry, and
- b) receives, holds, packages, repackages or distributes food to be consumed off the premises but does not process food.

Food premises – means any place where food intended for public consumption is sold, offered for sale, supplied, handled, prepared, packaged, displayed, served, processed, stored, transported or dispensed.

Training program – is a one-day workshop conducted by the Ministry of FLNRO that provides individuals with the knowledge needed to examine, handle and prepare game carcasses for human consumption, and to understand the risk presented by the contamination of meat and the presence of zoonotic organisms. Individuals will receive a letter of recognition upon completion of the training program.

Wild ungulates – include deer, elk or moose only. These are also referred to as “game animals” or “game meat” in this document.

Zoonotic organisms – are organisms carried by animals that can cause disease in humans.

Introduction

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) may permit B.C. communities to cull game animals within their jurisdiction and to donate the meat. These standards apply to situations in which wild ungulates are culled for management purposes and meat is subsequently made available through a donation system.

All meat derived from these culls has been processed by approved facilities and must be donated to individuals or families for their personal consumption only, or to food bank intermediaries.

Background

Economically disadvantaged individuals and families may have challenges in obtaining high quality and nutritious food. Donated food, particularly the high protein and low fat meat obtained from game animals, can greatly increase the diversity and nutritional quality of recipients’ diets. As such, the benefits of donating wild game meat to economically disadvantaged individuals and families can outweigh any disadvantages or costs such a program may entail.

Consumers of donated game meat may lack the knowledge necessary to ensure the meat is safe for human consumption. To reduce the risk to human health presented by unsuitable meat, parasites or diseases, donation programs for culled game meat should be delivered by personnel trained and experienced in assessing game meat quality that follow the standards in this document.

Donation of game meat must comply with those sections pertaining to sanitation and food hygiene of the Meat Inspection Regulation and the Food Premises Regulation.

When culled game animal carcasses and meat are made available through a donation system, the following standards apply. These standards do not apply to uninspected meat from domestic farm animals or from game animal carcasses from hunts. The Meat Inspection Regulation applies to all domestic farm animal slaughter, except those intended for personal consumption by the animal's owner, their immediate household and immediate family.

Standards

- Donated game meat must be from carcasses that are inspected in the field by individuals who have completed the Ministry of FLNRO training program, and have determined the meat to be fit for human consumption. The training program provides individuals with the knowledge required to inspect, handle and prepare game carcasses for human consumption, and to understand the food safety risks presented by contamination and/or the presence of zoonotic organisms.
- Animals must be killed humanely and exsanguinated (bled) as soon as possible after death. Internal organs must be removed as quickly as possible (field dressed) to allow rapid cooling of the carcass.
- To limit carcass contamination, it is recommended that the hide be left intact for transport and that all steps are taken to promote cooling of the carcass. These steps are outlined in the *Wildlife Health Fact Sheet: Meat Spoilage and Proper Field Dressing of Wild Game*.
- Carcasses must be transported to a cut-and-wrap facility approved by the regional Health Authority, and received as soon as possible.
- All carcasses must be processed in an approved cut-and-wrap facility in accordance with the Meat Inspection Regulation, Food Premises Regulation and the provincial *Guideline for Cutting and Wrapping of Uninspected Meat and Game in Approved Food Premises*. The operator of the approved cut-and-wrap facility will also inspect the game carcasses to ensure they are not diseased, unwholesome, spoiled or otherwise unfit for human consumption.
- A carcass must be clearly labeled as "Not Government Inspected - Not for Resale" or other similar words to the satisfaction of an Environmental Health Officer, in accordance with the *Guideline for Cutting and Wrapping of Uninspected Meat and Game in Approved Food Premises*. A carcass may also require additional labeling information, including the type of animal, date of cull and harvest area. This should be confirmed with your regional Health Authority.
- Game meat must be properly chilled to and held at 4°C (40°F) or colder, or frozen at -18°C (0°F) or colder until pickup by or delivery to the designated recipient.
- Game meat must always be protected from contamination and be handled, prepared, stored and transported in a sanitary manner.
- The transportation and transfer of ownership of game carcasses must comply with all directions detailed within a permit issued by the Ministry of FLNRO.
- Game meat will not be donated to soup kitchens, charitable organizations or any facility in which compliance with the Food Premises Regulation is required. The use of wild game meats is contrary to the Food Premises Regulation, which requires that foods come from an "approved source" (meat must be slaughtered in a federally or provincially inspected facility).

Safety Precautions

Live and dead wild game animals can carry organisms including viruses, bacteria and parasites that could cause illness in humans. Precautions to minimize the human health risks to those handling or consuming game meat must be taken at all stages, including:

- Documenting and physically identifying carcasses with abnormalities.
- Using basic personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves and protective clothing) when handling live animals and carcasses.
- Proper handling of carcasses to prevent contamination, especially from gastrointestinal or fecal matter.
- Washing hands and exposed portions of arms thoroughly before and after handling carcasses or meat, and always before eating.
- Ensuring proper food handling and preparation techniques are used. These include:
 - **Separate** – prevent contact between raw meats and ready-to-eat foods
 - **Chill** – keep meat at or below 4 °C (40 °F)
 - **Cook** – make sure all meat is cooked to 74 °C (165 °F)
 - **Clean** – wash hands and equipment after use

Further detail on potential pathogens and specific safety precautions is found in the references below: *Diseases You Can Get from Wildlife* and *Meat Spoilage and Proper Field Dressing of Wild Game – Wildlife Health Fact Sheet*.

If you need clarification, please contact your regional Health Authority.

References

B.C. *Food Safety Act*, Meat Inspection Regulation. B.C. Reg. 349/2004

B.C. *Public Health Act*, Food Premises Regulation. B.C. Reg. 210/99

B.C. *Wildlife Act*, RSBC 1996, c 488

Guideline for Cutting and Wrapping of Uninspected Meat and Game in Approved Food Premises:

Retrieved from: <http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/FCB24E29-9223-4655-AC73-BA528175ED02/0/GuidelineforCuttingandWrappingUninspectedMeatFINALDec2012.pdf>

Diseases You Can Get from Wildlife: A Field Guide for Hunters, Trappers, Anglers and Biologists.

Retrieved from: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/wldhealth/diseases_from_wildlife_safetymanual.pdf

Meat Spoilage and Proper Field Dressing of Wild Game – Wildlife Health Fact Sheet. Retrieved from:

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/wldfact.html>

British Columbia Centre for Disease Control. August 2012. *Guidelines for the Safe Transportation of Carcasses, Poultry and Meat Products.* Retrieved from: <http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/61C0B237-8884-4D64-A4A0-139B8CE46471/0/GuidelinesfortheSafeTransportationofCarcassesPoultryMeatProducts.pdf>