

Wild game guidance

Guidance for primary producers and food business operators on the hygienic production of wild game

Guidance on food safety and hygiene requirements that apply in the various situations in which wild game is hunted and supplied for human consumption.

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Revision history

Revision number	Date	Purpose of revision	Revised by
3	October 2024	Minor revision of the guidance, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of references to specific hunter training providers in "Training requirements in Health and Hygiene" section of the guide.• Other minor wording amendments.	Meat Hygiene Policy
2	25 July 2022	Complete revision which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• removal of the section on Approved Game Handling Establishments.• inclusion of a section that EU Law directly applies in Northern Ireland, that EU Law has been amended to introduce 'collection centres for wild game'.• clarification of exemptions that apply to primary production. Inclusion of a section signposting traders to import and export processes due to changes since 1 January 2021.	Veterinary and Meat Hygiene Policy Team
1	November 2015	Update	Paul Stubbington
0	June 2014	Complete revision	Simon Tudor

Summary

Purpose

To provide guidance on food safety and hygiene requirements that apply in the various situations in which wild game is hunted and supplied for human consumption.

Legal status

This guidance is intended to explain how to comply with regulatory requirements in relation to the supply of wild game and wild game meat for human consumption along with approaches that might be employed to provide confidence in food safety, but which are not a legal requirement to follow.

Who is this publication for?

This wild game guidance is intended for:

- primary producers (for example, hunters, members of hunting parties, shooting estates)
- food business operators (FBOs)
- enforcement officers of: Local Authorities (LAs) in England and Wales, District Councils in Northern Ireland; Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Which UK countries does this guidance apply to?

- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland

Review date

The next scheduled review date for this guidance is October 2026.

Wild game guidance: Introduction

This guidance will explain how these regulatory requirements apply to wild game which is intended for human consumption.

The food safety and hygiene requirements for ensuring the safe production of foodstuffs, including wild game and wild game meat, are set out in relevant legislation. However, which of these requirements applies to a given person or business can differ depending on specific circumstances, with various exemptions to the rules also set out in these regulations. This guidance will explain how these regulatory requirements apply to wild game which is intended for human consumption.

The application of many of these requirements depends on whether you are a primary producer (for example, a hunter, member of a hunting party etc) and/or a food business operator (for example, preparing wild game for placing on the market) and whether you supply wild game directly to final consumers (defined as 'the ultimate consumer of a foodstuff who will not use the food as part of any food business operation or activity'), to a retailer or to an approved game handling establishment (AGHE) ([footnote 1](#)). The circumstances in which you may require approval as an AGHE will also be explained.

1.1 Intended audience

This guidance is intended for:

- primary producers (for example, hunters, members of hunting parties, shooting estates)
- persons who carry out an initial examination of hunted wild game
- persons who transport wild game and wild game meat

- FBOs who handle and supply wild game and wild game meat (for example, AGHEs, cutting plants, butchers, restaurants, farm shops etc).

1.2 Purpose of the guidance

This guidance aims to explain how the legal requirements apply in various situations in which wild game and wild game meat is supplied for human consumption. This includes guidance on the legal requirements which apply to the handling, examination, preparation, storage, transport and supply of wild game and wild game meat for human consumption. This guidance does not cover the legal requirements for farmed game, please see our 'glossary' for more information.

1.3 Legal status of guidance

This guidance document has been updated and published since the United Kingdom (UK) exited from the EU and the end of the Transition period. References to EU legislation have therefore been updated to reflect assimilated law, which is domestic law previously known as Retained EU Law (or REUL) but without the EU law interpretive features applied to it (supremacy, general principles of EU law and rights retained under section 4 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018), after the end of 2023). In Northern Ireland, the majority of food and feed hygiene and safety law is listed under Annex 2 of the Windsor Framework, so existing EU rules continue to apply and assimilated law only applies to goods moved via the [NI Retail Movement Scheme](#).

Assimilated EU Law is identified in FSA guidance using the following formats:

Assimilated Regulation (EU) No. xxx/xxxx or Regulation (EU) No. xxx/xxxx (REUL).

These guidance notes have been produced to provide:

Guidance on the legal requirements for compliance with:

Specific hygiene rules applying to businesses producing food of animal origin, set out in:

[Assimilated Regulation \(EC\) No. 853/2004](#) in Great Britain
[Regulation \(EC\) No. 853/2004](#) in Northern Ireland

General rules as regards animal by products and derived products not intended for human consumption, set out in:

[Assimilated Regulation \(EC\) No. 1069/2009](#) in Great Britain
[Regulation \(EC\) No. 1069/2009](#) in Northern Ireland

General requirements for the hygiene of foodstuffs applying to all food businesses, including primary producers, set out in:

[Assimilated Regulation \(EC\) No. 852/2004](#) in Great Britain
[Regulation \(EC\) No. 852/2004](#) in Northern Ireland

Rules on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products and associated acts, set out in:

[Assimilated Regulation \(EU\) No. 2017/625](#) in Great Britain
[Regulation No. \(EU\) 2017/625](#) in Northern Ireland

General principles and requirements of food law and procedures in matters of food safety, including traceability of food and feed, set out in:

[Assimilated Regulation \(EC\) No. 178/2002](#) in Great Britain
[Regulation \(EC\) No. 178/2002](#) in Northern Ireland

Best practice guidance

You are not required by law to follow best practice guidance.

The guidance notes on legal requirements cannot cover every situation and you may need to consider the relevant legislation itself to see how it applies in your circumstances. Businesses with specific queries may wish to seek advice from their local enforcement agency, which will usually be the [Trading Standards](#) / Environmental Health department of your [Local Authority \(LA\)](#).

Following these guidance notes will help you to comply with the law. You are not required by law to follow best practice guidance. All guidance on best practice is identified in shaded boxes, with a heading of “Best Practice”.

Review

We aim to keep all guidance up to date and undertake regular reviews to ensure guidance remains relevant. The next scheduled review date for this guidance is October 2026.

Contact us

We welcome your feedback on this guidance, including reports of any broken links or out-of-date content and will consider all feedback for the next intended review of the guidance. Please provide any feedback to wildgameguidance@food.gov.uk.

1. Assimilated Regulation (EC) 853/2004 defines game-handling establishment as any establishment in which game and game meat obtained after hunting are prepared for placing on the market (this refers to approved and registered establishments). The reference to 'approved' game-handling establishment helps to point out the difference on the activities for which an establishment is allowed to perform.

Primary producers of wild game: requirements and exemptions

The food hygiene regulations regard hunting of wild game for human consumption as a primary production activity.

Primary production is defined as the production, rearing or growing of primary products including harvesting, milking and farmed animal production prior to slaughter. It also includes hunting, fishing and the harvesting of wild products.

An individual who shoots game alone, or as an active member of a hunting party or a shooting estate that organises shooting of wild game, is considered a primary producer. Therefore,

hunters, members of hunting parties and estates who organise shoots are all primary producers.

Primary wild game products are the products of hunting. Primary products in the wild game sector include:

- large wild game which includes wild game land mammals (wild deer, wild boar)
- small wild game which includes wild game birds and wild game lagomorphs (rabbits, hares and rodents)

The hunting, killing, subsequent transport, storage, and handling of wild game at the place of production are considered to be within the scope of primary production, provided they do not substantially alter the nature of the wild game. Certain handling activities conducted at the place of production, including evisceration, and in the case of large wild game the bleeding, removal of the head and viscera, are considered to be within the scope of primary production. Transport from the place of production to an AGHE is also considered part of primary production.

The general requirements for the hygiene of foodstuffs applying to all food businesses and the specific hygiene rules applying to businesses producing food of animal origin provide the food hygiene regulatory framework and requirements by which all food businesses dealing with wild game must comply. These regulations are underpinned by the general principles and requirements of food law and procedures in matters of food safety. However, there are exemptions included in these regulations aimed at primary producers (hunters and people actively involved in the hunting process).

Whether any of the exemptions apply to you will depend on:

- whether you keep all the wild game you hunt for your own private domestic consumption
- whether you supply the wild game you hunt as primary product or you prepare it to be supplied as wild game meat
- who you choose to supply your wild game and/or wild game meat to (i.e. whether the supply is directly to final consumers; or to retail establishments; or to AGHEs, etc)

Primary producer: requirements and exemptions table

The original version of this table was produced by the Scottish Office of the British Deer Society (BDS) and FSS (FSA) are grateful to BDS for allowing its use. References to “853/2004” and “852/2004” within this table relate to:

- Assimilated Regulation (EC) 853/2004 and assimilated Regulation (EC) 852/2004 in England and Wales
- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 and Regulation (EC) 852/2004 in Northern Ireland

Nature of supply	Restrictions on supply	Applicable Food Hygiene Regulations and Competent Authority	Trained person status	Food Business Registration with LA	HACCP Plan	Official record keeping and traceability
Keeping wild game for private domestic consumption	Wild game kept either for your own private domestic consumption or restricted to supply only to family and friends for their own private domestic consumption. Family and friends you supply wild game to must not supply the wild game to anyone else	Exempt from the scope of Food Hygiene Regulations (852/2004 and 853/2004)	Not required but encouraged	Registration as a food business is not required.	A Food Safety Management System (FSMS) based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). Principles is not required.	No, exempt from the scope of the General Food Law (178/2002).

Nature of supply	Restrictions on supply	Applicable Food Hygiene Regulations and Competent Authority	Trained person status	Food Business Registration with LA	HACCP Plan	Official record keeping and traceability
Direct supply by the producer of wild game to the final consumer and/or to local retailers who directly supply to the final consumer	Supply must be, by the producer, of small quantities of hunted wild game (primary product). Supply must be direct to the final consumer or to a local establishment who directly supply to the final consumer (for example, butchers, restaurants) Supply from the producer to local retail establishments (who directly supply to the final consumer) can be no further than your own LA, a neighbouring LA or 50 km/30 miles from the boundary of your LA.	Exempt from the scope of Food Hygiene Regulations (852/2004 and 853/2004). Your LA is the Competent Authority.	Not required but encouraged.	Registration as a food business is not required but you are encouraged to contact your LA to ensure you can make use of this exemption	A FSMS based on HACCP Principles is not required but you are still bound by the obligation to supply safe food and should have systems in place to manage food safety risks	Yes, General Food Law provisions (178/2002) apply.
Direct supply of wild game meat to the final consumer or to local retail establishments directly supplying to the final consumer	Supply must be of small quantities of wild game meat. Supply of wild game meat must be direct to the final consumer or to local retail establishments who directly supply to the final consumer (i.e. butchers, restaurants). Supply to local retail establishments can be no further than your own LA, a neighbouring LA or 50 km/30 miles from the boundary of your LA.	Regulation 852/2004 apply. Exempt from 853/2004. Your LA is the competent authority.	Not required but encouraged.	Yes, registration with your LA as a food business is required.	You must have FSMS based on HACCP principles.	Yes, General Food Law provisions (178/2002) apply.
Supply of wild game to approved game handling establishments (AGHEs)	Not applicable	Regulations 852/2004 and 853/2004 apply. Competent Authority LA (Supplier) and FSA at AGHE	'Trained person' status required	Yes, registration with your LA as a food business is required.	You must have a FSMS based on HACCP principles. You are also required to comply with the criteria set out in the receiving establishment's HACCP plan.	Yes, General Food Law provisions (178/2002) apply.

2.1 Primary production for private domestic consumption

If you hunt, prepare, handle or store wild game for your own private domestic use, you are exempt from the general principles and requirements of food law and procedures in matters of food safety, as set out in Article 1(3), as well as from the general requirements for the hygiene of foodstuffs applying to all food businesses and the specific hygiene rules applying to businesses producing food of animal origin, as set out in Article 1(2)(a) and Article 1(3)(a) respectively. Private domestic use refers to the personal preparation, handling, storage and consumption of hunted wild game, with any supply restricted to family and friends for their own private domestic consumption only. You are not required to register as a food business with your LA but you are encouraged to contact them to ensure you are eligible for this exemption.

Exemption summary:

- you are exempt from the scope of the above-mentioned regulations.
- you are not required to be registered or approved.

To be eligible for this exemption the wild game you hunt must only be kept for your own private domestic consumption, or that of your family and friends.

2.2 Direct supply, by the producer of Wild Game to the final consumer and/or to Local Retail Establishments supplying to the final consumer

If you are a primary producer (for example, hunter, shooting estate) that supplies all of your hunted wild game directly to the final consumer or to local retail establishments who directly supply to the final consumer (for example, butchers, restaurants or farm shops):

- you **must abide** by the rules of the general principles and requirements of food law and procedures in matters of food safety including the legal obligation to supply safe food and to comply with traceability principles and requirements
- you are **exempt** from the general requirements for the hygiene of foodstuffs applying to all food businesses and the specific hygiene rules applying to businesses producing food of animal origin as set out in Article 1(2)(a) and Article 1(3)(a) respectively
- you do not need to register as a food business with your [Local Authority](#). However, you are encouraged to contact your Local Authority to ensure you are eligible for this exemption
- your supply of wild game must be of small quantities direct to the final consumer, or to local retail establishments directly supplying the final consumer
- the definitions of wild game, final consumer, local, retail and small quantities can be found in the Glossary

2.3 Direct supply of Wild Game Meat to the final consumer and/or to Local Retail Establishments supplying the final consumer

Wild game becomes wild game meat when it undergoes any further preparation (e.g. evisceration, skinning and/or plucking). If you hunt, handle and/or prepare wild game to supply wild game meat directly to the final consumer and/or local retail establishments who directly supply the final consumer:

- you **must abide** by the general principles and requirements of food law and procedures in matters of food safety and by the general requirements for the hygiene of foodstuffs applying to all food businesses, including primary producers. In principle this means having:
 1. a FSMS based on HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) principles
 2. adequate structures and operations in place for the processing of wild game
 3. adequate facilities in place for the appropriate storage, including the ability to maintain the cold-chain, of wild game bodies and wild game meat
- you must comply with the above-mentioned requirements to provide safe food and to maintain traceability
- you must have hygienic facilities to transport the wild game meat to the final consumer or local retailer
- you must be registered as a food business with your [Local Authority](#)
- it is encouraged that hunters supplying wild game meat with a view for placing it on the market for human consumption should be trained in health and hygiene by a recognised training provider. Please see section on training
- you are **exempt** from the requirements under the specific hygiene rules applying to businesses producing food of animal origin, however in order for this exemption to apply:
 1. the supply of wild game meat needs to be of small quantities (for definition see Glossary) direct to the final consumer, or to local retail establishments who directly supply to the final consumer

2. it is encouraged that the wild game meat should be prepared by a trained person who has received Training
3. this exemption does not apply if the retailer you supply your wild game meat goes on to supply other retailers and not just final consumers

Retail-to-retail supply exemption for wild game

The food hygiene regulations allow a retailer to supply wild game and wild game meat to other retail establishments only, without the need for approval as an AGHE.

The supply must be marginal, localised and restricted. These terms are defined in the FSA Operational Approval Policy as follows.

'Marginal' means supply to other retailers of food of animal origin of up to a quarter of total food sales, calculated by weight or by value if measurement by weight is impractical for the range of products. To meet this criterion, you as the retailer must sell at least 75% of all the food you supply direct to the final consumer through your own retail outlet. Any wild game or wild game meat you sell other than through your own retail outlet must be sold to other retailers such as butchers' shops and restaurants

'Localised' means that other retailers supplied must be in the same county, in immediately neighbouring counties or those situated no more than 30 miles/50 kilometres from the boundary of the retailer's county, whichever is greater – but never beyond the UK, except supply from Northern Ireland (NI) to the Republic of Ireland (RoI). Those NI counties bordering the RoI can supply into the neighbouring county in the RoI

'Restricted' means the supply of wild game meat to other retail establishments is restricted by the requirements to be marginal and localised as above.

Supplying wild game to AGHEs

It is expected that the majority of activities which prepare wild game for placing on the market will take place at an Approved Game Handling Establishment (AGHE).

Under these circumstances, those involved in all stages of production and distribution of wild game to AGHEs (for example, hunters, shooting estates, game buyers, transporters and larders etc) must comply with the food business operators (FBO's) responsibilities by:

- abiding by the relevant requirements in various relevant legislation. The exemptions laid out in the food hygiene regulations do not apply to you
- registering as an FBO with your [Local Authority](#)
- meeting the food safety law and traceability requirements of relevant legislation
- have hygienic and safe transport of wild game - please see the section on Transport for more information.

4.1 Handling of Large Wild Game for Supply to AGHEs

The specific requirements for the handling of large wild game for placing on the market through AGHEs are set out by the specific hygiene rules applying to businesses producing food of animal origin.

The steps which should be followed when hunting large wild game for supply to an AGHE are set out below:

- after killing, large wild game must, have their stomachs and intestines (green offal) removed as soon as possible (galloched), and if necessary, be bled. The stomach, intestines and other body parts including the head, may either be disposed of safely at the kill site, or at a larder provided this does not compromise the need for prompt removal
- a 'trained person' must then carry out an examination of the body and of any viscera removed to identify any characteristics that may indicate that the meat presents a health risk. This examination must take place as soon as possible after killing
- following the above-mentioned examination, and providing no abnormal characteristics were found, no abnormal behaviour was observed before killing, and there is no suspicion of environmental contamination, the trained person must issue and attach a numbered declaration which must include the date, time and place of killing. This is usually achieved by tagging or labelling to link them to each other. Please refer to Annex A for an example of the declaration. In this situation, the head and viscera do not need to accompany the body, except in those species who are susceptible to Trichinosis (such as wild boars and any other porcine species), whose head and diaphragm must accompany the body to the AGHE
- upon examination of the body, if abnormal characteristics are suspected by the trained person, the head (not the tusks, antlers and horns) and all the viscera except for the stomach and intestines must accompany the body to the AGHE. In this situation, the hunter must inform the competent authority (the FSA Official Veterinarian (OV)) of the abnormalities that have prevented them from issuing the "hunter declaration". If you suspect an animal may be affected by a notifiable disease (ND) contact the [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#)
- if no trained person is available to carry out the examination above, the head (not the tusks, antlers and horns) and all the viscera except for the stomach and the intestines must accompany the body to the AGHE
- if the head, viscera and other body parts do accompany the wild game to an AGHE, adequate correlation is to be maintained.
- chilling must begin within a reasonable period of time after killing and achieve a temperature throughout the meat of not more than 7 °C. However, the carcass should not be frozen. Where climatic conditions so permit, active chilling is not necessary. These factors should be incorporated into the food safety management requirements of the receiving establishment
- the carcass should then be transported to an AGHE as soon as possible after examination. During transport to the AGHE, heaping (the laying of carcasses on top of each other) must be avoided to help the chilling process. Upon arrival at an AGHE, the large wild game will undergo formal inspection procedures by the OV or the Meat Hygiene Inspector (MHI) before a health mark is applied to the carcass.

4.2 Handling of Small Wild Game for supply to AGHEs

The specific requirements for the handling of small wild game for placing on the market through AGHEs are set out in legislation.

The steps which should be followed when hunting small wild game for supply to an AGHE are set out below:

- the trained person must carry out an examination to identify any characteristics that may indicate that the meat presents a health risk. The examination must take place as soon as possible after killing

- if abnormal characteristics are found during the examination, abnormal behaviour was observed before killing, or environmental contamination is suspected, the trained person must inform the competent authority
- meat of small wild game may be placed on the market only if the body is examined by a trained person and transported to an AGHE as soon as possible after the examination. You are encouraged to present a hunters declaration for small wild game, however it is not a legal requirement. See Annex A for an example of a 'trained person' declaration
- chilling must begin within a reasonable period of time after killing and achieve a temperature throughout the meat of not more than 4°C. Where climatic conditions so permit, active chilling is not necessary
- evisceration must be carried out, or completed, without undue delay upon arrival at the AGHE, unless the competent authority (the FSA) permits otherwise

Small wild game delivered to an AGHE must be presented for inspection to the FSA (Competent Authority) for inspection.

Best practice

For small wild game, best practice is that a 'trained person' declaration would accompany the game being supplied to an AGHE. For hunter supply to a retailer or final consumer, it is considered best practice for the trained person to complete and attach a declaration to large game carcasses.

4.3 Handling of Offal intended for Human consumption

Offal is defined as the fresh meat other than that of the carcase, including viscera and blood.

Large wild game must be presented with a hunter's declaration and the offal need not accompany the carcase in the absence of abnormalities declared by the hunter. Large game accompanied with a hunter's declaration stating that abnormalities were found, must have the correlating offal accompanied with the carcase. If the hunter's declaration does not accompany large wild game, the offal must be presented for inspection by the FBO to the OV/MHI. Large wild game and accompanying offal must be clearly identified and correlated; this is usually achieved by tagging or labelling to link them to each other. If the offal is not clearly correlated to the body it cannot be supplied for human consumption.

Where the offal from large wild game is intended for human consumption, the supplier to the AGHE must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the receiving establishment that it has been handled hygienically and that full correlation and traceability of body parts and large wild game can be made. The onus is on the receiving establishment to ensure that its product intake meets the requirements set out in its own HACCP plan. This should include ensuring that the supplier has the necessary infrastructure to ensure that the cold chain is maintained as necessary, and cross contamination is avoided.

Training requirements in Health and Hygiene for wild game

When wild game is hunted with a view to placing it on the market, at least one active member of the hunting team must meet the training requirements.

When wild game is hunted with a view to placing it on the market, at least one active member of the hunting team must meet the training requirements - set out at Annex III, Chapter I, Section IV by the specific hygiene rules for businesses - of being a 'trained person' with sufficient knowledge

to undertake an initial examination of wild game.

This training is to be provided to the satisfaction of the competent authority (FSA in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and cover at least the following areas:

- the normal anatomy, physiology and behaviour of wild game
- abnormal behaviour and pathological changes in wild game due to diseases, environmental contamination or other factors which may affect human health after consumption
- the hygiene rules and proper techniques for the handling, transportation and evisceration of wild game animals after killing
- legislation and administrative provisions on the animal and public health and hygiene conditions governing the placing on the market of wild game

Notifiable diseases (ND) are animal diseases that you are legally obliged to report to the APHA, even if you only suspect that an animal may be affected. If you suspect that wild game has a ND you must contact APHA. Read further information on [notifiable diseases and contact details](#) on food.gov.

There are organisations that can provide support on how to become a 'trained person'. We recommend that individuals wishing to become a 'trained person' should undertake their own research when identifying a suitable training provider.

It is required that you find a training provider who covers the areas mentioned above (as set out in [Annex III, Section IV, Chapter I](#) by the specific hygiene rules for businesses) and offers a practical element as part of its training program.

Storage of wild game

Game larder is generally understood as a facility used to store wild game after hunting.

The term 'game larder' is not defined in hygiene legislation. Nevertheless, in the UK it is generally understood as a facility used to store wild game after hunting, as an associated primary production operation. The following activities carried out at game larders are regarded as part of primary production:

- any necessary carcass preparation activity that is part of normal hunting practice (for example, bleeding, gralloching). It is often preferable to do this at the game larder rather than in the field
- storage of wild game

To this end, game larders should:

- have sufficient capacity to handle hygienically the amount of wild game passing through the game larder, as well as the capacity to store, handle and dispose of waste and Animal By-Products (ABP) as necessary
- be adequately ventilated or refrigerated with a record of temperatures kept
- be protected against contamination including from animals and pests
- facilities and equipment must be kept clean and, where necessary after cleaning, be disinfected in an appropriate manner
- Use potable water to prevent contamination
- prevent the introduction and spread of contagious diseases transmissible to humans through food and report the suspicion of such diseases to the competent authority
- ensure that all those who handle wild game and wild game meat are in good health and have undergone training on food safety risks

- store and handle waste and hazardous substances so as to prevent contamination

Examples of best practice and those not considered to meet required standards for game larders and storage can be found on our website, [Wild Game photos \(PDF\)](#).

6.1 European Union (EU) amendments on collection centres impacting on Northern Ireland (NI)

EU Law directly applies in Northern Ireland. EU Law was amended in 2021 to introduce collection centres for wild game. The [EU changes](#) within Section IV provide a new legal concept of 'collection centres'.

The EU amendment defines wild game collection centres as '**an establishment used to store the bodies and viscera of wild game before their transport to a game handling establishment**'.

The collection centre for wild game can be either:

- registered with the competent authority as a food business carrying out primary production as referred to in Article 4(2)(a) when only receiving bodies as first collection centre, or
- approved by the competent authority as a food business in accordance with Article 4(2) when receiving bodies from other collection centres

Either registered or approved, relevant hygiene rules apply.

Transport of wild game and wild game meat

Food hygiene standards are to be maintained at all stages of production and transport/distribution of wild game and wild game meat to provide confidence in food safety.

Managing food safety risks begins at primary production (for example, hunting) and good hygiene practices must be maintained during the transport/distribution of wild game and wild game meat along the food supply chain.

The hygiene requirements which apply to the transport of wild game from the place of production (for example, the kill site) to an establishment are set out in Annex I under the general requirements for the hygiene of foodstuffs applying to all food business, including primary producers. Unless you are exempt from these general requirements (for example, under the exemptions set out in Section 2.1 and Section 2.2) you must abide by the basic hygiene requirements in Annex I. Those transporting wild game and wild game meat must abide by the traceability principles and requirements.

If you transport wild game to an AGHE, you will need to be [registered as a food business with your Local Authority](#) and comply also with related requirements set out at Section IV of Annex III by the specific hygiene rules applying to businesses producing food of animal origin for the handling of wild game. These rules require for wild game to be transported to the AGHE as soon as possible after the trained person's examination has taken place.

During the production, transport/distribution of wild game and wild game meat the cold chain is not to be interrupted as to prevent the growth of pathogenic bacteria. Temperatures during transport need to be maintained at:

- 7°C for large wild game and wild game meat (other than offal)
- 4°C for small wild game and wild game meat

- 3°C for offal

During transport, wild game must not be piled, heaped or stacked at any stage as this will facilitate cross-contamination and make cooling of the wild game difficult.

Good and bad examples of transport and storage can be found in the [Wild Game photos PDF](#).

Traceability principles and requirements for wild game

Traceability is the ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food-producing animal or substance.

Traceability is the ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food-producing animal or substance intended to be, or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution.

Traceability rules help keep track of food in the supply chain. They ensure that efficient and accurate withdrawals and recalls of unsafe foods from the market can be made in the event of any food safety problems.

[Principles and Requirements for the traceability of food](#) apply to all stages of the food supply chain and are part of the legal responsibility to manage food safety risks. Primary producers (including those who transport or store wild game), food business operators and retailers are required to meet these traceability rules. For further guidance see our [Food traceability, withdrawals and recalls guidance](#).

The basic principle is that as wild game and wild game meat moves through the supply chain there should be a “one step forward, one step back” record at each stage (for example, both the source and the destination should be identified and a record kept).

Traceability records need to be up-to-date and kept at least until it can be reasonably assumed that the food has been consumed and be available to competent authorities upon demand. The records need to include:

- description of the food
- volume/quantity
- name and address of FBO dispatching food
- name and address of consigner (if different)
- Name and address of FBO receiving the food
- name and address of consignee (if different)
- reference identifying lot, batch or consignment
- date of dispatch

Traceability requirements do not apply to those who hunt wild game for own private domestic consumption (see exemptions). However, primary producers supplying small quantities of wild game and wild game meat direct to the final consumer or to local retail establishments must comply with the general principles and requirements for traceability set out in food law.

Animal by products (wild game)

Animal by products (ABP) are defined as the entire bodies or parts of animals, products of animal origin or other products obtained from animals.

ABPs are defined as the entire bodies or parts of animals, products of animal origin or other products obtained from animals, which are not intended for human consumption, including oocytes, embryos and semen.

ABPs can be one of three categories based on the risks they pose. Category 1 ABP and Category 2 ABP are classed as high risk and Category 3 ABP is classed as low risk. Category 1 and Category 2 ABPs include high risk material and must be handled with extreme care. You should therefore ensure you have adequate knowledge to categorise, handle and dispose of different ABPs appropriately.

For further guidance on the categorisation, handling and disposal of ABPs consult UK government guidance on [Animal by-product categories, site approval, hygiene and disposal](#).

ABPs generated from wild game as part of normal hunting practice (for example, blood and green offal) and not collected after killing, are out of the scope of the ABPs regulations.

All ABPs generated, other than as part of normal hunting practice and not collected after killing, need to be correctly categorised, handled and safely disposed of (including records for traceability purposes) in accordance with the above UK government guidance. Once a product is identified as ABP, it must be stored separately from products of animal origin intended for human consumption and cannot be diverted back into the food supply chain.

If you want to use ABPs, you must seek approval or registration from APHA. Whether you need to be approved or registered depends on what your business does and the ABPs you handle. For further guidance consult the related section in the UK Government guidance on [Animal by-product categories, site approval, hygiene and disposal](#).

If you wish to manufacture and supply pet food from an FSA approved establishment please read our guidance [Co-location of food and pet food production](#).

Best practice

Although not mandatory, it is best practice that ABPs generated and which are out of the scope of the ABP regulations (for example, gralloch) should either be:

- incinerated or rendered in an approved plant
- buried on holding where the wild game was shot or otherwise killed
- double-bagged and put out in waste to landfill bins to prevent environmental contamination risks

Trichinella testing in wild boar and other species susceptible to trichinosis

Trichinella is a parasite which can affect many animal species, including humans, causing a disease known as trichinosis.

People can become infected through eating raw, undercooked or processed meat from pigs, wild boar, horses or game that contain microscopic larval worms (known as 'trichinae') encysted in muscle tissue. In humans, symptoms associated with infection commonly include diarrhoea, abdominal cramps and malaise. Disease progression may include fever, muscle pain and headaches. In severe cases vital organs may be affected possibly leading to meningitis, pneumonia or even death.

It is possible that the food scavenged by wild boar, or other animals including feral porcine species (i.e. feral pigs) might be infected with Trichinella and, it is likely that animals consuming this food will become infected themselves.

Wild boar accepted at Approved Game Handling Establishments (AGHEs) undergo mandatory trichinella testing as standard. If a sample tests positive for trichinella, the testing laboratory will inform the FSA and the hunter. The carcass will then be traced and rejected as unfit for human consumption. For more information, see [Testing for trichinella in pigs](#).

Best practice

Although not mandatory, it is best practice to test wild boar intended for own personal consumption or for supply directly to consumers or local retailers, to provide confidence in food safety. Hunters sampling wild boar should send the sample to an appropriate laboratory for testing. Containers for storing and transporting samples together with addressed, freepost envelopes for posting samples can be ordered prior to hunting free of charge from APHA.

APHA has developed [guidance for hunters on trichinella testing in wild boar](#) that explains how samples should be taken from feral wild boar and details of how to get a sampling/sending kit prior to hunting.

Lead-shot game

Wild game may contain lead due to hunters using lead shot or bullets.

If wild game is processed in an Approved Game Handling Establishment (AGHE), lead and affected parts of meat will be removed, although small amounts may remain in the meat.

If you are preparing wild game for own private domestic consumption or if you are a retailer supplying wild game, you should also remove as much lead as possible and the surrounding meat.

Eating lead-shot game regularly can expose you to potentially harmful levels of lead. Those who eat lead-shot game should be aware of the negative health effects and try to minimise exposure.

Best practice

Exposure to lead can harm the developing brain and nervous system. Minimising the amount of lead-shot game eaten is especially important for children, pregnant women and women hoping to conceive.

For more information, see our consumer guidance on [lead-shot game](#).

Imports and exports of wild game

From 1 January 2021, new rules and processes apply for traders (importers and exporters) in Great Britain.

Imports

[Guidance for businesses that import or move products of animal origin for human consumption from the EU and Northern Ireland to Great Britain*](#).

Exports

The Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) Centre for International Trade - Carlisle (CITC) issue Export Health Certificates (EHC) for live animals and products of animal origin exports to trading partners.

Information on these services can be found via the links below:

- the [Export Health Certificates \(EHC\) Online service](#)
- [EHC Form Finder](#)

*Please note this guidance is owned by Defra and the location of this guidance maybe subject to change. Traders are responsible for keeping up to date with the latest updates.

Contacts, approvals, registration and additional sources of wild game information

Information on how to contact if you have any further queries regarding food hygiene legal requirements.

General

If further clarification is required or you have any queries regarding the food hygiene legal requirements which apply to wild game and wild game meat, please contact our Meat Hygiene Policy team - wildgameguidance@food.gov.uk

Approval

To seek approval for an AGHE please contact the approvals team at FSA using the following email address:

- England and Wales - approvals@food.gov.uk
- Northern Ireland - nioperationalpolicy@food.gov.uk

For more information on the approval process, see our [Applying for approval of a meat or food establishment by the FSA](#) page.

Registration

If you supply wild game and wild game meat into the food chain and you do not fall within the relevant exemptions you will need to register as a food business with your LA. To find out whether these exemptions apply to you or not and to [register as a food business](#), you will need to contact your LA. For contact details for your LA, please visit our website at [contact your Local Authority](#).

Additional sources of wild game information

There are a number of sources of information for wild game, as well as organisations that can provide advice and guidance on a range of topics including deer, firearms and pest control.

[Annex B has a list of useful sources](#), however, as this is not an exhaustive list, we recommend that individuals seeking such advice should undertake their own research.

Wild game guidance: Annexes

All annexes for the wild game guidance, including templates, a bibliography, acronyms and a glossary.

Annex A: Hunter's Declaration Information (example templates)

Large wild game

Tag Number: Date/Time of Kill: Location/Estate:	Species: Other: Weight: (Kgs)
Sex: M F	
I declare in accordance with assimilated Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 (as amended) that no abnormal behaviour was observed before killing and there is no indication of environmental contamination. I have inspected the head, pluck and viscera without observing abnormalities.	
Notes:	
Trained Person Number:	
Trained Person Qualification:	
Contact Details:	
Name:	
Signature:	

Small wild

Date/Time of Kill:
Location/Estate:
Number in Batch:
Species:
Observations:
Trained Person Qualification:
Trained Person Number:
Contact Details:
Name:
Signature:

Annex B: Bibliography

For further information you may wish to look at the following sites:

- [The British Association for Shooting and Conservation \(BASC\)](#)
- [The British Deer Society](#)

- [British Deer Veterinary Association](#)
- [British Game Alliance](#)
- [The Code of Shooting Practice](#)
- [Countryside Alliance](#)
- [County Sports Ireland](#)
- [Deer Management Qualifications](#)
- [Federation of Associations for Country Sports in Europe \(FACE-UK\)](#)
- [National Gamekeepers' Organisation](#)
- [National Game Dealers' Association](#)
- [Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#)
- [Scotland's Nature Agency \(formerly Scottish National Heritage\)](#)
- [Wild Game | Food Standards Scotland](#)

Annex C: Acronyms

Abbreviation	Full title/name
ABP	Animal-by-product
AGHE	Approved Game Handling Establishments
APHA	Animal and Plant Health Agency
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
FBO	Food Business Operator
FSA	Food Standards Agency
FSMS	Food Safety Management system
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
LA	Local Authority
MHI	Meat Hygiene Inspector
ND	Notifiable Disease
NI	Northern Ireland
OV	Official Veterinarian
REUL	Retained European Union Law
ROI	Republic of Ireland
UK	United Kingdom

Annex D: Glossary

- **"Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)"** is the UK Government Agency which is part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and responsible for animal and plant health in the UK. [Contact APHA](#).
- **"Animal By-Product (ABP)"** means the entire bodies or parts of animals, products of animal origin or other products obtained from animals, which are not intended for human consumption, including oocytes, embryos and semen. Refer to section 9 for further information.
- **"Approval"** refers to the requirement for food business operators – at Article 4 by the specific hygiene rules applying to businesses - to only place products of animal origin on the market if they have been produced in establishments approved by the competent authority.
- **"Approved Game Handling Establishment (AGHE)"** means an approved establishment in which wild game and wild game meat obtained after hunting are prepared for placing on the market. Activities are limited to evisceration, skinning and/or plucking which prepare the wild game for placing on the market.
- **"Carcase"** means the body of an animal after slaughter and dressing (evisceration, skinning and/or plucking).

- **"Competent Authority (CA)"** means the authority responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant food hygiene regulations, the performance of official food controls and of other official activities, in accordance with the official controls regulation and the rules referred to in Article 1(2).
- **"Critical Control Points (CCP)"** means any step in a process in which hazards can be prevented, eliminated, or reduced to acceptable levels. Examples of CCPs may include include: chilling, testing, cooking.
- **"Cross-contamination"** means the action by which bacteria or other microorganisms are unintentionally transferred from one substance or object to another, with a harmful effect.
- **"Evisceration"** means the process of removing viscera from the bodies of wild game. Sometimes referred to as 'gralloching'.
- **"Farmed game"** is defined in food hygiene regulations as farmed ratites and farmed land mammals other than domestic bovine, porcine, caprine and ovine animals and domestic solipeds. Farmed game includes deer and boar produced by farming. All meat from farmed game placed on the market must be produced in approved slaughterhouses.
- **"Final consumer"** means the ultimate consumer of a foodstuff who will not use the food as part of any food business operation or activity.
- **"Food Business Operator (FBO)"** means the natural or legal persons responsible for ensuring that the requirements of food law are met within the food business under their control.
- **"Food Safety Management System (FSMS)"** means a permanent procedure put in place by a FBO, based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points principles, and used as an tool to help FBOs attain a higher standard of food safety.
- **"HACCP"** means Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points. HACCP is a system that helps you identify potential food hazards and introduce procedures to make sure those hazards are removed or reduced to an acceptable level.
- **"Hazard"** means a biological, chemical, or physical agent in, or condition of, food or feed with the potential to cause an adverse health effect.
- **"Lagomorphs"** include rabbits, hares and rodents
- **"Local supply"** means supply within the same Local Authority, in immediately neighbouring Local Authorities or those situated no more than 30 miles/50 kilometres from the boundary of the supplier's Local Authority , whichever is greater – but never beyond the UK, except supply from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland.
- **"Normal hunting practices"** include actions regularly carried out in the act of hunting activity, including bleeding and gralloching.
- **"Notifiable Diseases (ND)"** are animal diseases that you are legally obliged to report to APHA, even if you only suspect that an animal may be affected. If you suspect that wild game has a ND you must contact APHA. Read further information on [notifiable diseases and contact details](#).
- **"Offal"** means fresh meat other than that of the carcass, including viscera and blood.
- **"Green offal"** means the stomach, intestines and related tissues of the wild game body, which are the contents of the abdominal cavity of the wild game body.
- **"Red offal"** means other parts of offal which do not fall under the definition of green offal, including the liver, heart, lungs etc.
- **"Placing on the market"** means the holding of food or feed for the purpose of sale, including offering for sale or any other form of transfer, whether free of charge or not, and the sale, distribution, and other forms of transfer themselves.
- **"Primary Production"** means the production, rearing or growing of primary products including harvesting, milking and farmed animal production prior to slaughter. It also includes hunting and fishing and the harvesting of wild products.
- **"Primary Products"** means the products of primary production including products of the soil, of stock farming, of hunting and fishing.
- **"Processing"** means any action that substantially alters the initial product, including heating, smoking, curing, maturing, drying, marinating, extraction, extrusion or a combination of those processes.

- **“Registration”** refers to the requirement for FBOs - set out at Article 6 by the general requirements for the hygiene of foodstuffs - to register premises involved in food production with the relevant CA, this is your LA.
- **“Retail”** is defined as the handling and/or processing of food and its storage at the point of sale or delivery to the final consumer, and includes distribution terminals, catering operations, factory canteens, institutional catering, restaurants and other similar food service operations, shops, supermarket distribution centres and wholesale outlets.
- **“Restricted supply”** means the supply of wild game and wild game meat to other retail establishments is restricted by the requirements to be marginal and local.
- **“Small quantities”** is regarded as self-defining because demand for wild game and wild game meat from final consumers and local retailers that supply directly to final consumers is limited.
- **“Trained person”** refers to a person who has undertaken appropriate training to be able to carry out an initial examination of the wild game in the field, to identify any characteristics that may indicate that the meat presents a health risk.
- **“Viscera”** means the organs of the thoracic, abdominal and pelvic cavities, as well as the trachea and oesophagus and, in birds, the crop.
- **“Wild game”** means wild birds that are hunted for human consumption as well as wild ungulates, lagomorphs and other land mammals that are hunted for human consumption. These include mammals living in enclosed territory under conditions of freedom similar to those of wild game.
- ? **“Small wild game”** means wild game birds and lagomorphs living freely in the wild.
- ? **“Large wild game”** means wild land mammals living freely in the wild that do not fall within the definition of small wild game.
- **“Wild Game Meat”** is defined as the edible parts of wild game, including blood.

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