



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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the british.
deer society
Together for Deer



**SUSSEX
GRAZED**



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 key information to consider before selling venison directly, including legal requirements, regulations and practical resources to 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 South East 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 at least 28 days before you begin trading. Registration can be completed online through the official [Register a Food Business portal](#).

Once your business is registered, a local-authority food safety officer will normally contact you to arrange an inspection 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. Read the [FSA's full guidance](#) on starting a food business.

Food businesses must comply with legislation designed to ensure that food sold for human consumption is safe to eat. Key legislation includes:

- [The Food Safety Act 1990 \(as amended\)](#)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 178/2002](#) also known as the General Food Law Regulation
- [The General Food Regulations 2004](#)
- [Regulation \(EC\) 853/2004](#)

Read the Food Standards Agency's [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 build consumer confidence:

- **DSC2 – Deer Stalking Certificate Level 2**
- **Trained Hunter status, gained through DSC2 for candidates registering from 1 April 2021, or through another recognised standalone qualification**

The BDS has produced a useful [summary sheet](#) explaining the requirements for selling and supplying venison under different scenarios.

Additional relevant certification

[British Quality Wild Venison](#)

See the [British Quality Wild Venison Standard](#) for further guidance on carcass-production specifications and venison traceability throughout the supply chain.

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. Through its partnership with the British Deer Society, the Wild Venison Network aims to make **high-quality, sustainable wild venison more accessible** while supporting responsible deer management and local producers.

At Sussex Grazed, we use The Open Food Network UK for our direct sales. We have created a [practical guide to help you get started with the platform](#).

SUPPLYING SUSSEX GRAZED

We are looking for Sussex-based farmers, graziers and deer managers who manage land for habitat conservation and nature recovery. If you would like to sell directly to consumers through Sussex Grazed, read our guide for [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 My Maps](#).

[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 selection of deer-butchery courses](#) in South East England for deer managers looking to develop their skills.

WILD VENISON STANDARDS

(British Deer Society and The Open Food Network UK)

Standard Required

The above standards were developed by the [British Deer Society \(BDS\)](#), which is 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. Although developed for the Wild Venison Network on [The Open Food Network UK](#), these standards provide useful guidance for anyone selling wild venison, helping to demonstrate responsible deer management and maintain consumer confidence.

The standards are presented as either required or recommended. For more information, read the full [Wild Venison Standards](#).

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 parks managed ethically and sustainably
5. Labelling and Consumer Transparency
6. Scotland Businesses Only- Venison Dealer's License

Recommended

1. Sustainable packaging
2. Qualifications & Training

Photo credit: Sophie Robinson



VENISON DIRECTORIES

Wild Venison Network

The Wild Venison Network helps customers find 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 and managers who process venison for local sale, either directly to consumers or through local retailers and hospitality businesses.

Wild venison producers can join this network for free by completing [the registration form](#), which also provides further 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 in 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 National Landscape: Buy local

The High Weald National Landscape website includes an interactive map of local food suppliers, with a venison filter. Venison suppliers can apply to be included 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

Eat Game

Eat Game promotes healthy, sustainable British game meat and is supported by the [British Association for Shooting and Conservation](#). Its website includes a national directory of game suppliers. To get your business listed, email enquiries@eatgame.co.uk.



Photo credit: Lizzie Beard

EatWild

EatWild believes 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. You can also complete the registration form. 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

Andrea Barden, The British Deer Society
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Chris Hannon, South Downs National Park Authority
Daniel and Jodie Simson
Mark Smith, High Weald National Landscape Partnership
Nick Weir, The Open Food Network UK
Sophie Paterson, The Open Food Network UK

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

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

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