

Information for commercial harvesters and recreational hunters about processing wild-caught game deer

Changes made in March 2018 permit commercially harvested wild deer to be processed in a PrimeSafe licensed meat processing facility for human or pet consumption.

Further changes made in December 2019 permit recreational hunters to have wild deer processed in an unlicensed meat processing facility.

WHEN CAN WILD DEER BE HARVESTED AND PROCESSED?

Under the *Wildlife Act 1975* and its subordinate legislation there are a number of circumstances in which wild deer can be harvested and a number of ways in which the carcasses can be used.

Additional requirements under the *Meat Industry Act 1993* or interstate legislation may apply to deer carcasses taken for commercial processing.

Commercial harvesting of deer from private land (wild, non-farmed)

All deer (except Hog Deer) are unprotected on private property in Victoria under certain conditions.

A landowner, or person authorised by the landowner, may humanely destroy deer (except Hog Deer) on their property.

The deer carcasses can be used for personal consumption.

Alternatively, deer carcasses can be taken to a facility licensed by PrimeSafe for commercial processing for pet food or inedible rendering.

The deer carcasses can also be taken to a facility licensed by PrimeSafe for commercial processing for human consumption.

More information, including what you must know before destroying deer on private property, is available from the Game Management Authority (GMA). Visit the [GMA website](#) or call 136 186.



Recreational hunting on public and private land

A person holding a relevant game licence from the GMA may take wild deer from private land (with the permission of the landowner) or from public land, for personal consumption.

Recent changes allow recreational hunters to have deer carcasses processed by an unlicensed meat processing facility for the hunter's personal consumption. These facilities are not licensed by PrimeSafe and are not regulated for safety or hygiene. Recreational hunters should ensure that any unlicensed meat processing facility used to process deer carcasses has sufficient practices in place to manage food safety and hygiene.

Deer carcasses taken by recreational harvesters cannot be processed in any meat processing facility that processes game or other meat into products available for sale.

Hunters can find further information [here](#) to help them minimise the food safety risks associated with harvesting, field dressing, transporting, storing and handling game meat before it gets to a meat processing facility or their own home.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IF I WANT TO HARVEST DEER TO BE PROCESSED FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES?

As a harvester, in addition to ensuring that you have the appropriate permissions to harvest wild deer, you should also be mindful of food safety standards that may apply if you want to supply deer carcasses to a commercial processor.

These requirements will differ depending on the end use of the carcass and whether it will be processed in Victoria or interstate.

Further information about commercially harvesting wild deer can be found on the [PrimeSafe](#) website or by calling PrimeSafe on (03) 9685 7333.

Supplying wild deer to be processed in Victoria for human consumption

Wild deer intended to be processed for human consumption will need to be harvested in accordance with the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Wild Game Meat for Human Consumption (AS4464:2007).

Only a person approved (in writing) by PrimeSafe can supply carcasses or meat from wild deer to a PrimeSafe licensed game meat processing facility.

A game meat processing facility may be a vehicle, a fixed or mobile field depot, or a facility that processes or packages game meat products for human consumption.

Further details on how to apply for PrimeSafe approval can be found on the [PrimeSafe website](#) or by calling (03) 9685 7333.

Vehicles used in the harvest, storage, processing or transport of wild deer for human consumption, including game harvest vehicles and mobile field depots, will also need to be licensed by PrimeSafe. An exemption is available for vehicles already licensed for this purpose in another state or territory.

Supplying wild deer to be processed in Victoria for pet food

Wild deer intended to be processed for pet food will need to be harvested in accordance with the Standard for the Hygienic Production of Pet Meat (AS4841:2006).

A PrimeSafe licensed pet food processing facility can only accept carcasses or meat from wild deer from an approved harvester.

Vehicles used during the harvest of wild deer for pet food will need to be licensed by PrimeSafe if they are used to sell, store for sale or prepare for sale, deer carcasses. This is unless the vehicles are already licensed for that purpose in another state or territory.

Supplying wild deer to be processed for inedible rendering

Wild deer can be taken to a PrimeSafe licensed facility for inedible rendering by an approved harvester. No food safety requirements apply to the harvesting or transport of wild deer for this purpose.

Supplying wild deer to an interstate facility for processing

The Victorian Government recognises that many game businesses operate across state borders. If you are harvesting wild deer in Victoria to supply to a processing facility in another state, you should contact the food safety regulator in that jurisdiction to understand their regulatory requirements.

Harvesters operating or supplying vehicles that are licensed in another state do not need to be approved by PrimeSafe. However, you should contact the food safety regulator in that jurisdiction to understand their regulatory requirements.

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ISBN 978-1-76090-154-7

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