



Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet



LICENSING AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROCESSING WILD GAME

Scope

This document is designed for agent and state inspectional staff, along with wild game processing industry members.

Definitions

Amenable species: “amenable” means an animal species, or products made from an animal species, that are subject to mandatory inspection under state or federal meat and poultry inspection regulations.

Guidance

Type of Facility	License Requirements	Wild Game Processing Requirements
Home Based Business	No License Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May cut/grind/wrap customers’ wild game No additional meat from amenable species may be added Spices may be added
Retail Food Establishment	Retail Food Establishment License Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variance required May cut/grind/wrap customers’ wild game May add amenable species, such as beef or pork, from and approved source (state/federal inspection) to final product
Meat Establishment	State or Federal Meat License Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Custom exempt meat processing activity May cut/grind/wrap customers’ wild game May add uninspected amenable species from customer (custom exempt) or inspected state/federal inspected product <p>NOTE: A meat establishment may still be required to obtain a retail food establishment license if otherwise required under Wis. Admin. Code ATCP § 75.06(1)</p>



Wild Game Product Handling

A meat establishment operator may custom process legally harvested wild game at a meat establishment if the establishment notifies the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's Bureau of Meat and Poultry Businesses of its plans, and the establishment complies with processing, labeling, and recordkeeping requirements applicable to custom processing of wild game under Wis. Admin. Code ATCP §§ [55.03\(11\)](#) and [55.08](#). Operators are to handle, store, and process wild game products in a manner that prevents contamination of other meat or poultry products.

- Garbage bags and other non-food grade containers or bags are not permitted for use in receiving or storing wild game.
- Wild game is only to be accepted by the meat establishment if the wild game carcasses are clean and unadulterated.
- Hide-on deer carcasses are not allowed to be stored in coolers where other product is stored unless completely covered with an acceptable plastic material.
- Wild game processors are to process wild game during times that do not interfere with the slaughter or processing of other food animals.
- Adequate separation by time or space is required for these operations.
- All wild game processing, cutting, and smoking must be done at times or in areas where no other meat processing is being conducted.
- All areas and equipment where wild game processing occurs must be cleaned and sanitized before processing other meat products.
- At all times, wild game product(s) are to be stored separately from other meat or poultry products and clearly identified as a wild game product.
- Wild game products are to be labeled, including clear identification of the species.

Identification of Wild Game in Meat or Food Establishments

Identification of wild game is imperative for wild game processors to ensure the wild game does not enter commerce and is returned only to the owner. Wild game is often received either as whole carcass or as boneless trimmings. Wild game processors who receive wild game carcasses are to affix identification to the carcass upon receipt. This identification would include affixing the game tag or marking the carcass with "Not for Sale" along with the owner's name. Likewise, boneless trim is to be properly identified upon receipt by affixing the game tag or a label stating, "Not for Sale" and the owner's name to the storage container. This assures that the carcass or boneless trim can be returned to the owner.

Finished products of wild game, including carcass parts, cuts, ground product, and/or sausage, must be labeled at the time of packaging, including all boxes, cartons, packages, or containers which contain wild game products. Sausage products that have a diameter of more than 1 ½ inches, if those sausages are individually packaged or if they are shipped or stored in unsealed containers, must be individually labeled. The label shall identify the species along with the words "Not for Sale" in block lettering at least 3/8" high, and the Wisconsin meat establishment number (if applicable) or the name of the processing plant.

Refer to Wis. Admin. Code §§ ATCP [55.03\(11\)](#) and [55.08\(2\)](#) for more information on wild game processing and labeling requirements at licensed meat establishments.

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