



Photo credit: Andrew Whitmarsh

DEER MANAGER RESOURCE PACK

COMPILED BY BRIGHTON & HOVE FOOD PARTNERSHIP IN COLLABORATION WITH THE
BRITISH DEER SOCIETY



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Photo credit: Remy van Haarlem

INTRODUCTION

This resource pack is designed for those managing or culling deer as part of landscape protection and restoration. It brings together everything you need to know and consider before selling venison directly, from the key requirements and regulations to practical resources that can help you set up a new business or expand an existing one.

Developed in collaboration with the British Deer Society and informed by the experience of deer managers in the South East of England, this pack offers clear guidance for direct sales, underpinned by responsible deer management and a commitment to protecting the landscape. It also highlights the importance of maintaining high standards of food safety and building consumer trust, both of which are essential when selling venison directly to the public.

This resource supports individuals, conservation organisations and large land managers nationwide in addressing the impacts of unbalanced deer populations on local landscapes.

SETTING UP A FOOD BUSINESS AND KEY LEGISLATION

If you plan to sell venison directly to customers, you must register your food business with your local authority before you begin selling. Registration can be completed online through the official [Register a Food Business portal](#).

Once registered, a Food Standards inspector will usually arrange a visit to discuss food hygiene requirements and help ensure your business is operating safely and legally.

The [Food Standards Agency \(FSA\)](#) provides detailed guidance for anyone starting a food business, including clear information on legal requirements, food safety responsibilities, and the practical steps involved in selling food directly to the public in the UK. You can read the full guidance here on [Starting a Food Business Guidance](#).

Food Businesses must follow legislation designed to ensure food sold for human consumption is safe to eat. Key legislation includes:

- [The Food Safety Act 1990 \(amended\)](#)
- The General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002
- The General Food Regulations 2004
- [Regulation \(EC\) 853/2004](#)

The Food Standards Agency provides [guidance for primary producers and food businesses on the hygienic production of wild game](#). This sets out the food safety and hygiene requirements for hunting and supplying wild game for human consumption in England and Wales.



Photo credit: Daniel Simson

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

To supply venison into the food chain via the [Wild Venison Network](#) and [Sussex Grazed](#), deer managers should hold:

- **DSC1 – Deer Stalking Certificate Level 1** (Required)
- **Large Game Meat Hygiene Certificate** (Required)

The following are strongly recommended to demonstrate best practice and is beneficial to consumer confidence:

- **DSC2 – Deer Stalking Certificate Level 2**
- **Trained Hunter Status** (included in DSC2 from April 1st 2021)

The BDS have created a useful [summary sheet for selling and supplying venison](#) that summarises what is needed to supply to the food chain under different scenarios.

Additional relevant certification

[British Quality Wild Venison](#)

Please also see the British Quality Wild Venison Standard, for further guidance on specifications for carcass production and venison traceability throughout the supply chain. For the full standard, click the title above.

SELLING THROUGH THE OPEN FOOD NETWORK UK

The [Open Food Network UK](#) is an open source platform that helps producers sell food directly to customers, supporting a fairer, more local and sustainable food system. They have an aim to make it easier for consumers to access high-quality, sustainable wild venison, while supporting responsible deer management and local producers.

At Sussex Grazed, we use The Open Food Network UK for our direct sales. So we've produced a helpful resource on [getting started with Open Food Network UK](#).

SUPPLYING SUSSEX GRAZED

We are looking for farmers, graziers and deer managers, based in Sussex who are managing their landscape for habitat conservation and nature recovery. If you want to be able to sell directly to consumers, see our [resource on how to get involved](#).

VENISON BUTCHERS IN SUSSEX

This map of the facilities that are currently offering contract butchery for venison within Sussex. You can view them all here: [Google mymaps](#).

[Calcot Farm](#)

Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AL

[Middle Farm](#)

West Firle, East Sussex, BN8 6LJ

[Goodtrees Farm](#)

Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 7EB

[Knepp- Wild Range Meat](#)

Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8NN

[S H Handson Family Butchers](#)

Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0PW

To be included in this list please email sussexgrazed@bhfood.org.uk

We have compiled a [small selection of deer butchery course options](#) in the South East for deer managers looking to develop their butchery skills.

WILD VENISON STANDARDS

(The British Deer Society & The Open Food Network UK)

Standard Required

The above standards were developed by the British Deer Society (BDS), who are committed to supporting ethical, sustainable and transparent food systems. They ensure that wild venison is sourced, processed and sold to the highest standards of food safety, traceability and environmental responsibility. While written with the Open Food Network UK in mind, these standards should apply wherever venison is sold to demonstrate responsible deer management and maintain consumer confidence. The standards are presented as either required or recommended. For the more information click the title above.

Required

1. Be a locally registered food business
2. Keep accurate and up-to-date records
3. Be an Independent Business
4. Provide Wild Venison sourced from the open landscape or from deer ethically and sustainably managed deer parks
5. Labelling and Consumer Transparency
6. Scotland Businesses Only- Venison Dealer's License

Recommended

1. Sustainable packaging
2. Qualifications & Training (more on this in the next section)

Photo credit: Sophie Robinson



VENISON DIRECTORIES

Wild Venison Network

Currently the Open Food Network UK has a network of all of the producers supplying wild venison across the country. The Wild Venison Network aims to increase sales of wild venison. They are working to build and promote a network of deer stalkers who process game for sale locally to the final consumer or to local retail establishments who directly supply to the final consumer (i.e. butchers, restaurants, schools, hospitals, etc).

Wild venison producers can join this network for free by filling in [this form](#) where you can also find more information.

Sussex and Hampshire Wild Venison Directory- Our South Downs

This is a resource hosted by Our South Downs to help individuals and businesses find local, wild venison. The directory was created by partners of the [Fair Game project](#); a multi-partner, award-winning project led by the University of Exeter, with [Natural England](#), [The South Downs National Park Authority](#), [The National Trust](#), [The British Deer Society](#) and others. The directory forms part of the Fair Game project legacy to help address the overpopulation of Fallow deer by signposting potential customers to suppliers of wild venison in Sussex and Hampshire.

Any Wild venison supplier can be added to the directory by [signing up to our South Downs](#) as a 'Venison Supplier'.

Photo credit: Daniel Simson



High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty- Buy local

The High Weald National Landscape website includes an interactive map of local food suppliers, where you can register as a venison supplier to be showcased. You can sign up by completing [the registration form](#). The website also offers a range of useful resources, including a mailing list, a map of communal deer carcass hubs, and a frequently asked questions section.



Photo credit: Remy van Haarlem

EatGame

EatGame is a brand that promotes the benefits of eating healthy, sustainable British game meat. They are supported by the [British Association for Shooting and Conservation](#). They have a national map of venison suppliers. To get your business listed, email enquiries@eatgame.co.uk.



Photo credit: Lizzie Beard

EatWild

EatWild believe that wild meat should become a popular choice for consumers. They highlight its versatility, leanness, high protein content, and distinctive flavour profile. To be included on their 'wild meat stockist' page, email info@wildmeat.co. Or you can fill out [this form](#), to register.



Photo credit: John Plant

See [this resource](#) for additional directories that local producers can join to increase their visibility and reach new customers.

With thanks to

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Mark Smith, High Weald National Landscape Partnership

Nick Weir, The Open Food Network UK

Sophie Paterson, The Open Food Network UK

Virtuous Venison

For more information please contact sussexgrazed@bhfood.org.uk

Visit: <https://bhfood.org.uk/sussex-grazed/>

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