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Food Protection Program Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Issue: Slaughtering and Processing of Meat and Poultry

No: FP-03

Current Massachusetts regulations regarding the slaughtering and processing of meat and poultry (105 CMR 500.030 and 105 CMR 500.031) do not specifically address raised or wild game animals that may be subject to slaughtering and processing and intended for use as human food. This policy attempts to provide slaughterers, processors, regulators and consumers with the necessary information to determine if these activities are being conducted in conformance with the relevant regulation(s).

Meat and Poultry Intended for Sale as Food:

All domesticated meat and poultry whose product is intended for sale must be slaughtered and processed in an U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS) inspected facility. The facility must be subject to mandatory or exempt inspection by USDA/FSIS. All USDA/FSIS inspected facilities are subject to licensure by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).

Meat and Poultry Raised for Private Use and Slaughtered and Processed by the Owner:

Individuals who raise meat and poultry for personal use and slaughter and process the animals may do so without first obtaining a permit from MDPH or the local board of health (LBoH) within whose jurisdiction the slaughtering and processing occurs. The product generated from the slaughtering and processing may not be sold or given away and is solely for use of the owner of the animal, his/her immediate family members and/or non-paying guests.

Meat and Poultry Raised for Private Use and Slaughtered and Processed by a Second Party:

Individuals who raise meat and poultry for personal use but choose to have the animal slaughtered and processed by a second party, must have it slaughtered and processed in a MDPH licensed facility. If the individual has slaughtered the animal and is only seeking to have the animal processed, it too must be processed in a MDPH licensed facility or at a retail facility holding a current, valid permit from the LBoH within whose jurisdiction the processing occurs. The product generated from the slaughtering and/or processing may not be sold or given away and is solely for use of the owner of the animal, his/her immediate family members and/or non-paying guests.

Game Animals Raised Commercially and Intended for Sale as Food:

All game animals, raised commercially, whose product is intended for sale as food must be slaughtered and/or processed in an USDA/FSIS inspected facility subject to voluntary inspection or in a MDPH inspected facility. Both types of facilities are subject to licensure by MDPH.

Game Animals Intended for Private Use and Slaughtered and/or Processed by the Owner:

Game animals harvested by an individual for their personal use, may be slaughtered and/or processed by the owner without first obtaining a license from MDPH or a permit from the LBoH within whose jurisdiction the slaughtering and processing occurs. The product generated from the slaughtering and processing may not be sold or given away and is solely for use of the owner of the animal, his/her immediate family members and/or non-paying guests.

Game Animals Intended for Private Use and Slaughtered and/or Processed by a Second Party:

Game animal trapped but not killed in the field, whose owner intends the product for their own personal use must have the animal slaughtered and processed in a MDPH licensed facility. Those animals that are field dressed must be processed in a MDPH licensed facility or at a retail facility holding a current, valid permit from the LBoH within whose jurisdiction the processing occurs. The slaughtering and/or processing of game animals for free or for a fee for service by a person not licensed by MDPH or permitted by the LBoH is prohibited. The product generated from the slaughtering and/or processing may not be sold or given away and is solely for use of the owner of the animal, his/her immediate family members and/or non-paying guests.

Game Animals Not Commercially Raised:

Game animals, not commercially raised, may not be sold or given away and is solely for use of the owner of the animal, his/her immediate family members and/or non-paying guests.

Attached is a glossary of common and usual terms associated with the slaughtering and processing of domesticated, raised and wild game animals.

Common Terms Used for the Slaughtering and Processing Of Meat, Poultry, Raised and Wild Game Animals

Applicability:	“...any meat which is produced, prepared, packaged, advertised, sold, or offered for sale, whether packaged or unpackaged, which is identified or named in any way, whether it be by labeling, advertising, or any other means.”
Custom Processing:	preparing/processing of animals who have died by means other than slaughtering and whose product is not to be sold or given away and is only for the use of the owner of the animal, his family and/or non-paying guests
Custom Slaughter:	slaughtering of meat or poultry for personal use, which is not to be sold or given away and is only for the use of the owner of the animal, his family and/or non-paying guests
Exempt:	not subject to individual animal or bird inspection but subject to periodic inspection
Fee for Service:	slaughtering or processing of game animals by an unlicensed person for a fee, barter, or trade
Game Animals:	examples: elk, deer, buffalo, llama, moose, ducks, rabbits, squirrel, etc which may be inspected by USDA/FSIS under a voluntary fee for inspection program
LBoH Responsibility:	licensure and inspection of retail facilities
Mandatory Inspection:	individual animal or bird inspection by USDA/FSIS
Meat and Poultry:	cattle, sheep, swine, or goats (in some cases, equine), raised/domesticated birds (chicken, turkey,) subject to USDA laws, regulations and inspection
State Responsibility:	licensure of mandatory, voluntary, exempt and custom slaughterers
USDA/FSIS Inspected:	any facility in which an animal is slaughtered with the intent to be sold. The facility is subject to mandatory, exempt or voluntary inspection
USDA Responsibility:	inspection of mandatory, voluntary and exempt slaughterers and custom slaughter when performed in an inspected facility
Voluntary Inspection:	individual inspection of animals not covered under the act for a separate fee and at times other than when mandatory inspections are taking place