

Selling wild venison- A summary of the stalkers exemption

This summary explains the food-hygiene exemption that may allow stalkers to supply small quantities of wild venison directly to final consumers or eligible local retailers without using an Approved Game Handling Establishment.

- [FSA guidance on the hygienic production of wild game](#)
This is the detailed guidance. The most relevant parts are sections 2.2 and 2.3.
- [Guidance for primary producers and food business operators on wild game](#)
This is the main government page linking to the guidance and supporting documents

Who can use the exemption?

The FSA guidance explicitly says that “an individual who shoots game alone” is considered a primary producer, alongside members of hunting parties and shooting estates. So an individual stalker carrying out a cull for habitat protection can potentially use the exemption.

What can they do?

If one or two stalkers are culling deer for habitat protection, and they have legally shot the deer themselves, they can potentially:

- prepare the deer into venison themselves
- sell small quantities of that venison directly to members of the public
- do so without the venison having to go through an Approved Game Handling Establishment (AGHE)
- sell directly to consumers anywhere in England — the consumer doesn't have to be local
- also supply local butchers, restaurants, farm shops etc., provided those businesses sell directly to the final consumer.

What requirements still apply?

Once they skin, butcher, cut or otherwise prepare the carcass, it becomes **wild game meat** rather than simply wild game. At that point, they are not exempt from the general food hygiene requirements.

They would therefore need to:

- register as a food business with their local authority
- have appropriate hygienic facilities for processing
- maintain the cold chain
- have a food safety management system based on HACCP principles
- maintain traceability
- ensure the meat is safe
- ideally have appropriate wild-game hygiene training.

What they are exempt from is the more stringent Regulation 853/2004 approval requirements, provided they meet the conditions of the exemption, most importantly, that the supply is small quantities and is direct to the final consumer or an eligible local retailer.

What do 'small quantities and 'local' mean?

The FSA says “small quantities” because demand for wild game from final consumers and local retailers is considered limited on its own, they believe there isn't enough of a market to put a number/cap on this currently. It therefore doesn't give you a simple number such as “X deer per year”.

For supply to a retailer, that retailer needs to be 'local' which could be the stalker's own local authority, a neighbouring local authority, or within 30 miles of the boundary of their local authority. Direct sales to final consumers aren't subject to that same geographical restriction.

Does the reason for the cull matter?

The purpose of the cull isn't considered as part of the exemption, so it is not only culled for habitat recovery or for biodiversity > recreational hunting.