

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
GUIDELINES FOR VENISON PROCESSING IN MARYLAND
December 2006

Maryland allows individuals and licensed butchers to process venison for hunters and/or donation to food-donation programs. Following is a list of guidelines that processors should follow when accepting deer for processing.

- Processors should remember that some venison donation programs require donated meat to be processed at State-inspected facilities. Inspection requirements can be obtained by contacting the MD. Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene - Division of Food Control at 410-767-8400.
- Processors should adhere to practices that ensure a wholesome, safe product is processed and packaged for donation or for the hunter.
- Processors can only handle or accept legally-acquired deer. All deer must be accompanied by a confirmation number. If in doubt, do not accept the deer.
- Legally-acquired venison may be mixed with meat from other domestic meat products to produce sausage or other multi-ingredient venison products.
- Processors should maintain a log of all deer accepted for processing.
- The processor log should include:
 - Hunter's name, address, and confirmation number;
 - Type of cut requested (basic, custom, ground-only, etc);
 - Type and quantity of any sausage or multi-ingredient products;
 - Any donations accepted from the hunter and quantity.
- Processors should remember that the estimated edible venison weight of the deer should nearly equal the estimated weight of the processed venison returned to the hunter (allowing for ingredients incorporated into multi-ingredient products if applicable).
- Processors are reminded that they may not sell wild venison in Maryland. Processors may only collect fees to process legally-acquired deer for the individual who provides the deer to the processor.
- Processing charges may include:
 - Field-dressing,
 - Skinning and Caping,
 - Butchering, grinding, wrapping; and
 - Production of any multi-ingredient products.
- Processors are reminded that they may not recoup their processing costs for unclaimed deer by distributing the unclaimed meat to persons in exchange for money. Unclaimed deer may be donated or used by the processor for personal use. To distribute the unclaimed meat in exchange for money is considered a sale and is a violation of the Natural Resources Article.

If you have additional questions or concerns about this guidance document please contact MD. DNR, toll-free in Maryland, at 1-877-620-8DNR (8367) weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.