



PRIMARY PROCESSOR STANDARDS
FOR
SCOTTISH QUALITY WILD VENISON ASSURANCE SCHEME

Reviewed **April 2009**

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Certification to these Standards does not imply, where reference has been made to legislative requirements within the Standards, that all aspects of the referenced legislation has been complied with. The applicant is at all times responsible for meeting the necessary relevant legislation. Certification is granted and maintained on this understanding.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document describes the standards and practices that must be met and maintained for the primary processing of venison in order to fulfil the requirements of the Certification Scheme for Scottish Quality Wild Venison (SQWV). It should be read in conjunction with the SFQC Scheme Regulations which describe the operating procedures of the Scheme.

The Standards will be kept under regular review to confirm accuracy, relevance to current practice and market requirements.

The Standards are issued to participants in, and those who apply to join, the Scheme, to the Assessors and to members of the Board and TAC of SQWV.

The normal frequency of audits shall be nominally bi-annually unless otherwise specified by the Technical Advisory Committee.

If additional audits are requested by the TAC due to the nature of non-compliances, these additional costs are liable to be borne by the individual member.

Use of marks.

The SQWV scheme mark may be used on marketing materials by approved scheme members.

It should only be used on product, box labels and invoices where the product meets the requirement of the SQWV scheme.

Product Sourcing

Any sourced meat marked SQWV must have been culled on an approved SQWV site.

2.0 PRODUCT SPECIFICATION

2.1 Product Specification for Carcases

2.1.1 This specification applies to carcases from producers that are approved members of the Scottish Quality Wild Venison (SQWV) Assurance Scheme. Animals must be accompanied by all relevant documentation.

2.1.2 The carcase must be clearly identified using an SQWV traceability label.

2.2 Product Specification for Bone-In/Boneless Primal Cuts

2.2.1 This specification applies to bone-in/boneless primal cuts derived from SQWV carcases which the producer must be able to demonstrate comply with the product specification given in section 2.1 of these Standards.

2.2.2 The outer surface of the primal must be free from excessive bruises, blemishes, cuts and any trimming resulting from meat inspection.

2.2.3 The primals must be free from any abnormal odour.

2.2.4 On despatch, cuts should be identified in line with current labelling requirements and also include the following information:

Name and address or mark of supplier;
Content of package - name of primal(s), number and/or weight;
Slaughter date or packing date;

to be applied as appropriate to outer package, individual cuts or listed on despatch note.

2.3 Product Specification for Boneless Manufacturing Meat (destined for further processing i.e. mincing/dicing)

2.3.1 All meat must be sourced from carcases from producers that are approved members of the SQWV Assurance Scheme. The meat must comply with all aspects of boneless primal specification.

2.3.2 Where appropriate, meat must conform with Visual Lean (VL) specification as labelled.

3. PRIMARY PROCESSING STANDARDS

3.1 Location and EC Standards

3.1.1 Game primary processing plants must conform to the requirements described in EC 852/2004 and EC 853/2004 or as amended.

3.2 Transport/Unloading

3.2.1 All vehicles used for collection must be fit for purpose and easy to clean.

3.2.2 Internal walls, floors and ceilings must be smooth, impervious, clean and easy to clean and damage free.

3.2.3 Floor and wall junctions must be sealed.

- 3.2.4 All vehicles used to collect product must be collected, refrigerated and capable of maintaining product temperatures at below 7°C storage temperatures for the duration of the journey.
- 3.2.5 Records must be kept of storage temperatures.
- 3.2.6 All fully skinned carcasses must be transported using a rail system. All in-skin carcasses must, where possible and practicable, be transported using a rail system. **Heaping of carcasses must be avoided.**
- 3.2.7 Drivers handling primary processed game should wear clean protective clothing when handling product or product containers. Care shall be exercised at all stages to protect the product from possible contamination.

3.3 Dressing, Classification and Chilling

- 3.3.1 Carcasses must be clearly identified using the SQWV labelling system.
- 3.3.2 The sides must not be despatched or further processed until the deep muscle temperature is in the range 0°C to +7°C.
- 3.3.3 The chilling process must be demonstrable to the assessor and be verified by daily monitoring. Results must be documented and signed off by a nominated individual.
- 3.3.4 The chilling equipment and spacing of the sides must ensure a good drying airflow around the sides.
- 3.3.5 Conditions for despatch or further processing of carcasses should comply with all current legislation.

3.4 Meat Cutting

- 3.4.1 Meat cutting operations must be carried out in clean hygienic conditions and at sufficient speed to avoid any contamination of the meat or growth of undesirable micro-organisms. The temperature of the meat must not rise above +7°C during meat cutting operations.
- 3.4.2 The deep muscle temperature of a side or carcass must not exceed +7°C when cutting operations begin.
- 3.4.3 If the cuts/joints are to be de-boned the operation must be carried out with care, the bones must be removed cleanly and without making any unnecessary cuts into the muscle tissue.
- 3.4.4 After preparation the cuts/joints must be chilled to, and stored at, a deep muscle temperature in the range 0°C to +4°C.
- 3.4.5 Any damaged meat must be trimmed off and kept separate from SQWV approved meat.

3.5 Packaging

- 3.5.1 All packaging used must comply with current legislation as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 3.5.2 If primals are to be vacuum packed the operation should be carried out immediately after boning and trimming. The primal should be inserted into an appropriate sized pouch, and correctly sealed. If the primal is partially de-boned the bone edges should be covered with a suitable material to avoid pouch damage. Appropriate steps must be taken to screen the sealed pouches for signs of leaking.

- 3.5.3 The material used for product packaging must be new, clean, of food grade quality and must be strong enough to protect the meat during handling, storage, transit and, as appropriate, display. The material must not affect the organoleptic characteristics of the meat or transmit to it substances, in quantities, harmful to human health.
- 3.5.4 Materials used for non-returnable outer packaging must be new, clean and of food grade quality.
- 3.5.5 If returnable outer containers are used they must be made from non-absorbent materials, kept in good repair and they must be clean.
- 3.5.6 All packaging material must be stored off the floor, at least 45cm away from walls in clean, dry hygienic conditions.
- 3.5.7 The meat must be packaged in such a way as to effectively protect the meat during handling and transit and as appropriate enhance visual appearance on display at the point of sale.
- 3.5.8 Where possible and without detriment to the visual appearance of the retail package, absorbent material of food grade quality may be included in the pack to prevent the pooling of exudate.

3.6 Labelling

- 3.6.1 Where products meet the requirements of these standards, they must be labelled from point of acceptance as SQWV.
- 3.6.2 All product being sold as SQWV must be clearly identified by using the SQWV certification logo and all labelling must comply with current labelling legislation.
- 3.6.3 All printing and labelling must be done with non-toxic ink or adhesive and must not come into contact with the meat.
- 3.6.4 Retail packs of fresh, chilled meat must carry a “use by” date and recommendations for domestic storage which comply with relevant legislation. Evidence must be available to demonstrate how the “use by” date has been established from kill date.

3.7 Storage and Distribution

- 3.7.1 During storage, on loading and throughout the period of transit, the meat must be kept in clean, hygienic conditions and the deep muscle temperature maintained within the range 0°C to +4°C.
- 3.7.2 The meat must be transported in purpose built, clean refrigerated vehicles that are capable of maintaining the deep muscle temperature of the meat within the ranges specified above throughout the period of transit.
- 3.7.3 Cuts/carcases must not be allowed to come into contact with vehicle floors during loading, transit and unloading.
- 3.7.4 Boxed product must not be transported in the same vehicle as unwrapped carcass meat unless the boxes are adequately protected.
- 3.7.5 Heaping of carcasses must be avoided.

4.0 TRACEABILITY

4.1 Full traceability must be demonstrated on all meat (approved and non-approved) from point of dispatch or sale back to the original animal or group of animals.

4.2 Boneless and Bone-In Primals

- a) All product on site must be traceable to defined production batch.
- b) Systems of traceability must be documented and allow full identification from box end through a batch recording mechanism to a defined production batch detailing date of production, date of kill and kill numbers.
- c) Product must be identified at all stages of process.
- d) Product designated as SQWV must be traceable to product complying with section 2.0 of these Standards.
- e) All carcasses must be fully identifiable with a minimum of kill date and producer membership number.
- f) Quarters must all be fully traceable by kill date and producer membership number as a minimum requirement.

4.3 Detained Carcasses

- a) Detained carcasses must be identified as detained and recorded within the documentation.

4.4 Meat Products, Preparations for Retail Packs, Wholesale

System of production must include:

- a) Details of raw materials by use of supplier batch codes.
- b) Component or dry ingredients must also be traceable.
- c) Any manufactured product labelled SQWV must comply with Section 2.0 of these Standards.
- d) Products designated as SQWV must contain only meat derived from SQWV primals, trims or carcasses.
- e) All products and packing materials must comply with current EC/UK legislation.
- f) Specifications should be in place.
- g) Batch traceability must be recorded.

5. CLEANING AND HYGIENE STANDARDS

5.1 Plant Fabrication

- 5.1.1 Walls/ceilings must be maintained as complete and undamaged washable surfaces to prevent the accumulation of dirt and dust, reduce condensation and mould growth.
- 5.1.2 Access must be available to false ceilings to assist cleaning and maintenance and allow monitoring of vermin activity.
- 5.1.3 Floors must be well drained, complete, maintained and appropriately washable.
- 5.1.4 If floor drains are open they must be covered by removable and cleanable grids.
- 5.1.5 Windows must be entire, weatherproof and equipped with fly screens if opened for ventilation.
- 5.1.6 External doors to raw material handling, preparation and storage areas must be complete, well fitted and easy to clean or able to prevent access by vermin.
- 5.1.7 Lighting must be adequate for all work areas.
- 5.1.8 All areas in which product is present must have lights with clean protective shatterproof coverings to minimise the risk of contamination.
- 5.1.9 All work areas must be free from foul smells, airborne dust and be appropriately ventilated.

5.2 General Cleaning and Hygiene Control

- 5.2.1 No refuse or waste materials, whether solid or liquid, must be allowed to accumulate except so far as may be unavoidable for the proper operation of the process. Waste materials should be removed from working areas at frequent intervals throughout the working day.
- 5.2.2 All parts of the premises and the equipment must be kept clean and tidy. Daily or more frequent cleaning is required in all working areas to ensure that they are maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- 5.2.3 Each plant must designate a single individual who is held responsible for the cleanliness of the plant.
- 5.2.4 Critical areas must be designated for specific attention as a part of a permanent sanitation schedule. The frequency of the cleaning required for each area including floors, equipment, utensils, walls and vehicles and the requirements for adequate cleaning must be clearly defined. Detergents, disinfectants, the means of application and the strength of the sanitiser must be specified. The procedures must be in writing and used as a checklist for hygiene maintenance and control.
- 5.2.5 Detergents, disinfectants, sanitisers and other chemicals employed in the cleaning and sanitising routines must be approved for use in food processing establishments, safe to use and effective for their intended purpose. They must be used in such a way that the products are not adversely affected. Strong smelling substances, which may contaminate or taint the product must not be used.
- 5.2.6 All detergents, disinfectants, sanitisers and other chemicals used for cleaning must be properly labelled and stored safely to avoid the risk of product contamination.
- 5.2.7 Potable water must be used for all wet cleaning routines.

- 5.2.8 All product contact surfaces of equipment, tools and utensils, must be cleaned as frequently as necessary throughout work periods to prevent build up of micro-organisms and contamination of the products.
- 5.2.9 Non-product contact surfaces must be cleaned as frequently as necessary to prevent accumulation of product debris, dirt, refuse and other extraneous matter.
- 5.2.10 Clean-up routines at the end of work-periods must be carried out promptly to prevent the drying out of product debris that may be difficult to remove later and avoid microbial build up.
- 5.2.11 Detergents must be properly used to ensure physically clean equipment. Clean equipment must be protected from possible recontamination.
- 5.2.12 Before each work period begins a documented pre-production check must be carried out of all work areas, equipment, tools and utensils, etc to ensure they are hygienically acceptable and suitable for production. These checks must be carried out and signed off by a nominated individual.
- 5.2.13 Product contact surfaces and general plant hygiene must be assessed by microbiological methods to a set rota allowing for additional areas when appropriate. The sample procedure must be carried out by acceptable technical methods and target limits set either by customer (or in-house) specifications which are documented and verified by a qualified person or company. Initially samples should be taken on a regular basis, and following satisfactory risk based trend analysis, this frequency can be reviewed. Plants must demonstrate adequate swabbing and recording procedures.

Out of target range areas must be actioned and re-swabbed. Methods, rotas and results must be available and demonstrable to Inspectorate. Prompt corrective action must be taken when adverse results are recorded.

- 5.2.14 Product trays must not come into contact with the floor or walls and must not be subject to splash or spray from cleaning operations.
- 5.2.15 Plants should maintain the factory fabric in a condition that prevents the ingress of pests, and have suitable control measures in place.

5.3 Staff Hygiene

- 5.3.1 Staff working with fresh meat are required to maintain high standards of personal cleanliness while at work and take all necessary precautions to prevent contamination of the meat and materials used in the processing operations. In this regard they must:
- (a) Keep as clean as is reasonably practicable all parts of their person which are liable to come into contact with the meat. Fingernails must be kept short, clean and must not be varnished.
 - (b) Wash and disinfect their hands on entering a work area, at frequent intervals during work periods and each time work is resumed.
 - (c) Keep any cut or abrasion on any exposed part of their person covered with a suitable waterproof dressing.
 - (d) Not wear personal adornments or jewellery of any kind, including watches, except for plain wedding rings or plain sleeper earrings.
 - (e) Strictly refrain from smoking, spitting or eating in working or storage areas.
- 5.3.2 All persons working in or passing through working areas must wear sufficient clean, light coloured washable protective clothing and a head covering of a suitable type. A fine mesh hair net must also be worn. The protective clothing must be changed at least daily

or more frequently if required. Outdoor clothing must not be worn over or in place of protective clothing.

- 5.3.3 Staff who work in the skinning area must not be allowed to pass through other work areas where meat-cutting operations are carried out without taking effective precautions to prevent cross contamination. Staff who are required to work in the skinning area and in meat cutting areas must change their protective clothing and wash and disinfect their hands between the change over.
- 5.3.4 Appropriate medical approval must be held for any person assigned to work on and handle meat.
- 5.3.5 Staff who are suffering from stomach disorders or any conditions that may cause infection must not be allowed to work on or handle the products. Immediately a member of staff becomes aware that they are suffering from, or are a carrier of, any infection likely to cause food poisoning they must inform the Senior Site Manager who must then immediately inform the relevant health authority. Staff must obtain clearance from their GP before returning to work after any gastro-intestinal infection.

5.4 Pest Control

- 5.4.1 Effective control measures must be in place for all types of pest - flies, vermin, etc.
- 5.4.2 Individuals conducting pest control inspections and/or treatments must be suitably trained and competent.
- 5.4.3 Records must be kept of pest control inspections, any recommendations and action undertaken. Typically, these records should be kept for a minimum period of 12 months.
- 5.4.4 All material must be stored to minimise the risk of infestation i.e. packaging stored off the floor.
- 5.4.5 Drains must be fitted with screens/traps to prevent ingress by pests.
- 5.4.6 COSHH data shall be available for the safe use and application of baits, if used.

6. QUALITY SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Control of Non - Conforming Products

- 6.1.1 Approved Primary Processors must nominate a responsible person(s) with appropriate knowledge and experience and the necessary authority to decide the action to be taken in cases where the product does not conform to the product specification or have been subject to a failure of process standards defined in these standards.
- 6.1.2 Non-conforming products must not carry the Certification Mark nor must they be knowingly delivered or sold under description, direct or implied indicating that they have been produced in accordance with the requirements of the Certification Scheme and they conform to the Standards required by the Scheme.
- 6.1.3 Non-conforming products must be identified and segregated and may be re-graded for alternative use or if unfit for human consumption they must be disposed of safely and in accordance with relevant regulations covering the disposal of unfit products.
- 6.1.4 Records must be kept detailing non-conforming product and appropriate preventative action.

6.2 Control of Foreign Bodies

- 6.2.1 All necessary precautions must be taken to eliminate, prevent and control chemical and physical contamination of product through the use of HACCP identified controls.
- 6.2.2 Where possible the use of a suitably controlled and alarmed metal detector is recommended.
- 6.2.3 Chemical stores must be segregated from process areas and should be locked. Chemicals must only be stored in clearly labelled containers.
- 6.2.4 Glass and perspex items in process areas must be indicated on a register and audited for integrity to a set schedule. Glass/perspex breakage procedures must be documented and available to appropriate supervisory staff.
- 6.2.5 Wood must be excluded from all areas where the processing/handling of unwrapped or exposed meat takes place.
- 6.2.6 Wooden pallets, packing materials and boxes must be controlled in line with good practice controls defined by processor. Packing materials returned to storage must be clean, intact and protected from any source of contamination. All pallets must be sound, clean and undamaged.
- 6.2.7 Personal items such as coins, smoking materials, watches must not be taken into process areas. Each site should have a written policy covering such items as jewellery and personal items.
- 6.2.8 Food and drink must only be consumed in designated areas, separate from changing and process environments.
- 6.2.9 Smoking must only be allowed in designated areas, separate from changing facilities and process areas.
- 6.2.10 Protective clothing must be removed at smoke areas and should be removed at canteen and toilet facilities.

6.3 Complaints Procedure

- 6.3.1 The responsibility for complying with these Standards and for complying with Statutory requirements, rests absolutely with the Approved Primary Processor and, therefore, any complaint about the product or any complaint arising from possible infringements in the law shall be dealt with by the Primary Processor concerned. Complaints of this nature coming directly to the Certifying Authority or other organisations involved in the operation of the Scheme will be referred to the Approved Primary Processor for appropriate action to be taken. Approved Primary Processors are required to maintain a record of all complaints and any subsequent action taken and make this available to the scheme assessors during surveillance visits.
- 6.3.2 Approved Primary Processors must nominate a responsible person through whom all product complaints should be channelled. This person should have appropriate knowledge and experience to decide the action to be taken in respect of any product complaints received.
- 6.3.3 Complaints must be dealt with promptly taking into account statutory requirements.

6.4 Records

6.4.1 Precise and up-to-date records, appropriate to the volume and nature of the production of the Primary Processor must be maintained to demonstrate the achievement of the standards and practices defined in this section of these Standards. The records must be made available for examination when surveillance inspections are carried out. Typically these records must include:

- (a) A valid Certificate of Registration.
- (b) Any correspondence with or from the Certifying Authority including copies of any non-compliance reports.
- (c) Details of suppliers of carcasses including confirmation that they have been culled in Scotland.
- (d) Records of stock received and all relevant identification paperwork sent with them.
- (e) Pest Control – details of pest control arrangements and servicing report, using an accredited pest control agent.

6.5 Staff Training

6.5.1 Procedures, appropriate to the volume and nature of the production of the Primary Processor, should be maintained for training needs to be identified and for training to be given to personnel as necessary in regard to:

- (a) Key Operations effecting quality and product safety.
- (b) Matters concerning hygiene and hygienic handling of foods.

6.5.2 Personnel performing specific assigned tasks must be qualified on the basis of appropriate education training and/or experience as required.

6.6 Document Control

6.6.1 The Primary Processor shall define and document such procedures necessary to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of these Standards.

6.6.2 Such documents shall be reviewed and approved for adequacy by authorised personnel prior to use.

6.6.3 A master list or equivalent control procedure identifying current revision status and location of each document shall be maintained.

6.6.4 To the extent applicable documents of external origin such as Legislation requirements, Codes of Practice, Directives, etc shall be included.

6.7 Internal Audits

6.7.1 The Approved Primary Processor will conduct, at regular intervals of not less than once per year, audits of the operating systems and procedures that are used to meet and maintain the requirements of the standard defined in these Standards. Records of these audits and resultant corrective actions will be maintained and made available for assessment by the assessor.

6.7.2 Internal audits must still be carried out on pre-requisites to Quality Management System such as cleaning schedules, pest control, temperature controls and routine reviews of

Control Points at least every six months, where one of these audits is the HACCP system verification.

Objective documented evidence of compliance and non-conformity must be available to the assessor.

6.8 Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points

6.8.1 All plants must have a fully documented and operational HACCP system in place.

6.8.2 The member must have a fully comprehensive practical and achievable HACCP plan. The plan must be based on the Codex Principles for seven point HACCP.

Hazard Analysis should cover only Food Safety issues, nature of hazard detailed and measures for their control:

- Microbiological
- Chemical
- Physical

Each process applicable to scheme membership must be assessed by means of:

Flowchart for process.

1. Detailed assessment of hazards and control measures at each process step.
2. Identification of CCP (Critical Control Points) in the food production process. A CCP 'decision tree' may be used .
3. Establish the critical limits (tolerances or target levels) at each CCP.
4. Set up a system to monitor (and record) each CCP.
5. Establish the corrective actions to be undertaken when the CCP is out of control.
6. Create procedures to **verify** and to **review** that the HACCP is working effectively
7. Set up a documentation system to record all of the above.

The HACCP plan should be developed by a multi-disciplinary team of suitably trained staff. The Team Leader/HACCP Co-ordinator on site must demonstrate knowledge or training in relation to HACCP principles.

Verification and review of the HACCP system must be carried out to a defined schedule, at least annually, or when processes change. External auditors or third party audit evidence is recommended, provided the auditors or third party is suitably competent and qualified. This does not include any verification carried out by the assessor.

APPENDIX I

LEGISLATION

COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations 2002

The Food Labelling Regulations 1996 (as amended)

The Food Premises (Registration) Regulations 1991 (as amended)

The Food Safety Act 1990 (as amended) **and regulations made under the Act**

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The Plastic Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Scotland) Regulations 2007

(see also Food Contact Materials Guidance for Scotland published by the Food Standards Agency Scotland.)

Regulations (EC) 852/2004; 853/2004 and 178/2002, **and other relevant regulations**

The above legislation is available from The Stationery Office, London:-

www.thestationeryoffice.com

or online at:

www.foodstandards.gov.uk