

Game Animal Dinners

COMMUNITY EVENTS SPONSORED BY CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Receiving donated wild animals

Game animal dinners are community events where lawfully taken wild animals are donated to charitable organizations and are cooked and served to the public. For profit organizations cannot sponsor these dinners.

Many types of wild animals are lawfully hunted for sport and food in Minnesota. Some common examples include venison, pheasant and fish.

Before accepting donated meat, ensure that it:

- Was lawfully taken.
- Is pure wild animal meat (no sausage or ground meat).
- Was eviscerated within two hours after harvest.
- Was properly cleaned, stored, and processed at a Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) licensed facility. See [Donating hunter-harvested deer in Minnesota](#) for a list of participating venison processors.
- The MDA licensed facility must have written standard operating procedures to eliminate the possibility of cross-contamination from wild animal processing to other food.

Record-keeping

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires that the recipient of a donated wild animal obtain a receipt from the donor at the time of transfer, and

retain this receipt in possession. The donor must prepare this receipt containing the following information:

- Name and address of donor.
- Name and address of recipient.
- Date of transfer.
- Description of gift, including number and species.
- License number under which the animal was taken.

Cook thoroughly

Temperature and time are the most important factors for controlling foodborne pathogens in food. Cook meat from wild animals to 165°F or above for 15 seconds.

Chronic wasting disease

[Chronic wasting disease \(CWD\)](#) is a fatal brain disease found in deer, moose and elk, caused by an abnormally shaped protein, called a prion. Prions have not been found in muscle meat, even in infected deer. Research is ongoing to evaluate the risk of transmission, if any, to humans.

The following precautions should be taken with harvested deer, moose and elk:

- Only boneless cuts of meat should be used.
- Meat should be processed without splitting the backbone.

Certain parts where prions are known to accumulate should not be eaten, including deer and elk brains, spinal cords, eyes, spleen, tonsils or lymph glands.

Resources

[Minnesota Department of Health Food
Business Safety
\(www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety)

[Donating hunter-harvested deer in
Minnesota
\(www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/deer/donation/index.html\)](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/deer/donation/index.html)

[Chronic Wasting Disease \(CWD\)
\(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/cwd/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/cwd/index.html)

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