

Guidelines for Slaughtering/Processing Non-Amenable Species Without State Inspection

“Non-amenable” species are game animals such as bison, deer, rabbits, pheasants, etc. These species are not covered by the Federal Meat Inspection Act or the Poultry Products Inspection Act, however, the USDA and VDACS Office of Meat and Poultry Services provide voluntary inspection services of game animal slaughtering/processing. This inspection is required for processors to sell game animal meat to restaurants or retail stores. For those processors who wish to raise and process their own game animals for sale at their farm/home or at farmer’s markets, the following are guidelines to consider when processing game animal meat.

Animal Health

1. Animals should be treated humanely, at all times, and no slaughtering of sick or diseased animals is allowed. In addition, the processor should have a designated area to segregate sick animals from healthy animals.
2. Animal production living areas should be kept clean and measures should be taken to minimize exposure to rodents.
3. Animals should have access to water in all holding pens and, if held longer than 24 hours, access to feed.
4. Animals should have sufficient room in the holding pen to lie down, if held overnight.

Slaughter/Processing Structure

1. The processing area does not have to be enclosed, but should be covered. In addition, overhead, side and ground protection is recommended when contamination from insects, dust, mud, pests, or other source is likely to occur. Tarps, canopies, netting, and ground cover to prevent splashing are examples of protection that can be used. If there is minimal risk of contamination, the entire slaughter, cut up, and packaging can occur outside.
2. The processing area for non-amenable species should be separate from processing areas that are used for processing amenable species or any other types of food products – whether raw or ready-to-eat.
3. Rooms and compartments in which edible product is processed, handled, or stored ought to be separate and distinct from rooms or compartments in which inedible product is processed, handled, or stored, to the extent necessary to prevent product adulteration and creation of insanitary conditions.
4. Functioning toilet and hand washing facilities are not required in the processing area, but should be conveniently located to the processing area for use by employees. Hand washing facilities should be able to deliver hot water of at least 105° F and cold water tempered by means of a mixing valve or combination faucet. In addition, soap and disposable paper towels should be available at all times.
5. If slaughter/processing is done at night or in an enclosure, adequate lighting should be available to prevent personal injury.

Equipment

1. Tools, equipment (including processing tables) and utensils used for slaughtering and/or dressing livestock, or otherwise handling any edible product should be constructed of smooth, non-absorbent, and easily cleanable materials to avoid adulteration of the food.
2. Rooms, compartments, all food contact surfaces, equipment and utensils used for preparing, processing, storing, or otherwise handling any product should be cleaned and sanitized as frequently as necessary to prevent insanitary conditions and the adulteration of product.
3. Receptacles used for handling inedible material should be made of smooth and impervious material such that they may be easily cleaned. Also, these receptacles should be conspicuously marked "INEDIBLE" and not be used for handling any edible product.
4. Live animal and poultry holding and transportation cages should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized after use. Live animal and poultry holding cages should be equipped with waste material catch pans, at the bottom of each cage.

Water

1. Water used for washing, scalding, chilling or any other purpose that contacts food or food contact surfaces, should be potable and changed as often as necessary to avoid contamination.
2. The water supply should be ample, clean, and potable, and protected against contamination and pollution. Unless coming from a municipal water supply, process water should be tested for coliform bacteria annually to ensure the safety of the water.

Temperatures

1. Carcasses of processed animals should be chilled within 4 hours of slaughter, to an internal temperature not to exceed 41° F. Thermometers ought to be calibrated and used to verify the internal temperature. Refrigerators and/or freezers should be capable of maintaining an internal finished product temperature of 41° F, or 0° F, respectively.

Personnel

1. All persons working in contact with product, food contact surfaces, and product packaging materials should adhere to hygienic practices while on duty to prevent adulteration of product and the creation of insanitary conditions.
2. Aprons, frocks and other outer clothing worn by persons who handle product should be of material that is disposable or readily cleaned. Clean garments should be worn at the start of each working day, and garments should be changed during the day as often as necessary to prevent adulteration of product and the creation of insanitary conditions.
3. Any person who has, or appears to have, an infectious disease, open lesion (including boils, sores, or infected wounds), or any other abnormal source of microbial contamination, should be excluded from any operations which could result in product adulteration and the creation of insanitary conditions, until the condition is corrected.

Labeling

1. Statement of identity
2. Name and full street address of the processor (unless provided in a local telephone directory)

3. Net weight statement
4. Ingredient statement, listed in descending order of predominance, including sub-ingredients (if the product is comprised of two or more ingredients). Otherwise, it will simply be the species name.
5. Safe handling instructions (see below)



Offal and Waste Water Disposal

1. Disposal methods of offal and waste water should not contaminate or attract insects or rodents to the slaughter/processing area. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the processor to comply with federal, state, or local zoning and/or environmental laws and regulations.

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