

Custom Slaughter & Deer Processing: Basic Requirements

July 2021

Purpose

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA) is providing guidance for those interested in opening a new custom slaughter or deer processing facility. Full regulatory requirements may be found under the statutes and regulations, Tennessee Meat and Poultry Inspection Act, Tennessee Comprehensive Rules and Regulations Chapter 0080-04-14, and the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 21, Chapter 117, Parts A and B.

The basic requirements are summarized below. **This document is not legal advice, nor is it a substitute for the full requirements set forth in the above referenced laws and regulations as they may be amended from time to time.** Please contact department personnel with any questions.

Facilities & Equipment

Grounds

The area around the facility must be maintained to protect against possible contamination.

Grounds must not constitute an attractant, breeding place, or harborage for pests. This requires operators to remove litter and waste and cut the surrounding weeds or grass.

Maintenance equipment must be stored in a manner to not attract or harbor pests.

Grounds maintenance includes surrounding roads, yards, and parking lots.

Adequate drainage, waste treatment, and waste disposal systems must be provided and maintained to prevent contamination to food by seepage, foot-borne filth, or providing a breeding place for pests.

Plant Construction

Physical Facility

Facility must be a suitable size for its purpose. Aisles and areas between workstations must be spaced to allow for easy movement and must be unobstructed.

Floors, walls, and ceilings shall be smooth, nonabsorbent, clean and in good repair.

Adequate floor drainage must be provided in all areas where floors are subject to flooding-type cleaning or where normal operations release or discharge water or other liquid waste onto the floor.

Overhead fixtures, ducts, and pipes shall be recessed or otherwise contained to minimize dust collection. Water and steam lines shall be wrapped or insulated to prevent condensation from dripping on foods or work surfaces.

Sewage lines shall not be installed over work surfaces, areas where food is stored, or where containers of food are placed.

Lighting, Ventilation, Doors & Windows

Adequate lighting shall be provided in all areas of the plant.

All light bulbs, skylights, or other glass fixtures in processing areas shall be shatter-resistant or protected with shields to prevent food contamination if broken.

Ventilation must be adequate to minimize condensation, odors, or vapors, including steam and noxious fumes.

The plant shall be effectively screened with self-closing doors or other protection against entrance of pests including birds, animals, insects, and rodents.

Plumbing

Water Supply and Sewage Disposal

All water used in the plant operation shall be from an approved source and free of any cross connections.

Hot and cold running water under pressure tempered by means of a mixing valve or combination faucet shall be provided in all areas where food is processed, and equipment is cleaned.

The plant shall have an approved sewage disposal system installed and maintained in compliance with all state laws and regulations.

Handwashing and Toilet Facilities

Hand sinks with hot and cold running water tempered by means of a mixing valve or combination faucet shall be located in food processing areas and toilet rooms.

Sinks shall be kept clean and in good repair.

Each sink location shall be supplied with soap and disposable hand towels or a hand drying device, and a covered waste basket.

Sinks used for equipment cleaning cannot be used for hand washing.

Toilet room design and equipment shall comply with all state laws and regulations.

All toilet room doors shall be self-closing and not open directly into areas where food is exposed.

Pest Control

Pets, including guard dogs and cats, shall be excluded from plants.

Garbage and any offal shall be conveyed, stored, and disposed of in a manner that prevents food contamination and pest attraction.

Chemical pest control application shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the manufacturer's directions so as not contaminate food or food-contact surfaces.

A person shall not apply a pesticide in a building used for processing, packing, or otherwise handling or storing food except under the direct supervision of a person licensed to apply pesticides in accordance with General Provision 62-21-124 (a)4, Chapter 21 of the Tennessee Application of Pesticide Act of 1978.

No chemicals for pest control shall be used in the plant except those specifically approved for use in food establishments.

Equipment

All equipment and utensils shall be of sanitary design, easily cleanable, and in good repair.

Equipment shall be constructed and maintained to prevent food contamination by lubricants, fuel, metal fragments, or other contaminants.

There shall be enough space around, under, and behind large pieces of equipment to allow cleaning and to prevent accumulations of dirt and litter.

Each freezer and cold storage compartment must be fitted with an indicating thermometer, temperature-measuring device, or temperature recording device.

Personnel

Personnel with any communicable disease or with boils, sores, or infected wounds on their hands or arms are prohibited from handling foods.

Employees are required to wash their hands before starting work, after each absence from or changing of workstations, and as often as necessary on the job.

Employees must wash their hands after eating, smoking, or using the toilet.

Eating, drinking, and use of tobacco shall be prohibited except in designated areas outside of processing and storage rooms.

Personnel are required to wear clean outer garments and hair restraints during processing.

Processes

Raw Materials

Roadkill shall not be processed unless in compliance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 70-4-114.

Only farm-slaughtered animals, licensed facility-slaughter animals, or lawfully harvested deer may be processed.

Carcasses and cuts must be marked in a manner that allows the animal owner to be identified.

Ingredients must come from an approved source. For example, spices and cheese added to meat must come from a facility duly licensed by the appropriate local, state, or federal authority. Fat that is added to meat must come from a facility inspected or licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Deer Processing

Deer carcasses shall be examined by the processor immediately upon submission of the carcass for processing.

The processor shall reject any carcass when evidence of spoilage is observed or suspected which would result in probable unwholesomeness of the meat.

No deer carcass shall be accepted if harvested from a quarantined area as designated by the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA) or other appropriate state agency.

All TWRA requirements for deer carcass transportation and reporting must be followed.

Storage

Storage and transportation of food must be under conditions that will protect against allergen, biological, chemical, and physical contamination of food.

Carcasses not processed immediately shall be protected from contamination and stored at 45°F.

Processed meats shall be protected from contamination and stored at 45°F or hard frozen.

Adequate coolers and or freezers with accurate thermometers shall be provided to store the carcasses and meats in a sanitary condition.

Packaging

Food packaging materials must be safe and suitable for use.

Single-service materials, such a packaging, must be stored and handled in a manner that protects against contamination.

Each individual package of meat must be marked "NOT FOR SALE."

Sanitation

Adequate sanitation measures must be used during manufacturing, packing, and holding of food, including operations directed to receiving, inspecting, transporting, and segregating.

Utensils and equipment shall be effectively cleaned and sanitized after use and as often as necessary throughout the day.

Equipment shall be effectively cleaned and sanitized when animals of a different species are processed. It is recommended that sinks with hot and cold running water for washing and sanitizing equipment be installed to accommodate the largest piece of equipment to be hand washed.

Cleaning materials, detergents, and sanitizing solutions shall be used according to label directions.

Cleaning materials, detergents, and sanitizing solutions shall be properly maintained, labeled, and stored consistent with label requirements.

Sales

No meat may be sold at retail unless the facility is also licensed and inspected by the USDA.

Questions

For questions concerning this document or the application process, please contact the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Food and Dairy Section at 615-837-5193 or newfood.business@tn.gov.