

Wild Game Meat Harvesting Guideline

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1. WHERE WILD GAME CAN BE HARVESTED

Wild game can be harvested from private land in Victoria with written approval from the landowner. Wild game can also be harvested from Crown land with prior approval granted by the relevant government department.

2. APPROVAL TO HARVEST WILD DEER

Each harvester of wild deer for human consumption or pet food that is to be processed through a **Victorian** facility must first apply to PrimeSafe to be **approved** as a Game Meat Field Harvester and provide the following information as part of their application:

- (i) Certificate of Attainment for Wild Animal Field Harvesting or equivalent from an approved Registered Training Organisation (RTO);
- (ii) Evidence of shooting proficiency certification;
- (iii) Nominate a PrimeSafe licensed Harvest Vehicle to use when harvesting; and
- (iv) Payment of the appropriate licence fee.

3. KANGAROO HARVESTING PROGRAM

A Kangaroo Harvesting Program (KHP) in Victoria commenced on 1 October 2019. Information on the program, which is administered by the Victorian government, not PrimeSafe, is available from the following Victorian government website <https://djsir.vic.gov.au/game-hunting/kangaroo-harvesting>

The KHP replaced the Kangaroo Pet Food Trial that was in operation since 2014.

Game Meat Field Harvesters of kangaroos **do not** need to be approved by PrimeSafe as they must be when harvesting wild deer. They instead must be authorised by the Victorian government.

Effective from 28 January 2021, the KHP permits kangaroo meat to be harvested for human consumption when supplied to a PrimeSafe licensed Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises), in addition to being harvested for pet food when supplied to a PrimeSafe licensed Pet Meat Processing Facility.

The KHP has been declared as a Developmental Wildlife Trade Operation (DWTO) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*. This allows kangaroo products collected under the program, such as skins, to be exported overseas.

Game Meat Field Harvesters harvesting kangaroos or the controlling entity (i.e. company) require a licence for any Harvest Vehicles or Field Depots used in the storage or transportation of kangaroo carcasses.

All queries, complaints and concerns regarding the Kangaroo Harvesting Program should be emailed to customer.service@ecodev.vic.gov.au or by calling 136 186 between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

4. OTHER GAME SPECIES (Rabbit, Hare, Pig and Goat)

Under the *Meat Industry Act 1993*, game in Victoria includes rabbit, hare, kangaroo, pig, goat and deer, if living in a wild state. As stated in sections 2 and 3 above, specific approval and authorisation arrangements are in place for deer and kangaroo field harvesters in Victoria. There are however no approval or authorisation requirements for individuals field harvesting rabbit, hare, pig and goat. Field harvesters of these game species must still obtain the necessary licences for their Game Meat Processing Facility (Harvest Vehicle) and for any Game Meat Processing Facility (Field Depot: Premises / Vehicle) that they utilise.

The licence holder of a Harvest Vehicle must ensure that they and any other field harvesters using their vehicle to harvest other game species are suitably trained and accredited as per the requirements stipulated in section 2 (i) to (iv) of this guideline. In addition, a licensed Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises) and a Pet Meat Processing Facility must not receive other game species carcasses unless the individual field harvester is registered as an Approved Supplier in their Food Safety Program having met the above requirements.

5. FIREARMS LICENSING

It is the responsibility of the Game Meat Field Harvester to ensure that their current firearms licence is correctly classified by the relevant state police department for their intended commercial harvesting activities.

6. INTERSTATE LICENSED GAME MEAT PROCESSING FACILITIES, HARVEST VEHICLES AND FIELD DEPOTS

A Game Meat Field Harvester intending to take wild game directly to a processing facility interstate will need to contact the relevant state regulatory authority for the requirements for acceptance into an interstate game meat processing facility.

Wild game harvested in Victoria and taken directly interstate for processing **does not** require PrimeSafe approval or licensing. For interstate licensing requirements, contact the applicable state regulatory authority (i.e. NSW DPI).

Vehicles used in the harvest, storage, processing or transport of wild game **do not** need to be licensed by PrimeSafe if they are already licensed for this purpose in another state or territory.

7. TAGS

Tags are not supplied by PrimeSafe and can be manufactured by Game Meat Field Harvesters or Game Meat Processing Facilities (except for kangaroo tags).

Immediately after harvest, each wild game animal carcass must have a tag applied to it, either a Victorian State Government tag allocated for kangaroos, or a tag that contains the following information:

- (i) Property Identification Code (PIC) or public land description;
- (ii) PrimeSafe Wild Game Meat Field Harvester Approval Number;
- (iii) Harvest date; and
- (iv) Carcass body number.

Kangaroo tags used in the KHP are available through the Victorian government.

Tags are not available from PrimeSafe.

8. FIELD DRESSING

Harvested wild game animal carcasses must be field dressed to ensure the following:

- (i) The skin is retained on the carcass until processed at a PrimeSafe licensed Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises) or at a Pet Meat Processing Facility; and
- (ii) The lungs, liver, heart and kidneys (pluck) must remain attached to the carcass for inspection by a meat inspector until processed at a PrimeSafe licensed Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises) **if intended for human consumption** or in accordance with conditions of the PrimeSafe licence.

9. MEAT TRANSPORT VEHICLE USE FOR GAME MEAT AND CARCASSES

A PrimeSafe licensed Meat Transport Vehicle (MTV) **may** be used to transport harvested wild game animal carcasses to a Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises) but **at no time** can non-game meat be transported in this MTV at the same time as harvested wild game animal carcasses.

MTVs must be thoroughly cleaned after transporting wild game animal carcasses and prior to transporting processed game meat and non-game carcasses and meat.

10. HARVEST VEHICLE DESIGN AND USE

A Game Meat Processing Facility (Harvest Vehicle) must be designed so that carcasses are carried in a way that allows them to cool and protects them from contamination.

The following elements can be used as a guide to the design and operational outcomes required by the Standard when designing and using a harvest vehicle:

- (i) Carcasses should be spaced and hung within the tray using crossbars with spikes. Spacing between pelvic spikes on crossbars should be no less than 270 mm in any direction. Practicably, you should have no more than six spikes on each crossbar. Spikes are not required for rabbits or hares.
- (ii) Sufficient space should be provided between carcasses to enable effective cooling. Cooling is critical to reduce bacterial growth and prevent conditions such as bone taint.
- (iii) Carcasses must be hung, not flat stacked, to enable them to adequately drain, prevent cross contamination and allow cooling. However, small wild game carcasses (i.e. rabbits) may be placed on racks or similar equipment.
- (iv) There must be enough racks to allow all eviscerated carcasses to be transported within the boundary of the hanging frame. Carcasses are not to be transported hanging on the outside of the rack to prevent potential contamination (i.e. dust).
- (v) Dogs used in the procurement of game animals must be transported on the harvest vehicle in a compartment that is completely separate from the carcasses and processing equipment.
- (vi) A solid partition (not mesh) should be at least 850 mm high, and sealed, rolled or joined at the bottom to prevent potential contamination (i.e. dog urine). It must allow airflow to the carcasses. Galvanised sheet metal is recommended for this purpose leaving space between the dog partition and the first row of carcass spikes to aid cooling.

- (vii) The tray of the harvest vehicle can be constructed of painted mild steel or aluminium. It must be kept free of dust. It must be of a finish that makes contamination clearly visible avoiding use of dark colours. Contact surfaces such as pelvic racks, crossbars, spikes and hooks should be galvanised dipped steel or stainless steel. Other industrial applications such as powder coating or pre-gal bars using cold gal paint on weld seams are allowed for the non-contact parts of the tray. Dressing spikes on the side of the tray do not require gal dipping, only painting, as long as the carcass is hung by the leg during dressing.
- (viii) Although gal dipping of the entire tray is initially more expensive than other methods, it is recommended as it will require less maintenance.
- (ix) No part of the tray can be made of exposed or painted wood, as wood is porous and difficult to clean. Where table top trays are constructed of wood, a false floor can be installed on top of it from galvanised sheet metal.
- (x) The height of the hanging rack ideally should be between 900 mm and 1000 mm.

The harvest vehicle **must** be equipped with the following:

- (i) Boning knives and a sharpening steel.
- (ii) Potable water (at least 20 litres is recommended) for rinsing hands and equipment. A water tank can either be built into the tray or PVC tubing of 150 mm diameter can be used. Water tanks or containers should not be fitted inside the harvesting tray itself, as this can make it more difficult to clean.
- (iii) Hand wash facility with taps, which must be located near the processing area.
- (iv) Detergent or liquid soap dispenser, which should be within 300 mm of the water tap. A dedicated sanitiser dispenser for knives (known as a bump sanitiser) should also be fitted on the tray.
- (v) Sealable knife container, which should be within 300 mm of the water tap. It must be able to be cleaned and made of an approved material (i.e. stainless steel, galvanised dipped steel, PVC tube, etc). The container must be watertight to store sanitising liquid.

At the end of each harvesting operation, the Game Meat Field Harvester must clean and sanitise the hanging frames, floors and equipment used in processing. These must also be clean at the commencement of harvesting.

Photos of a harvest vehicle, moveable hanging racks and washing facilities can be seen below:



An application for a PrimeSafe licence to operate a Harvest vehicle must include the following as part of the application:

- (i) List of approved PrimeSafe Game Meat Field Harvesters utilising the Harvest Vehicle;
- (ii) A third party auditing contract covering the vehicle; and
- (iii) Payment of the appropriate licence fee.

11. DOCUMENTATION TO BE COMPLETED

A PrimeSafe approved Food Safety Plan (FSP) must be maintained for a Harvest Vehicle, Field Depot, Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises) and a Pet Meat Processing Plant.

Each consignment of harvested wild game animal carcasses must be accompanied with a completed Game Meat Harvest Declaration (available from PrimeSafe). **Declarations are not required for kangaroos.**

12. FOOD SAFETY PLANS

Food Safety Plans for Harvest Vehicle operators are provided by PrimeSafe when issued with a Game Meat Processing Facility (Harvest Vehicle) licence.

Food Safety Plans for other licence types will need to be developed by each business or are available to purchase from various industry bodies and consultants. PrimeSafe can also develop a Food Safety Plan for other licence types under a *Fee for Service* arrangement.

13. AUDITS

The following licence types are subject to periodical audits by a third party auditor to monitor the quality assurance systems at Game Meat Processing facilities and Pet Meat Processing Facilities and to confirm compliance with the applicable Standard at the frequencies described below:

- (i) Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises): 2 audits per year
- (ii) Game Meat Processing Facility (Field Depot: Premises / Vehicle): 1 audit per year
- (iii) Game Meat Processing Facility (Harvest Vehicle): 1 audit per year
- (iv) Pet Meat Processing Facility (Knackery): 2 audits per year

You are required to have a contract in place with a PrimeSafe approved third party auditor before a licence to operate a Game Meat Processing facility or a Pet Meat Processing Facility is approved.

You must contact the third party auditors and make an appointment for them to audit your facility following the commencement of operations. They will then send their audit report to you and PrimeSafe.

It is a condition of your PrimeSafe licence that you comply with Standards which helps to prove you have procedures to keep game meat safe.

Details of PrimeSafe approved third party auditors are listed on the PrimeSafe website.

Audit costs are payable directly to auditor companies and these charges should be discussed with your audit company when entering into a contract for auditing services.

14. LICENCE FEES

PrimeSafe is the food safety regulator of the Victorian meat industry, including the game meat industry. PrimeSafe operates on the basis of full cost recovery from the regulated industries and does not receive any government funding for its operations. A list of fees applicable to each game meat licence and approval category can be found on the PrimeSafe website.

15. GAME MEAT STANDARD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

The harvesting of wild game intended for human consumption must comply with the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Wild Game Meat for Human Consumption (AS 4464: 2007). This Standard describes the requirements for the harvesting and processing of game to ensure harvested game meat is fit for human consumption. The harvested wild game animal carcasses must be taken to a PrimeSafe licensed Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises) for inspection and processing. Wild game animal carcasses may be stored and/or transported in a PrimeSafe licensed Field Depot prior to being transported to a Game Meat Processing facility.

A PrimeSafe licensed Harvest Vehicle and Field Depot (vehicle or fixed premises) must comply with the construction requirements of this Standard. The licensed Harvest Vehicle or Field Depot is for the transportation and storage of harvested wild game animal carcasses only and **must not** be used for the final processing, inspection, storage or transportation of processed game meat.

16. PET MEAT STANDARD FOR PET FOOD

The harvesting of wild game intended for pet meat must be conducted in compliance with the Standard for the Hygienic Production of Pet Meat (PISC Technical Report 88 – Amended 2009).

17. LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO GAME MEAT PROCESSING

Legislation / Standards	Field Harvester	Harvest Vehicle	Field Depot	Processor
Meat Industry Act 1993 *	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meat Industry Regulations 2015 *	✓	✓	✓	✓
Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Wild Game Meat for Human Consumption (AS 4464: 2007) #	✓	✓	✓	✓
Standard for the Hygienic Production of Pet Meat (PISC Technical Report 88 – Amended 2009) #	✓	✓	✓	✓
A guide to the implementation and auditing of HACCP (SCARM Report 60) #				✓
PrimeSafe approved food safety plan		✓	✓	✓
Certificate of Attainment Wild Animal Field Harvesting from an approved Registered Training Organisation (RTO).	✓			

Game meat intended for Human Consumption

* Available LitSupport (TIMG) - (03) 9621 1333 6767

Game meat intended for Pet Food

Available from CSIRO Publishing – 1300 788 000

Copies of all Legislation and Standards can also be downloaded from the PrimeSafe website.

18. DEFINITIONS

Bleeding

The severing of the large blood vessels in the region of the neck or throat to allow the free flow of blood from the carcass as soon as possible after death.

Dressing

The process of removing the head, hide, skin, viscera, genital organs, urinary bladder and feet from game animals if not removed during field dressing.

Field Dressing

The removal of internal organs other than the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys, and may include other parts such as feet up to the carpal and tarsal joints, and kangaroo tails and heads, provided the procedure does not substantially increase the risk of contamination.

Game Meat Field Harvester (Shooter)

A person who is approved by PrimeSafe to harvest, bleed and field dress wild game animal carcasses for human consumption or pet food.

Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises)

A place or vehicle that processes or packages game meat and/or game meat products.

Game Meat Processing Facility (Field Depot: Premises / Vehicle)

A place or vehicle in which wild game animal carcasses are held temporarily under refrigeration pending transport to a Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises) or a Pet Meat Processing Facility. This may also include the meat carrying compartment of a vehicle used to transport wild game animal carcasses under refrigeration to a Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises) or a Pet Meat Processing Facility.

Game Meat Processing Facility (Harvest Vehicle)

A vehicle used in the field harvesting of wild game animals and to transport wild game animal carcasses to a Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises), a Game Meat Processing Facility (Field Depot) or to a Pet Meat Processing Facility.

Harvesting

The killing of wild game animals, their identification, bleeding, field dressing, cooling, hygienic storage, and transport up to the point of their presentation at a Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises), a Game Meat Processing Facility (Field Depot: Premises / Vehicle) or at a Pet Meat Processing Facility (Knackery).

Meat Inspector

A person approved by PrimeSafe for the purposes of inspection of wild game and the control of hygiene in relation to them in the field and at a Game Meat Processing Facility (Premises).

Meat Transport Vehicle (MTV)

A vehicle used for the conveyance of any carcass or meat intended for human consumption.

Pet Meat Processing Facility (Knackery)

A facility (place) that slaughters or receives deceased horses, donkey or other consumable animals, including game not intended for human consumption.

Wild Game

An animal living in a wild state which includes deer, rabbit, hare, kangaroo, pig and goat.

19. FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact PrimeSafe on (03) 9685 7333 or via email to info@primesafe.vic.gov.au to obtain an application form or assistance, including determining the appropriate licence and fee for your proposed activities.