

Natural Environment Bill

Section 33: Removal of requirements related to licensing to deal in venison

Dear Madam / Sir,

On behalf of the lowland small volume, small deer species volunteer deer managers WHO ARE RESPONDING TO THE CURRENT Government directive to increase the deer management effort and effectiveness the imposition of the Venison Dealers License is an unfair, direct, disproportionate anachronism made redundant by the modern EU Wild Game Meat Regulations there is a considerable demand for the proposed amendments to abolish the Venison Dealers Licence be implemented, not retained for want of something else; there is already a perfectly functioning set of Regulations which already supersede it, the EU Wild Game Meat Regulations.

Nothing in Food Safety or property law will be lost if it is repealed.

LEGAL ASPECTS.

The Venison Dealer's Licence was introduced in 1959 at the behest of landowners attempting to place a degree of control on the movement of carcasses and venison, as a property law.

It remains in the Deer Act (Scotland) 1996, (as amended), in section 33. (Appendix 1)

There have been no convictions under this regulation, since inception.

Domestic Law and EU regulations require Local Authority to have three roles in the trade in venison currently:

1 It requires legitimate traders, (individuals and firms), in carcasses and venison to engage with their local Environmental Health Office in Local Authority and to pay a fee (£160.00 to Perth & Kinross), for a **three year license**.

SNH / NS and Police Scotland have powers to enter and to inspect records, and they demand that all returns are returned annually.

2 Separately the Environmental Health Offices must regulate the **Food Safety** requirements.

The trading entity must additionally register separately with the EHO as a "Food Business Premises", inspections of the premises should occur each three years along with re-application for approval, this is not the same as a Venison Dealers License. There are regulations under domestic law, pre-EU, which require food business to handle their produce in a safe manner.

This regulation will remain.

3 **Be the Competent Authority regulating EU Regulations.**

While members of EU, three EU Regulations were adopted, they remain Retained Regulations 178/2002, 852/2004 and 853/2004, under the Food Safety Act 1990, as amended.

These modern Food Safety regulations encapsulate and develop the domestic Food Safety Acts and Venison Dealers License requirements in a cohesive top to bottom array of regulations.

As is explained below in many documents, notably the FFS Guidance, 2021, (set out in a matrix of options on pages 10 & 11), any transaction of carcasses beyond family or friends must be recorded, the requirement to maintain records continues however complex the transaction, this was reiterated in a meeting between FSS and the writer, (Appendix 2).

FSS – Wild Game Guide 2021.

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/publications/wild-game-guides-and-haccp>

This regulation will remain.

COMPARISON OF LEGAL ASPECTS.

The Venison Dealers Licence was never introduced in the rest of the United Kingdom, trade in carcasses and venison in the rest of the UK are not fettered with the licensing system, they rely on the modern EU Regulations.

DISPROPORTIONATE FINANCIAL DISINCENTIVES.

On behalf of the lowland small volume volunteer deer managers the fixed fee, of about £180 for a three-year license is a direct disproportionate disincentive to trade in surplus small carcasses and venison, should there be need to sell surplus produce of say 10 roe deer a year with a wholesale value of £25 or a retail value of £75 the fee is an immediate direct cost of £6 per carcass, plus the time and effort to apply for the license, so probably nearly 10% of the value of the transaction, this is antagonistic to the concept of the current Government to make deer control more attractive. Transactions of a greater number of larger species of deer are not impacted to the same extent by the fixed fee license.

CURRENT UTILISATION OF VENISON DEALERS LICENSE.

Scrutiny of current practice of monitoring, collation and management of the VDL process will indicate that it is an inadequate system, under monitored, under managed and never utilized paper exercise with no value.

ZERO-CARBON ASPIRATIONS, SMALL ENTERPRISES, LOCAL TRADE.

Increasing the obstacles to those who have already undertaken training, three exams and maintenance of all Food Safety aspects of carcass preparation and the requirements to record all transactions for EHO requirements already, (under EU

174/2002), the VDL hinders small volume local venison transactions which are otherwise permitted by the EU regulations.

FINACIAL ASPECTS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Given the low value of the License fee, about £180 for three years, the cost of administration will outweigh the fees generated, it would be advantageous to cease the Licensing requirement.

SUMMARY.

The Venison Dealer's License is a superfluous anachronism:

EHO remains responsible for:

Approving the Food Business and premises and records. 178/2002

Records of any transaction, beyond family & friends, in carcasses must be recorded. 178/2002

Records of any transaction in game meat must be recorded. 178/2002, 852/2004

If a Food Business trades in venison from multiple sources, it must have the venison inspected by a State Vet, and the premises must become an Approved Game Handling Establishment. 853/2004 FSS are the Competent Authority.

The Venison Dealers License is superseded by EU 174/2002 so it is redundant and contributes nothing to property law or food safety.

There have been no convictions under the Venison Dealers regulation, since inception.

Regards,
John Bruce.
John Bruce, Chair of Lowland Deer Network Scotland,

Appendix 1.

Deer Act (Scotland) 199, as amended: Section 33.

33 Licences to deal in venison.

(1) A council may grant to any person whom they shall think fit a licence to deal in venison (which shall continue to be known as a “venison dealer’s licence”).

(2) The Secretary of State shall have power by order to regulate—

(a) applications for venison dealers’ licences and the manner in which they are to be dealt with (including power to authorise councils to charge fees in respect of such applications); and

(b) the procedure—

(i) by which venison dealers’ licences may be surrendered; and

(ii) for handing in of licences where a court has ordered their forfeiture or the holders have ceased to deal in venison.

(3) The Secretary of State may in regulations under subsection (2) above apply any provision of Schedule 1 to the [M1](#)Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, as he thinks fit.

(4) A venison dealer’s licence shall be valid for three years (unless the dealer has been disqualified from holding a licence by reason of his conviction of an offence under this Act), and may be renewed provided he is not at the time of the application subject to such disqualification.

(5) Every council which grants a venison dealer’s licence shall cause to be sent to [\[F1SNH\]](#) as soon as may be a copy of the licence.

(6) Every council by whom venison dealers’ licences are granted shall as soon as may be after the first day of January in each year make a return to [\[F1SNH\]](#) of the names and addresses of the persons who on that day held venison dealer’s licences issued by the council.

(7) In this section and sections 34 to 36 “venison” means the carcase or any edible part of the carcase of a deer, and “deer” means deer of any species, whether or not deer within the meaning of section 45 of this Act, and includes farmed deer.

(8) In this section and section 36 of this Act “council” means a council constituted under section 2 of the [M2](#)Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.

Appendix 2.

Transcript of meeting between John Bruce, chair LDNS, Lowland Deer Network Scotland and SQWV TAC, Scottish Quality Wild Venison Assurance Scheme, Technical Advisor with a representative of FSS, Food Standards Scotland to clarify the Hunter's Derogation, to allow the transfer of carcasses and venison under the adopted EU regulations.

Teams Call Food Standards Scotland, John Bruce, SQWV TAG, (09:15, 10/4/25).

Hunter's Derogation & Low Capacity AGHE.

Agenda, JEB seeks guidance & clarification about the practical and legal regulations in the changes from a Hunter producer, a Hunter processor, an Approved Game Handling Establishment.

1 A Hunter Producer wants to dispose of his un-processed deer carcass, must have been a part of the hunting party that dispatched the deer. He may supply the entire un-processed carcass to a family member or friends who must be the end consumer.

2 A Hunter Producer wants to dispose of their own un-processed deer carcass to a final consumer or local retail establishment, must have been a part of the hunting party. They may give the entire un-processed carcass to a final consumer or local retail establishments, one party to the transfer must have a competent VDL. The transaction must be recorded, 178/2002 applies.

3 A Hunter Producer who wants to process their own carcass and to supply the game meat to the final consumer and/or local retail establishment directly supplying the final consumer, the Processor must have been a part of the hunting party. One party to the transfer must have a competent VDL.

However, the Premises and the Processor must be registered as a Food Business with the Environmental Health Office of the Local Authority. 178/2002 & 852/2004 apply, you must adhere to HACCP principles and maintain traceability records of supply as outlined in s9.

4 A Producer who does not want to consume or process his own carcass may offer it to an Approved Game Handling Establishment, AGHE, however the Producer must be a competent "Trained Hunter" and must make a declaration that the animal was normal when seen, and upon inspection, anything abnormal should be stated. The Producer must have a food safety management system based upon HACCP principles.

The Producer must commit the carcass to a chiller of less than 7°C as soon as is reasonable. One party to the transfer must have a competent VDL.

The Producers premises must be registered as a Food Business with the Local Authority, and the Producer must comply with 178/2002. 852/2004 and 853/2004.

5 A Processor, a Game Handling Establishment, GHE, who takes carcasses from other Producers, who must all be "Trained Hunters" operating from registered

Food Business premises, must have the approval of Food Standards Scotland, FSS. Every carcass must be inspected by an FSS appointed Official Vet. The Vet is only present when needed and so may be present every day or there are options to accommodate low-capacity throughput, (such as batches of infrequent & fewer carcasses). Any infrequent visits/inspections for low-capacity throughput have a government sponsored discount making FSS visits inexpensive. All establishments are given Ministerial discounts, as a rule, the lower the throughput, the higher the discount. The AGHE must maintain traceability records as outlined in s9.

The Processor's premises must be approved by Food Standards Scotland, making it an Approved Game Handling Establishment, AGHE, and the Processor must comply with 178/2002, 852/2004 & 853/2004.

[Local Authority, Perth & Kinross Food Business requirements.](#)
[Registration of food businesses - Perth & Kinross Council](#)

[Register your business in the UK - mygov.scot](#)

Private Water Team - waterteam@pkc.gov.uk

Food Health Safety Team - foodhealthsafetyteam@pkc.gov.uk

Venison Dealers Licence application, <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/15626/Venison-dealing-licence>

For further information, contact the Food / Health & Safety Team on 01738 476476 or email foodhealthsafety@pkc.gov.uk .

[Food Standards Scotland requirements.](#)

FSS – Wild Game Guide 2021.
<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/publications/wild-game-guides-and-haccp>

FSA - HACCP
[Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point \(HACCP\) | Food Standards Agency](#)
[Create new account | MyHACCP \(food.gov.uk\)](#)

FSS – training on allergens
[Online Allergy Training | Food Standards Scotland](#)

HACCP and Food Hygiene online courses
[HACCP Training Courses | Level 2 & 3 HACCP Certification \(highspeedtraining.co.uk\)](#)

How to submit a site plan (curtilage) for the approval process
[Site plans and location maps | Food Standards Scotland](#)

The meat industry guide
[Meat Industry Guide | Food Standards Scotland](#)

FSS approval process

[FSS approved establishments | Food Standards Scotland](#)
[OCV - Approval Form \(arcgis.com\)](#)

Scottish National Protocol

[FSS approved establishments | Food Standards Scotland](#)

Site plan and location map

[Site plans and location maps | Food Standards Scotland](#)

FSS Charging

[Meat hygiene charges guidance | Food Standards Scotland](#)