



February 1, 2024

DONATION OF WILD GAME MEAT

This time of year brings a lot of inquiries regarding the donation of wild game meat to charitable organizations. The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is issuing this letter to explain and clarify the legal and regulatory requirements regarding the donation of wild game animals and/or wild game meat. Many organizations have reached out to ODA and asked if private individuals who possess legally obtained wild game meat, can donate such meat to food banks or other charitable organizations. While the gesture of sharing with our local communities is well appreciated, wild game which has not been inspected and processed according to the regulations, cannot be donated to food banks or other charitable organizations.

The Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) are the laws which govern the ODA and were put in place to assure a safe and wholesome food supply. ORS 603.045 describes the Custom slaughter and processing regulations, in part, *“as to protect the people of this state from the purchase, use, or consumption of uninspected or unwholesome meat or meat products.”* ORS 619.095 describes the legal requirements for Wild Game to be eligible for donation to Food Banks, or other charitable organizations. The donation of Wild Game requires that all wild game animals must be inspected to determine fitness for human consumption by employees of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, or the Department of the Oregon State Police.

The Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) 603-028-0845 through 603-028-0865 were developed to verify adherence with the legal requirements of ORS 603.045 and 619.095. The initial inspection for “fitness for human consumption” is determined by an examination of the animal carcass prior to processing, or if after processing, through the examination of the muscle tissue, heart, lungs, liver, spleen, mesentery and lymph nodes for discoloration, bruises, abscesses or other evidence of disease, and for excessive parasite lesions.

Wild game obtained by private individuals during hunting season are rarely presented for a “fitness for human consumption” evaluation at the time of harvesting, and therefore not eligible for charitable donations. These legally obtained animal are many times field dressed and skinned in the environment, and the internal offal not available for examination by a trained agency representative.

Wild game processed outside of a licensed establishment would also not be eligible for donation, even if the carcass was inspected by the appropriate agency prior to processing, as the game meat has to be processed in a licensed facility. It is our hope that the information provided above is helpful in determining which wild game products can be donated to – or accepted by charitable organizations.

If you have any further questions about accepting donated wild game meat, feel free to contact ODA Food Safety and Animal Health Program, at 503-986-4720.

A link to the Oregon Revised Statute can be found here:

https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors619.html

A link to the Oregon Administrative Rule, Division 28 can be found here:

https://oregon.public.law/rules/oar_chapter_603_division_28



DONATION OF WILD GAME: FLOW CHART



I legally obtained a deer and want to donate the meat to my food bank. Can I?



Was the animal inspected and tagged by ODFW or OSP immediately after harvest?

YES

NO



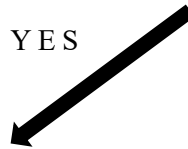
Was the animal (and tag) taken to a licensed game processing facility for processing (cut/wrap)?

Was the animal (including all offal) taken to ODFW or OSP for "fitness for human consumption" evaluation?"

YES



YES



No



Was the animal processed at a licensed facility and properly labeled?

Meat CANNOT BE DONATED.

NO



YES



Meat can be donated to Food Bank or other recognized non-profit or charity.