

Donating hunter-harvested deer in Minnesota

Minnesota deer hunters can donate deer carcasses or portions of carcasses for use in food shelves and feeding programs. To participate in the program, a hunter must have their deer processed at a Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture registered meat processing plant. Only entire carcasses can be presented for donation. Cut and wrapped will not be accepted. Hunters have the option of donating all or a portion of their deer. To participate in the donation program, hunters and processors must adhere to specific standards designed to prevent food-borne illness:

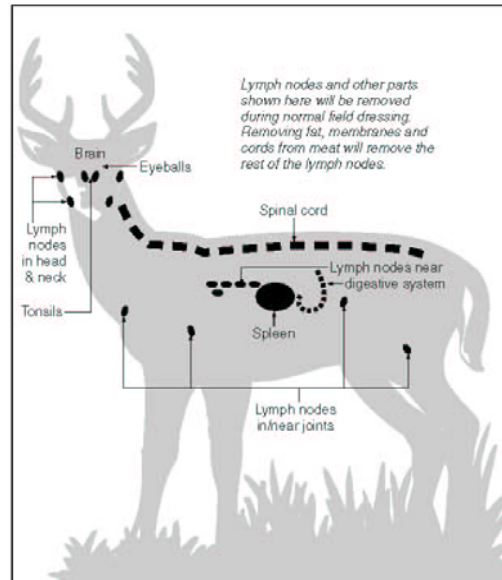
- Hunters must sign a form indicating their willingness to donate the deer and their adherence to the field dressing procedures outlined in this brochure.
- Processors will only accept carcasses for donation that are:
 - Free from signs of illness
 - Field dressed with the hide intact
 - Free of visible decomposition or contamination
 - Properly identified with a Minnesota DNR registration tag
- Processors will reject deer for the donation program that appear to have been mishandled in any way.
- Cooperators are working on ways to defray processing costs but hunters should be aware that they may be responsible for processing fees.

Website addresses for brochure cooperators:

Minnesota Deer Hunters Association: www.mndeerhunters.com
 Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry: www.fhfh.org
 Sportsmen Against Hunger: www.safariclubfoundation.org
 Bluffland Whitetails Association: www.blufflandwhitetails.org
 Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture: www.mda.state.mn.us
 Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources: www.dnr.state.mn.us
 University of Minnesota Extension: www.extension.umn.edu

Chronic Wasting Disease Information for Hunters

While current research suggests that Chronic Wasting Disease is not a food safety issue, hunters should still take precautions designed to minimize exposure to tissues that could potentially carry the causative agent.



- Do not shoot, handle, or consume any animal that is acting abnormal or appears to be sick.
- Wear latex or rubber gloves when field dressing your deer. Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing is completed.
- For deer that are not going to be donated, bone out the meat. Avoid cutting through the brain or spinal cord (backbone). Minimize handling of brain and spinal tissue.
- Avoid consuming brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils and lymph nodes. Normal field dressing coupled with boning out a carcass will remove most, if not all, of these body parts.

“Field to Fork”

Field Dressing Deer with Food Safety in Mind



Proper Field Dressing

Photos courtesy of Digital Bucket

Improper handling of the deer can contaminate the carcass with potentially harmful bacteria and compromise food safety and quality. By implementing a few precautionary measures during field dressing, the hunter can help ensure the final product is fit to consume.

1. Place the deer on its back and spread the hind legs. Support the carcass in this position by using rocks or sticks. **All hunters should wear gloves!!**



2. Cut along the midline of the belly from the breastbone to the anus. Avoid cutting into the intestines and stomach by turning the knife blade up during the cutting process. Slowly remove the skin from the incision.



3. Cut through the sternum to open the body cavity surrounding the lungs and heart.



4. After opening the body cavity, reach inside and begin cutting the diaphragm, lungs, and heart away from the body wall. Remove the internal organs all in one step. Take care to avoid puncturing or tearing the stomach and intestines during this process.



5. To promote cooling of the carcass, place a stick between the ribs to prop open the body cavity and allow airflow.



Transportation and Processing

- Drag the deer with the back or side down to minimize contamination of the meat. If possible, drag the deer on a tarp or use a deer cart.
- Keep the carcass cool during transport to the locker plant.
- Transport the carcass to the locker plant as soon as possible. If the carcass cannot be taken directly to the plant after harvest, it must be stored at a temperature of less than 41° F.
- Rinse the carcass with cold water prior to storage to remove debris and bacterial contamination.
- When transporting the deer in a vehicle, pack the body cavity with ice to promote additional cooling.
- Allow for adequate air circulation around the carcass and keep it out of direct sunlight and warm temperatures during transportation and storage.

Proper refrigeration and handling is necessary to prevent decomposition of the carcass and minimize the growth of potentially harmful bacteria. This will reduce the risk of food-borne illness due to consumption of contaminated meat.