

Venison Processing & Labeling

For wild game (*not farm-raised deer*)

Licensing

Venison processors who process *only* venison (i.e. grinding, cutting and wrapping – no cooked or smoked product) and no other meats are not required to be licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection.

Venison processors who manufacture venison sausages and use other meats such as pork trimmings or beef trimmings, and/or beef or pork fat must be licensed by the WDATCP (Division of Food Safety, Meat Inspection Bureau).

Venison processors who only use inspected meats for mixing with the venison must be licensed as food processors (Division of Food Safety, Food Inspection Bureau).

Venison processors who use both uninspected meats (meat belonging to the hunters and labeled “Not For Sale”) and inspected meats are required to be licensed as meat processors (Division of Food Safety, Meat Inspection Bureau).

Wisconsin Administrative Code ATCP 55 includes the above regulation.

Receipt of Venison

Only clean, wholesome venison can be processed. Venison that is not clean and wholesome is Detained or Retained by a meat inspector.

Deer carcasses with the hides on them may be stored 1) in areas or coolers alone, 2) with other hide-on deer carcasses, or 3) with other food if they are completely covered with an acceptable plastic material preventing contamination of the other foods within the area or cooler.

Boneless venison or venison trimmings also must be received at licensed establishments in a clean and wholesome condition.

Venison should be stored in food-grade bags or containers. *Plastic garbage bags are not acceptable for food storage.* If venison is brought to a licensed establishment in a garbage bag, it is removed immediately and placed in proper storage.

Processing of venison

If the licensed establishment processes any products for wholesale or retail sale, or products from domesticated species requiring inspection, those products must be kept separate and apart from any venison products. All venison processing, cutting and smoking must be done at times when no other food processing is being

conducted. All areas where venison processing occurs must be cleaned and sanitized before processing other foods.

Identification of venison

Carcasses of venison must be identified with a game tag or marked "Not For Sale." Venison separated from the game tag must be identified as "Not For Sale."

Tubs of venison, smoke carts containing venison, or any individual storage containers holding venison must be individually identified as "Not For Sale."

Labeling of Venison Products for Licensed Meat Plants

Venison carcass parts and sausage products must be labeled at the time of packaging, on all boxes, cartons, packages or containers in which venison products are contained, with the words "Not For Sale" in 3/8" block lettering, and the Wisconsin establishment number or the name of the processing plant.

This labeling must be on each piece of sausage which is of the ordinary "ring" variety or larger, if the products are individually packaged and shipped or stored in open containers.

This individual marking of "ring" variety or larger is not required provided that these products are in a properly labeled, closed and sealed container, and the entire contents are identified as belonging to one customer.

Labeling of Venison Products for Licensed Food Processing Plants

Venison carcass parts and sausage products must be labeled at the time of packaging, on all boxes, cartons, packages or containers in which venison products are contained with the words "Not For Sale".

This labeling shall be on each piece of sausage which is of the ordinary "ring" variety or larger, if the products are individually packaged and shipped or stored in open containers. This individual marking of "ring" variety or larger is not required provided that these products are in a properly labeled, closed container and sealed and the entire contents are identified as belonging to one customer.