

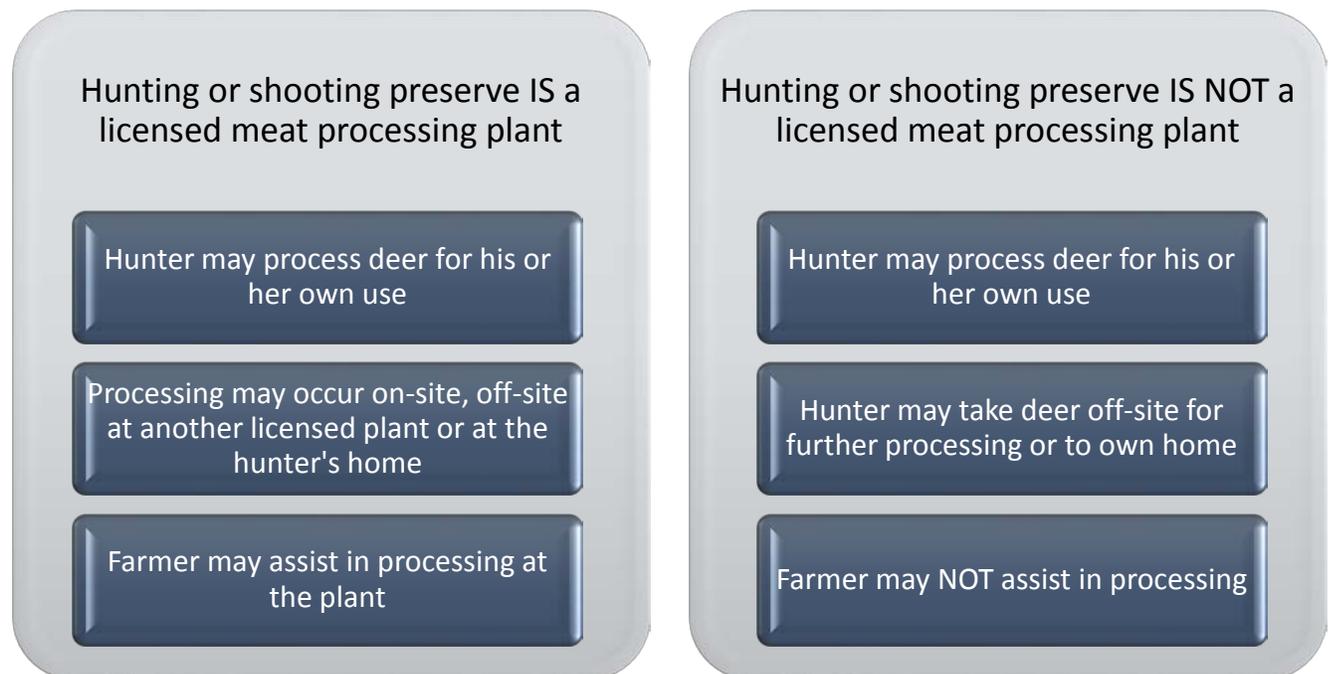
After the Hunt: Handling Meat from Animals Harvested on Hunting or Shooting Preserves

Shooting or hunting preserves for large game animals are growing in popularity in Minnesota. Farmers who raise deer or elk often explore this as a potential outlet for animals they have raised. Because farmed cervidae, such as deer or elk, are livestock and are not wild animals for purposes of game farm, hunting, or wildlife laws, the requirements for harvesting meat from these animals is more complicated than for those of hunter harvested wild animals.

This document provides direction for cervidae farmers, meat processors and hunters on carcass and meat handling regulations for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). Hunting preserves should also follow all applicable game laws for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (DNR) and the Minnesota Board of Animal Health (BAH) regulations concerning registration, animal identification, record keeping, fencing, CWD testing, etc. of farmed cervidae.

General Requirements

Meat from animals harvested on a hunting or shooting preserve can be used by the farmer or hunter but only for personal use. This meat cannot be sold because it has not undergone the required inspection for disease and safety. The farmer or owner of the preserve may choose to become a licensed and permitted custom exempt meat processing plant so that he or she may provide processing services to the hunter. The following figure provides additional details about specific scenarios.



Common Questions and Answers

Can a farmer sell a hunt to someone and allow the hunter to shoot the animal on the farm and harvest it for the hunter's personal use?

A farmer who raises animals for shooting purposes may sell a hunt and the animal to an individual. Then the hunter can shoot the animal and harvest it for personal use. The hunter is limited to only shooting and eviscerating the animal. Then, the hunter may take it to either a licensed and permitted custom exempt meat processing plant or home for their personal use.

Can a farmer assist in the slaughter and processing of that animal on their farm?

The farmer cannot slaughter nor the farmer and hunter further process (skinning, quartering, cutting, grinding, smoking, sausage making, etc.) the animal unless they have a MN Department of Agriculture licensed and permitted custom exempt meat processing facility on the farm.

Can farmers hunt the animal and then process it themselves?

The farmer may hunt their own animals and process it for their own personal use. However, the farmer cannot hunt or process the animal for someone else.

The farmer wants to have meat available for hunters that is already processed so that he can give or sell it to hunters who are unsuccessful or who would rather take home meat that is already processed. What are the options?

The farmer will need to take another animal(s) and have them slaughtered at a Minnesota 'Equal To' or USDA slaughter plant. The meat from these animals can then be sold or given to the hunter.

What if the hunter does not want to keep the meat from the animal he or she hunted?

The meat can be discarded in compliance with BAH livestock carcass disposal regulations or the hunter can give the meat to the farmer, friends, and family for their personal use. The hunter cannot sell the carcass, parts of the carcass or any meat from that animal.

Can a hunter donate a carcass harvested at a hunting preserve through the MN venison donation program?

No, these carcasses cannot be donated through this program. Minnesota Statutes state that only wild deer harvested by hunters can be can be donated through the program.

Can a cervidae farmer or hunter sell the carcass or part of the carcass they hunted, to individuals, stores, restaurants, etc.?

No. Meat can only be sold if it has been inspected with 'Equal To' or USDA inspection. Because this requires viewing of the live animal before the slaughter process and humane slaughter, it is very difficult to meet the requirements for this program in a hunting preserve situation.

For more information

The regulatory requirements are found in Minnesota Statutes 17, 17A, 31, 31A, 31B and 34A. To get more information from MDA staff; call 651-201-6300 or email MDA.MeatPoultryEgg@State.mn.us