

Venison Working Group

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Venison Working Group (the Group) was established in May 2020 in response to a turn down of the wild deer venison market in the UK. It is generally agreed that lower prices paid for deer carcasses are a disincentive to cull. Aside from reducing value, this has a potential negative effect on the condition of the habitats in which deer live and ultimately on deer welfare.

The broad aims of the Group are

- To support the UK wild venison supply chain and to help maintain a demand for the by-product of deer culling as a woodland management operation.
- Identify limitations within the venison supply chain and onward marketing of both carcasses, and venison as a retail product.
- Identify where change might make the venison supply chain and markets as robust as possible
- To stimulate the sale of British venison within the UK and abroad by
 - Where appropriate, supporting marketing of British Wild Venison in the UK and Internationally
 - Supporting mechanisms for developing markets for British Wild Venison in the UK and Internationally
 - Support the development of ways of increasing confidence in British Wild Venison

Membership of the Working Group

The Group is a national group drawn from those involved in the supply chain for British Wild Venison and includes representation from across the UK. It is currently chaired by the Forestry Commission David Hooton. Membership of the Group is from a range of organisations and specialist advisors with an interest in sustainable deer management, through invitation.

Governance

The business year of the WSWG is 1st August – 31st July.

The WSWG consists of around 10 members and includes:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- The Keeper of the Minutes

Meetings will be arranged via Microsoft TEAMS, chaired by David Hooton (Forestry Commission). Notes and actions from the meetings will be recorded, distributed within a few days of the meeting, and agreed via email and verbally at the following meeting.

Correspondence for the Wild Venison Working Group should be directed to Forestry Commission, Santon Downham, Brandon, Suffolk, or david.hooton@forestrycommission.gov.uk

British Quality Wild Venison Standard

Grown in Britain has worked in partnership with the WVWG to develop the British Quality Wild Venison Standard, which will support the work to build a growing, more robust British wild venison sector.

GiB is the owner of the BQWV Standard and the WVWG is the BQWV Scheme Owner.

Finance

The Group has no funding. Members are not able to claim expenses from the Group nor from the Forestry Commission.

Project money may be raised by the group to fund work, and this will be administered by agreement through an organisation within the group. The Forestry Commission is unable to administer project money, although it may, by agreement, help and support funding (financially or administratively) of project work, and grant applications.

No organisation should make any financial commitment or submit applications for money (project support) in the name of the Group without clear acceptance and agreement from the Group.

Publicity and Promotion

Any publicity or promotion (of the group) undertaken by Group Members, should be approved by the Group prior to submission for publishing. This is to ensure accuracy and consistency of messaging being published.

Authority

The Wild Venison Working Group has no formal power or legal standing.

Declaration of Interests

Group members (individuals and organisations) will have an interest in wild venison, and may be part of businesses that will benefit from increasing venison prices / sales / marketing, or be involved in bidding

for work that will have financial benefits to individuals or organisations that they are involved with, (either in a paid or voluntary capacity). Where this is the case other members must be made aware by a declaration of interest.

Members must ensure that they are representing the views of their organization, working and providing advice to the benefit of the agreed objectives of the group and the wider sector. If a significant personal gain is likely, this should be declared before work is undertaken.

It should be noted that at times sensitive discussions may occur as part of the working group meetings. Information that may be of a confidential or business nature should be treated in confidence.

Any member who has a clear and substantial interest in a matter under consideration by the working group should declare that interest at any meeting where the matter is to be discussed.

Members who have any queries or concerns about these matters should discuss them in the first instance with the Chairman.