



British Quality Wild Venison Standard
*Specifications for carcass production and venison
traceability throughout the supply chain*

Version: 1.1

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Scope

This document specifies the information to be recorded in the **wild venison** supply chain in order to establish the **traceability** of products originating from **wild venison** sources in the UK. It specifies the requirements for the management of existing wild deer populations with regards to:

- wild deer management requirements including legal culling
- how the carcass and venison is to be produced, processed, handled and transported in particular with regards to food safety
- how to identify products traded in the supply chain
- details the information to be generated and held by each of the **food businesses** that physically trade them through the processing and distribution chains.

It is specific to the distribution for human consumption of venison and venison products from the **wild venison and the producer**, through to the **processors** and retail.

The types of businesses and business areas identified in this standard are the following:

- **Trained person(s) (producer(s))** with regards to hunting and stalking deer
- Deer **Larders** and **Chillers**
- **AGHEs**
- Transporters
- Traders
- Other **processors**

A supply chain can be made up of one, or all of the above but must pass through an AGHE to be certified as BQWV – see Annex 1. It includes requirements for the following processes: shooting, tagging, gralloching, transport, chilling, processing carcass/butchering, labelling and **traceability** (packaging/paperwork). It details the requirements for certain items such as ammunition, **tags**, vehicles, processing equipment and **larders**.

Normative references

All aspects of Deer Management Best Practice:

England and Wales: https://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/best_practice/

Scotland: <https://www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk/>

British Association for Shooting and Conservation: Best practice guidance: <https://basc.org.uk/deer-management/best-practice-guidance-deer/>

The Wild Game Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995 1995 No. 2148 UK
Statutory Instruments

Food labelling and packaging: Food labelling and what you must show. The Food Information Regulations 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)

Wild Game Guide Food Standards Agency <https://www.food.gov.uk/print/pdf/node/190>

Terms and definitions

AGHE: Approved Game Handling Establishment: An establishment, approved by the relevant **food standards authority**, for processing wild game for general sale both within the UK and for exports. (Deer Initiative) Game Handling Establishments are approved by the appropriate **food standards authority** in accordance with Article 18 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 and require veterinary control.

Batch: is a single carcass or more that is processed in the same way, at the same time.

Chiller: Chilling is important in controlling food safety risks associated with controlling the growth of pathogens. A suitable **chiller** must be able to cool the **wild venison** carcass to no more than 7°C within a reasonable time after culling on a continual cooling curve and maintained at these temperatures or below. In fur venison carcasses must not be frozen. (Adapted from Wild Game Guide)

Estate or landholding: The area of land from which the deer are being culled.

Fit for human consumption: The General Food Law Article 14 states that food shall not be placed on the market if it is unsafe. Food is deemed to be unsafe if it is:

- injurious to health
- unfit for human consumption

Venison is fit for human consumption when it has been inspected, passed and stamped by a competent authority.

Food business and Food business operator (FB and FBO): Under Regulation 178/2002 'food business' means 'any undertaking, whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out any of the activities related to any stage of production, processing, and distribution of food'. (Wild Game Guide). In this case food means venison.

Note: To protect public health, competent authorities need to be able to identify those who are operating a **food business**, the address where the business is located and the activities that are carried out, this is known as "registration". (Deer Initiative)

Food standards authority: the authority for the devolved administrations that is responsible for food standards - FSA in England and Wales, FSS in Scotland, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD in Northern Ireland).

Label/ labelling: Labels can be applied to the outer packaging or to individual cuts.

Lead free bullet: A bullet that does not contain lead as a separate core component and meets the specifications of wild deer control in the management area.

NOTE: 'Lead free'/ 'non toxic' bullets will be stated as such on the packaging and purchase invoice, and typically will be brass, copper or composite alloy. It is understood and accepted that supplier specifications and manufacturing processes may still include lead as a minor component in lead free / non toxic ammunition as it may be used as a constituent of the copper/brass alloy used in the monolithic head of the bullet. The aim of the lead free requirement is not to use lead as the traditional core of a bullet.

Larder: Premises used for the storage of **wild venison** carcasses before onward transport, often associated with a **chiller** or chilling of culled wild deer, where primary products are stored prior to onward transport or processing. (Adapted from Deer Initiative)

Legally culled: Permission from the landowner to cull the deer legally, as defined in the following legislation: Deer Act 1963, Northern Ireland Wildlife Order 1985, Deer (Scotland) Act 1996, England and Wales Deer Act 1991 and subsequent orders and acts as amended.

Plant: a **premises** such as an **AGHE** that processes carcasses to produce venison.

Premises: Applies to any buildings, whether permanent or temporary, and mobile sales vehicles. (Deer Initiative – Best Practice Guide)

Producer, Stalker, Hunter: A person who stalks and shoots wild deer, who may or may not be a trained person.

Processor: A person or organisation that meets the requirements of processing in this standard. Note this includes **AGHEs** or could include an Estate that meets the **processor** requirements.

Risk based management plan: This is a way of managing food safety hazards using risk assessment or assessments of hazards throughout production. The plan must involve: a product flow, identification of potential hazards, critical control points to reduce or remove risks, planning for when things go wrong and making sure procedures are being followed, are working (continual improvement) and where possible recorded.

Sales documentation: This could be the delivery note or invoice.

Tag: **Tag** attached to carcass with **tag** requirements met, see 8.3.

Traceability: Regulation 178/2002 applies to all **food business operators** including primary **producers**, even those that benefit from exemptions, and covers the whole food and feed chain. The Regulation uses the principle of “one step back and one step forward” so that food can be traced along the supply chain. FBOs are required to have in place systems and procedures that allow for **traceability** information to be made available to competent authorities on demand. Copies of invoices and **larder** records may be sufficient. Key information is the name and address of the supplier/customer, the date, and the nature of the products. Final consumers do not have to be individually identified. However, it is useful to record how much game is supplied direct to final consumers. (Deer Initiative – Best Practice Guide)

Trained person (often referred to as a trained hunter): An individual who can produce evidence of training to cover the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, and Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 as they apply to wild game. A ‘trained person’ is someone who has sufficient knowledge of the pathology of wild deer, and of the production and handling of wild deer carcasses after hunting, to undertake an initial examination of the wild deer carcass on the spot. Where wild deer carcasses are intended for supply to an **AGHE**, at least one person of a hunting team must have this knowledge. For this standard this knowledge must be evidenced through completion of Deer Stalking Certificate level 2 or other equivalent recognised large Game handling qualification.

Wild venison: Wild deer that are **legally culled** for human consumption and are considered to be wild under the applicable laws in the UK. This includes deer living in enclosed territory under conditions of freedom similar to those of wild game and without veterinary intervention. (Adapted from Wild game as defined in annex 1 of Regulation 853/2004).

Note: Deer killed by any other means e.g. road traffic accidents, must not be supplied for human consumption. (Adapted from Deer Initiative Best Practice Guide).

Abbreviations

AGHE: Approved Game Handling Establishment

FB: **Food business**

FBO – Food business operator

FSA: Food Standards Agency

FSS: Food Standards Scotland

LA: Local authority

BQWV requirements:

1. General requirements

This section is for all in the supply chain. It is general requirements such as the policy, quality management system, training and complaint management to meet the standard.

1.1. Quality policy and objectives

Each member shall have a British Quality **Wild Venison** (BQWV) Policy that includes:

- The business' approach to British Quality **Wild Venison** considering the following:
 - **Wild venison** is the product of the management of the British wild deer population and the protection of the natural environment on a landscape basis
 - Protection of the natural environment
 - Woodland establishment, management and quality of habitat
 - Timber quality and economic return
 - British quality **wild venison** objectives including sourcing, processing and **traceability**
 - Designated person(s) and their responsibilities
 - Description of how the business keeps up to date with food safety standards
 - Recognition of critical control points and standard operating procedures
 - Commitment to training of relevant staff in scheme procedures
 - Site housekeeping standards to control acceptance of inputs and ensure that it is fit for human consumption
 - Any contractor arrangements

The BQWV policy must be communicated to all relevant staff and must be signed and dated by a senior responsible person and reviewed as part of a continual improvement process at least annually.

1.2. Quality manual including documented procedures and record templates

- All processes and procedures shall be documented.
- All critical control points (whether hazard analysis (from the **risk-based management plan** (e.g. HACCP)- see section 11) or quality control) shall be identified, standard operating procedures must be written and records, where appropriate, shall be kept.
- Document control and standard operating procedures. These controls shall include as a minimum:
 - Inputs (carcass) and other inputs – such as approval of primary **processors** and inspection before acceptance (carcass requirements).
 - **Producer** requirements and approval
 - Non-conforming product segregation
- Cleaning and other hygiene procedures and records including **plant**, transport, **chillers/larders**/storage, tools and equipment
- Requirements, approval and checks for:
 - Transport requirements
 - Storage requirements
 - **Processor** requirements
 - **Producer** requirements
- Complaint procedure including categorisation, closure and review.

- A process of continual improvement shall be instigated by each member that identifies issues and corrective actions where appropriate via an internal assessment and review of their BQWV system on an annual basis.
- 1.3. Roles and responsibilities
- **Wild venison** quality and British Quality **Wild venison traceability** responsibility within the business shall be clearly defined.
 - The roles and responsibilities shall include delivering the requirements of this standard throughout the business.
- 1.4. Records
- Precise and up-to-date records, appropriate to the volume and nature of the **food business** must be maintained to demonstrate the achievement of the standards and practices defined in this section of these Standards. The records must be made available for examination when surveillance inspections are carried out. For example, these records could include:
 - A valid Certificate of Registration with BQWV.
 - Any correspondence with or from the Certifying Authority or FSA (as appropriate) including copies of any non-compliance reports.
 - Any relevant correspondence from the Local Authority including registration details and Environmental Health Inspection reports.
- 1.5. All operations must have a **risk-based management plan** (e.g. a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point plan), based on best practice to ensure product safety, quality and legality. The management plan must use a process flow diagram to identify all necessary precautions that must be taken to eliminate, prevent and control contamination from glass and brittle items, wood (including wooden pallets), chemicals and metals. Controls must consider the following as potential sources of foreign bodies: staff, inputs, packaging and equipment. The plan must:
- Identify any hazards that must be avoided, removed or reduced
 - Identify the critical control points (CCPs) - the points where it is possible to prevent, remove or reduce a hazard in a work process
 - Determine limits for the CCPs
 - Institute monitoring procedures
 - Establish corrective actions
 - Implement record-keeping procedures
 - Instigate verification procedures
 - Food safety issues shall be identified, nature of the hazard detailed and measures for their control:
 - Microbiological
 - Chemical
 - Physical
 - Food Allergens
- 1.6. The **risk-based management plan** must be developed by at least one person trained in such a methodology. This is covered fully in section 6.
- 1.7. The developer(s) of this **risk-based management plan** must have knowledge of each production process carried out by the business.
- 1.8. The **risk-based management plan** must be reviewed on at least an annual basis to embed a process of continual improvement into the system.
- 1.9. Any relevant staff must demonstrate a good understanding of their key parts of the **risk-based management plan** and how they apply to their operation.

Training and competency

- 1.10. Training of relevant staff in BQWV operational procedures including critical control point operations must be documented and recorded.
- 1.11. Competency of key staff must be formally assessed; the outcome of the assessment must be recorded and where necessary further training instigated to maintain the requirements of the BQWV standard and the quality and hazard analysis management systems.
- 1.12. Roles and responsibilities with regards to BQWV and its requirements must be documented, and staff must understand their role.
- 1.13. As a minimum, there shall be at least one formally **risk-based management plan** (e.g. HACCP) trained member of staff.

Complaint management

- 1.14. There must a person designated to deal with complaints.
- 1.15. A complaints procedure must be in place and detail the following:
 - The person or role responsible for complaints including appropriate knowledge and experience for actions to be taken.
 - The approach to be taken including prompt action and take into account statutory requirements.
 - Procedure when complaints are escalated to BQWV certification body.
- 1.16. A record must be kept of all complaints and detail the following:
 - All complaints received
 - Categorised including quality, **traceability** and other
 - When the complaint was opened
 - How it was dealt with
 - If it is resolved/closed
 - Review of complaints and corrective actions for continual improvement

Legal and other requirements

- 1.17. All processors and producers must confirm that they comply with UK government legislation and regulations such as
 - COSHH
 - Health and safety with regards to site specific risk assessment
 - Waste regulations for their business
- 1.18. Appropriate first aid training
- 1.19. Keep up to date with codes of practice and deer best practice guides

2. Venison carcass specification

This specification applies to carcasses only – for **producers** this will be their outputs, for **processors** this will be their inputs. Failure implies that the venison is not fit for human consumption and must be condemned.

- 2.1. Only **producers** that are approved members of the British Quality **Wild Venison** (BQWV) Assurance Scheme may supply BQWV carcasses.
- 2.2. All venison carcasses must be culled by, or culling supervised and inspected by, a **trained person** as defined in this standard and must not include:

- Any notifiable diseases – these must be brought to the attention of the **processor** and reported to the Divisional Veterinary Manager
 - The deer was found moribund or dying
 - The venison is fly blown
 - The carcass is bloated or in extremely poor condition or been scavenged by vermin
 - The carcass cavity must not be washed out.
- 2.3. All carcasses must be **tagged** in accordance with **traceability** requirements
- 2.4. All carcasses must be fit for human consumption and free from
- Shot damaging any part of the green gralloch
 - Green gralloch spill at gralloching
 - Faecal contamination

3. Venison specification (processor products/outputs)

Venison requirements (bone in, boneless primal cuts and boneless manufacturing venison). Not required for **producers**.

- 3.1. Each cut must have an in-house specification to which the venison is produced. This specification must include the following:
- Species
 - Origin (Regional or National)
 - Primary Cut (Haunch, Saddle, Shoulder etc)
 - Muscle cut (topside, etc)
 - Verified Shelf life
 - Verified Microbial Standards
 - Basic Nutritional information
 - Packaging Materials
 - Allergens
 - Recommended storage and handling
- 3.2. All venison must conform to **traceability** and labelling requirements.
- 3.3. All venison must come from a certified **producer**.

4. Producer requirements

The following requirements are for those producing (stalking) the venison.

- 4.1. All **producers** must be registered as a BQWV certified **producer**, whether that is directly or via an estate or via a group scheme.
- 4.2. All **producers** (including permit or contractor **producers**) must meet the definition of **trained person**.
- 4.3. All **producers** must be **food business** registered with a risk assessment in place. General hygiene requirements for primary production in Regulation 852/2004 and the specific provisions in Regulation 853/2004 for the initial handling of deer carcasses intended to supply **AGHEs**.

Responsibility

- 4.4. Any BQWV **producer** supervising and signing the **hunter** declaration must hold level 2 Deer stalking certificate or equivalent. This must be demonstrable via training records of the trained person.

- 4.5. Where the BQWV **producer** is an **estate**/group of trained persons, these **producers** must conduct checks on all hunters to ensure they all meet the **trained person** definition and updated when necessary.
- 4.6. All BQWV **producers** must have a risk assessment for any culling taking place and must include local public and firearms safety as a minimum.
- 4.7. All carcasses must meet the specification requirements as outlined in section 2 above.
- 4.8. All BQWV **producers** must hold public liability insurance for culling deer to a minimum of £10 million cover.

Hygiene and hazard analysis

- 4.9. **Producers** must be able to demonstrate a thorough and current knowledge of food safety requirements for handling carcasses in the field and **larder**. It is recommended that where **stalkers** have not completed any relevant training in the last 5 years (for example attendance any Best Practice days or specific Food Safety training) this must be completed to ensure current knowledge and best practice is understood and maintained.
- 4.10. Gralloching must be carried out in a hygienic and approved manner, according to Best Practice principles and as soon as possible (completed within 1-hour maximum) after despatch. Any evidence of disease, or any other characteristics that may indicate that the venison presents a health risk, must be recorded in the **larder** record and on the trained person's declaration. Cuts made outside of the **larder** must be minimal to reduce the risk of contamination.
- 4.11. Management and hygiene of all tools including transport, visitors and staff and storage must be maintained in accordance with the procedures outlined in the **risk based management plan**.
- 4.12. Hazard analysis must include risks of contamination, washing and hygiene facilities and waste management. Specifically, the following must be covered:
 - Transport or storage with items other than venison
 - Transport suitability or adaptation to carrying carcasses such as the use of blood trays used when vehicles are not purpose built washable.
 - Reduction of the risks of contamination of carcasses

Despatch

- 4.13. **Producers** must observe the behaviour of deer prior to culling, record any suspected abnormal behaviour on cull sheets and inform the relevant Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA/SASA) of this information if this is linked to a carcass suspected of being infected with a notifiable disease. Information about deer behaviour must be declared on the Trained Person's Declaration.
- 4.14. Firearms and ammunition must be the correct legal specification and must be a **lead-free bullet** as defined in this standard.
- 4.15. Where the **stalker** inadvertently injures or apparently misses a deer, it must be followed up using the appropriate procedure and if necessary, humanely despatched. The appropriate procedure must be agreed by the trained person before the stalk commences and can be verbal or written and where appropriate require a procedure for a supervised **stalker**.

Records

- 4.16. Must only provide deer carcasses accompanied with BQWV assurance scheme issued **tag**.
- 4.17. Must maintain records of deer culled and who they are sold to.
- 4.18. The **producer** must keep records of all **tags** issued to them and must detail the following information
 - all **tags** that are used
 - any unused **tags**
- 4.19. Retrospective tagging is not allowed.
- 4.20. Only venison which has been processed via a certified **processor** can be sold to end customers as BQWV.

5. Transport requirements

Field to larder/chiller

- 5.1. In skin carcass tagging must be maintained.
- 5.2. Transport of carcasses from **Producers** to Primary **Processor** must be carried out in such a manner as to maintain the following:
 - Carcass quality including cleanliness
 - **Traceability** of cold chain
- 5.3. All in-skin carcasses must be transported in a way that prevents contamination.

Despatch and AGHEs vehicles – from larder/chiller to processor and beyond.

- 5.4. If cuts are transported in the same vehicle as carcasses, it must be physically separated with an impermeable layer.
- 5.5. Carcasses must not be allowed to come into contact with potential contamination such as vehicle floors during loading, transit and unloading.
- 5.6. All vehicles must be inspected based on a risk assessment to assess regularity including any subcontractors and be available for inspection if requested by an auditor.
- 5.7. Vehicle specification:
 - The vehicle needs to be fit for purpose, in good condition and easy to clean.
 - All vehicles used to collect and transport product must be refrigerated and capable of maintaining storage temperatures below 7°C for the duration of the journey and a record of this must be kept.
- 5.8. Cuts must not be allowed to come into contact with potential contamination such as vehicle floors during loading, transit and unloading.
- 5.9. All vehicles used to transport carcasses must meet regulatory and scheme requirements, whether they are owned by the member or contracted.
- 5.10. Any vehicles used for transport must have the following procedures in place:
 - Temporary storage requirements and carcass transfer to another vehicle.
 - Higher than planned carcass volumes.
- 5.11. All in-skin carcasses must be transported using a rail system. Heaping of carcasses is prohibited.
- 5.12. For each vehicle there must be a record of the following
 - Storage temperatures.
 - Cleaning schedules of all vehicles.

- At the time of each uplift and at the place of collection (uplift) or delivery of carcasses the following data must be recorded:
 - Date and time of uplift/delivery.
 - Place of uplift/delivery.
 - Vehicle used (registration & any ID).
 - Temperature in **chiller** container on arrival of site of uplift/delivery.
 - Number of carcasses uplifted/delivered.
 - Tag number.
- 5.13. Any vehicle inspection findings must be recorded, and any findings must have evidence of corrective actions where appropriate.
- 5.14. All BQWV **traceability** requirements must be met (see section 8)
- 5.15. In the event that temporary or short-term storage facilities are used then these must meet all the BQWV storage requirements.

6. The collector/chiller/larder/storage requirements

This section is applicable to any **chiller/larder/storage** that are part of the supply chain to the **AGHE**. If the collector/**chiller/larder/storage** conducts any processing, then they must comply with section 7.

- 6.1. Carcass tagging must be maintained and recorded on entry.

Hygiene and hazard analysis

- 6.2. The **risk-based management plan**, using a process flow, must consider and control the following:
 - Hazards that may risk the food hygiene status of venison during the stalking/carcass handling process must consider cleaning and sterilisation procedures for the processing areas, transport and storage areas and all equipment.
 - The level of risk of those hazards to their operation
 - What action is required to minimise those hazards including: cleaning and disinfection procedures; waste disposal procedures.
- 6.3. Hazards identified and assessed must include but is not limited to the following:
 - Cleaning facilities – construction and use including between **batches** and cleaning equipment and storage.
 - Carcass cleanliness and potential contamination sources including cleaning chemicals which must be food grade), waste (organic, inorganic and wastewater), vermin; any vermin controls (target based bait in line with food safety regulations and insectocutors), from other game during storage,
 - Handling and storage including allowing free circulation of air,
 - Whether the carcass is **fit for human consumption**: including assessment of the carcass as detailed in inputs, temperature monitoring and food grade cleaning materials
 - The design of the store/**chiller/larder** and it's suitability with regards to floors, walls and ceilings maintenance and cleanliness.
- 6.4. Details of food safe disinfectants and detergents used, including safe storage, usage and dilutions.
- 6.5. Any **larder, chiller** or storage must notify the game **processor** of the number of new carcasses awaiting collection as soon as they are available.

Chilling and temperature

- 6.6. Hazard analysis management plan must include the maximum time that is acceptable from killing to active chilling beginning. This analysis must take into account ambient temperatures and any measures during transport of the carcass.
- 6.7. **Chiller** temperature must be set to ensure that the internal temperature of carcasses does not exceed 7°C (usually requires the air temperature in the **chiller** to be 4°C or 5°C). Probes to be checked at least annually and replaced if defective.
- 6.8. The **chiller** temperature must be recorded continuously and where carcasses are present temperatures must be monitored at least twice daily.
- 6.9. Temperature records must be retained for 2 years.

Construction

- 6.10. The building must have a concrete apron in front of the doors for the loading/unloading of vehicles. The apron must be drained into a known effluent system that complies with current guidance, to enable wash down of vehicles used for the transport of carcasses.
- 6.11. All **producers** must have a purpose-built **chiller** unit if carcasses are to be stored prior to taking to a processor.
- 6.12. Any storage area must have appropriate protection from vermin and insects from any potential entry point such as windows, doors or vents.
- 6.13. All windows and other openings (for example air inlets and outlets) must be fitted with screens to prevent the entry of birds, insects and rodents. If a window has no screen, they must remain closed and fixed during production.
- 6.14. Exterior areas around the **larder** and entranceways must be kept clear of debris and non-essential equipment. Vegetation must be kept short and well managed.
- 6.15. The size of the **larder/chiller** must be adequate to comfortably store the volume and type of species being brought to the **larder**; and also to accommodate the number of **starkers** who may be working in the **larder** at any one time.
- 6.16. Wall surfaces must be maintained and in good condition and easy to clean and disinfect.
- 6.17. Ceilings and overhead fixtures must be designed, constructed and finished to prevent the accumulation of dirt and reduce condensation, the growth of undesirable moulds, the shedding of particles and access by pests. Ceilings must be high enough to accommodate the largest animals coming through the **larder**.
- 6.18. Floor surfaces must be maintained in a sound condition and must be easy to clean and disinfect.
- 6.19. All drains must be free running and kept clean and all traps must be regularly emptied.
- 6.20. Doors must be well fitting to prevent access by pests, easy to clean and disinfect and able to be opened from both sides
- 6.21. Surfaces (including surfaces of equipment) in contact with food must be made from smooth, washable and non-toxic materials (preferably stainless steel) and maintained in a sound condition and be easy to clean and disinfect.
- 6.22. Food **premises** must have adequate natural and/or artificial lighting. Any artificial lights must be fitted with protective covers to avoid risk of glass contamination.
- 6.23. There must be suitable and sufficient means of natural or mechanical ventilation.

Records

- 6.24. The **larder** and **chiller** must be kept clean and must be checked by a **stalker** before use.
- 6.25. Any storage area must have access to a properly equipped first aid kit and a trained first aider.
- 6.26. The **larder** and any other entrance rooms must be maintained in a clean and tidy condition.
- 6.27. Disposal of all washings and effluent must comply with current legislation.

Water

- 6.28. All water used for hand basins must be potable. This includes private supply which must be tested to demonstrate it is potable by an accredited laboratory at least annually.
- 6.29. In the case of a water test failure, there must be a contingency plan in place for an alternative water supply until remedial action has been taken.
- 6.30. Wash basins for cleaning hands must be provided with hot and cold (or appropriately mixed) running water. Wash basin taps must be arm, knee or foot operated. Materials for cleaning hands and hygienic drying (e.g. paper towels) must be provided. These must be located in the same building or site.

7. Processor requirements

All **processors** (including **AGHEs**) must meet the **AGHE** requirements as outlined by their appropriate food standards agency.

- 7.1. Staff and responsibility – **AGHE** food hygiene standards must be met as outlined above.
 - Staff handling primary processed game must wear clean protective clothing when handling product or product containers. Care shall be exercised at all stages to protect the product from possible contamination
 - Each **plant** must designate a single trained individual and deputy who is held responsible for the cleanliness of the **plant**.
 - Training records and training schedules must be available.
- 7.2. Staff Hygiene – **AGHE** food hygiene standards must be met as outlined above.
 - Staff working with fresh venison must maintain high standards of personal cleanliness while at work and take all necessary precautions to prevent contamination of the venison and materials used in the processing operations. In this regard, they must:
 - Keep as clean as is reasonably practicable all parts of their person which are liable to come into contact with the venison. Fingernails must be kept short, clean and must not be varnished.
 - Wash and disinfect their hands on entering a work area, at frequent intervals during work periods and each time work is resumed.
 - Keep any cut or abrasion on any exposed part of their person covered with a suitable waterproof dressing.
 - Not wear personal adornments or jewellery of any kind, including watches, except for plain wedding rings or plain sleeper earrings.
 - Strictly refrain from smoking, spitting or eating in working or storage areas.
 - All persons working in or passing through working areas must wear sufficient clean, light coloured washable protective clothing and a head covering of a suitable type. The

protective clothing must be changed at least daily or more frequently if required.

Outdoor clothing must not be worn over or in place of protective clothing.

- Staff who work in the skinning area must not be allowed to pass through other work areas where meat-cutting operations are carried out without taking effective precautions to prevent cross contamination.
- Staff who are required to work in the skinning area and in meat cutting areas must change their protective clothing and wash and disinfect their hands between the changeover.
- Appropriate medical screening must be completed for any person assigned to work on and handle meat. Staff who are suffering from stomach disorders or any conditions that may cause infection must not be allowed to work on or handle the products/outputs. Immediately a member of staff becomes aware that they are suffering from, or are a carrier of, any infection likely to cause food poisoning they must inform the designated responsible person who must then immediately inform the relevant health authority. Staff must obtain clearance from their GP before returning to work after any gastro-intestinal infection.

7.3. Goods in must have an initial inspection with record of who inspected it, time, date, any observations and comply with the requirements of inputs.

7.4. Processing

- All operations and storage during processing must be carried out in clean, hygienic conditions and avoid contamination or growth of undesirable micro-organisms.
- Venison cutting
 - The deep muscle temperature of a side or carcass must not exceed +7°C when cutting operations begin and the temperature of the venison must not rise above +7°C during venison cutting operations.
 - After preparation the cuts/joints must be chilled to, and stored at, a deep muscle temperature in the range 0°C to +4°C.
 - Areas that present a higher risk of potential contamination from pathogenic bacteria e.g. leg ends, neck ends, gralloch cuts and flanks must be correctively trimmed.
 - Any corrective trimming must be conducted in a manner that prevents cross contamination from any trimmings and discard and a record of any wastage must be kept for the mass balance.

7.5. Packaging

- All packaging used must comply with current legislation as outlined in the section Legal and other requirements below.
- The material used for product packaging must be new, clean, of food grade quality and must be strong enough to protect the venison during handling, storage, transit and, as appropriate, display. The material must not affect the organoleptic characteristics of the venison or transmit to it substances, in quantities, harmful to human health.
- Any non-returnable outer packaging must be new, clean and of food grade quality.
- Any returnable outer containers used must be made from non-absorbent materials, kept in good repair and they must be clean.
- All packaging material must be stored off the floor, at least 45cm away from walls in clean, dry hygienic conditions.

- The venison must be packaged in such a way as to effectively protect the venison during handling and transit and as appropriate enhance visual appearance on display at the point of sale.
- Any absorbent material used to prevent pooling of exudate, must be of food grade quality
- Vacuum packing
 - If primals are to be vacuum packed the operation shall be carried out immediately after boning and trimming.
 - The primal must be inserted into an appropriately sized pouch, and correctly sealed.
 - If the primal is partially de-boned the bone edges shall be covered with a suitable material to avoid pouch damage.
 - Pouches must be monitored for signs of leaking.

7.6. Storage, handling and product distribution

- During transportation, all vehicles and transportation must comply with BQWV transport requirements.
- Staff handling primary processed game must wear clean protective clothing when handling product or product containers. Care shall be exercised at all times to protect the product from possible contamination.
- Records must be kept of storage temperatures.

7.7. **Plant** requirements

- Walls/ceilings/doors/windows must be maintained as complete and undamaged washable surfaces to prevent the accumulation of dirt and dust, reduce condensation and mould growth.
- Floors must be well drained, complete, maintained and appropriately washable.
- If floor drains are open, they must be covered by removable and cleanable grids.
- Any storage area must have appropriate protection from vermin and insects from any potential entry point such as windows, doors or vents.
- All windows and other openings (for example air inlets and outlets) must be fitted with screens to prevent the entry of birds, insects and rodents. If a window has no screen, they must remain closed and fixed during production.
- Access must be available to false ceilings to assist cleaning and maintenance and allow monitoring of vermin activity.
- Lighting must be adequate for all work areas.
- All areas in which product is present must have lights with clean protective shatterproof coverings to minimise the risk of contamination.
- All work areas must be free from foul smells, airborne dust and be appropriately ventilated.

7.8. Cleaning and general hygiene control

- Pre-production hygiene checks must be carried out and signed off by a nominated individual before each work period begins.
- Critical areas (as determined in the hazard analysis management plan) must be designated for specific attention as a part of a permanent sanitation schedule. The frequency of the cleaning required for each area including floors, equipment, utensils, walls and vehicles and the requirements for adequate cleaning must be clearly defined.
- Potable water must be used for all wet cleaning routines. A routine water testing regime must be in place and results monitored against the member's risk assessment.

- Out of target range areas must be actioned and re-swabbed. Methods, rotas and results must be available, and records kept. Prompt corrective action must be taken when adverse results are recorded.

7.9. Hygiene Routines

- To avoid accumulation, waste materials must be removed from working areas at frequent intervals throughout the working day.
- All parts of the **premises** and the equipment must be kept clean and tidy. As a minimum, daily checks must be carried out in all working areas to ensure that they are maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- All product contact surfaces of equipment, tools and utensils, must be cleaned as frequently as necessary throughout work periods to prevent build-up of micro-organisms and contamination of the products.
- Non-product contact surfaces must be cleaned as frequently as necessary to prevent accumulation of product debris, dirt, refuse and other extraneous matter.
- Clean-up routines at the end of work-periods must be carried out promptly to prevent the drying out of product debris that may be difficult to remove later and avoid microbial build up.
- Product contact surfaces and general **plant** hygiene must be assessed by microbiological methods to a set rota allowing for additional areas when appropriate. The sample procedure must be carried out by acceptable technical methods and target limits set either by customer (or in-house) specifications which are documented and verified by a qualified person or company. Samples must be based on an evidenced risk assessment. **Plants** must demonstrate adequate swabbing and recording procedures.

7.10. Equipment and cleaning products

- Detergents, disinfectants, the means of application and the dilution rate of the sanitiser must be specified. The procedures must be documented and used as a checklist for hygiene maintenance and control.
- Detergents, disinfectants, sanitisers, and other chemicals employed in the cleaning and sanitising routines must be approved for use in food processing establishments, safe to use and effective for their intended purpose. They must be used in such a way that the products are not adversely affected. Strong smelling substances, which may contaminate or taint the product must not be used.
- All detergents, disinfectants, sanitisers, and other chemicals used for cleaning must be properly labelled and stored safely to avoid the risk of product contamination.
- Detergents must be properly used to ensure physically clean equipment. Clean equipment must be protected from possible recontamination.
- Product trays must not come into contact with the floor or walls and must not be subject to splash or spray from cleaning operations.

7.11. Pest control in the hazard analysis management plan must include the following:

- Details of pest control arrangements and servicing report, using an accredited pest control agent.
- **Plants** must meet the requirements outlined in 7.7 with regards to pests.
- Effective control measures must be in place for all types of pests for example, flies, vermin, etc.
- All material must be stored to minimise the risk of infestation e.g. packaging stored off the floor.

- Records must be kept of pest control inspections, any recommendations and action undertaken. These records must be kept for a minimum period of 12 months.

8. Supply chain management and traceability requirements

- 8.1. There must be a record of the signed Trained **Hunter** Declaration (THD). The declarations must be checked against the approved BQWV **producers** list and procedures in place to check the declarations against the approved names list. A record must be kept where a declaration has been signed by someone not on the qualified persons list and the product must be segregated from any BQWV product. Where the suppliers are BQWV approved members, these records must be available to Certification body on request so that any potential breach of the BQWV **Producer** standards by the supplier can be thoroughly investigated.
- 8.2. Details of suppliers of carcasses including confirmation that they have been culled in the British Isles. Note: regional claims are outside the scope of this standard.
- 8.3. The certification body will hold a centralised declaration **tagging** database and each **tag** must include the following:
 - **Producer** name
 - **Producer** ref/no.
 - BQWV certification **producer** number
 - Date shot
 - Time shot
 - Location – **Estate** is minimum requirement
 - Species
 - Sex
 - Weight
 - **Larder** Date
 - **Larder** Time
 - Customer/**AGHE**
 - Declaration – I declare in accordance with EU regulation 853/2004 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. This deer has been killed with a lead free bullet.
 - Signature
 - BQWV logo
 - BQWV carcass **tag** unique reference number
- 8.4. Each step in the supply chain must check the BQWV status of all their suppliers. Where supply chain is not certified, the carcasses must be segregated as non-conforming product.
- 8.5. Primary **processors** must keep records of stock received and all relevant identification paperwork sent with them. The following is required:
 - Carcass **tagging** must be maintained and must be recorded on entry.
 - Carcass numbers recorded
 - All carcasses must have an initial inspection.
 - Segregation of BQWV from non-conforming venison must be demonstrated.
 - Records of BQWV must detail the supplier, the number condemned and the total consignment, and the reason for the condemnation.

- Where the suppliers are BQWV approved members these records must be available to Certification body on request so that any potential breach of the BQWV **Producer** standards by the supplier can be thoroughly investigated.
 - Detained carcasses must be identified as detained and recorded within the documentation.
- 8.6. All stages of any journey from **Producer** to Primary **Processor** must be recorded including whenever carcasses are transferred to new vehicle.
- 8.7. The records for all journeys must be kept in full by the Primary **Processor** and must be available for inspection at any time.
- 8.8. All BQWV must be segregated, and this must be maintained throughout processing, from receipt to despatch for the BQWV claim to be made.
- 8.9. Boneless and bone-in primals
- All BQWV primals must comply with venison specifications including quality and **labelling**.
 - All BQWV primals must be traceable to a defined production **batch**.
 - For each production **batch**, records must be kept detailing date of production, date of kill and kill numbers and for quarters the **producer** membership number.
 - Venison Products, Preparations for Retail Packs, Wholesale System of production must include the following **traceability** in order to be labelled BQWV:
 - A supplier **batch number**.
 - Component or dry ingredients.
 - All venison must be derived from BQWV carcasses.
 - All products and packing materials must comply with current UK legislation
- 8.10. Labelling
- All products being sold as BQWV must display the members certification mark or number in association with the product.
 - All **labels** must be non-toxic (e.g. ink/adhesive) and must not come into contact with the venison. Note: this is not the vet's stamp.
 - All retail packs of venison must carry a 'use by' date and recommendations for domestic storage in line with relevant legislation. Evidence must be available to demonstrate how the 'use by' date has been established from the kill date.
- 8.11. Logo and certification mark
- The logo is the brand logo alone, the certification mark is the logo with a unique identifier to the business or individual registered and approved on the scheme.
- The logo and certification mark can only be used on approval by the certification body and must be used as outlined in the BQWV Logo and Certification Mark document.
 - Non-conforming product
 - Approved Primary **Processors** must nominate a responsible person(s) with appropriate knowledge and experience and the necessary authority to decide the action to be taken in cases where the product does not conform to the product specification or have been subject to a failure of process standards defined in these standards.
 - Non-conforming products must:
 - not carry the Certification Mark nor must they be knowingly delivered or sold under description, direct or implied indicating that they have been produced in accordance with the requirements of the Certification Scheme and they conform to the Standards required by the Scheme.

- be identified and segregated and may be re-graded for alternative use or if **unfit for human consumption** they must be disposed of safely and in accordance with relevant regulations covering the disposal of unfit products.
- Records must be kept detailing non-conforming product and appropriate preventative action.
- There must be a BQVV mass balance check that accounts for inputs, product and rejected/discarded material are within controlled parameters.

Bibliography and further guidance

https://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/best_practice/

Scotland ref: <https://www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk/>

Deer legislation The Deer Act 1991 (as amended by Statutory Instrument 2007, No 2183 and referred to as “the Deer Act”) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/54/contents>

Firearms legislation:

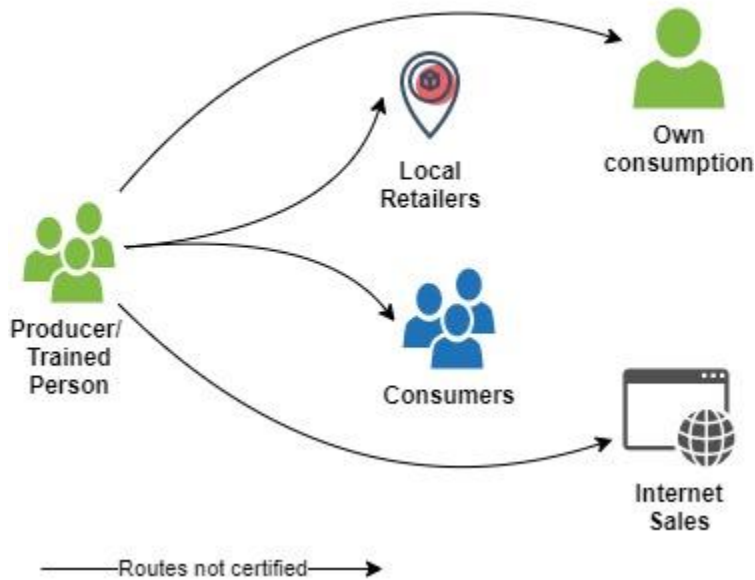
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/firearms-law-guidance-to-the-police-2012>

Wild Game Guide:

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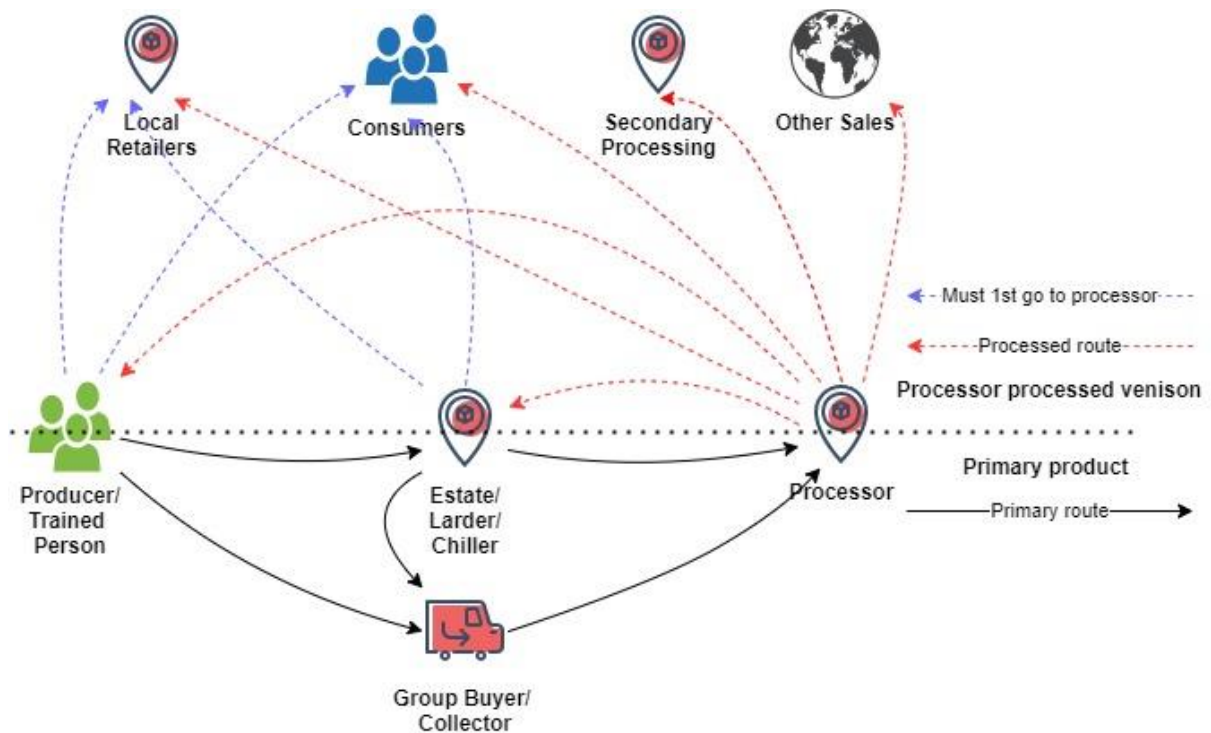
Annex 1: Flow Diagrams to demonstrate routes that are and are not included in the standard

Figure 1: Producer routes to consumption that are NOT part of the standard




The routes to market are as described in figure 2. Secondary processing is outside the scope of the scheme.

Figure 2: Processor Chain of Custody



The red arrows denote the processed route. For example, if a certified **producer** (e.g. running a box scheme) has carcasses processed by a BQWV certified **AGHE**, they can be returned to them to sell onto a retailer or end consumer but only as a finished product. It can be branded as long as it comes from a BQWV certified AGHE. All links must be certified whether via a group scheme or direct.

Version control

Version no.	Author	Purpose/change	Date	Approved by
1.0	HBF	First version of standard	20 th October 2021	
1.1	HBF	Update terminology, definitions and formatting and tag requirements	25 th April 2023	