

# EXOTIC MEAT

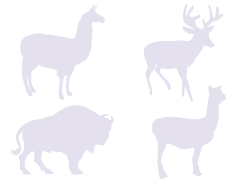


In general, all animal products – meat, poultry, eggs, etc. – donated to an Emergency Food Organization (EFO) must meet the same standards as animal products sold in a retail store. There are a few exceptions to this rule for some lower risk foods. Both donors and EFOs should take steps to make sure donated food is safe for clients. This guide addresses donations for exotic meat (buffalo and buffalo hybrids, antelope, reindeer, water buffalo, alpaca, llamas, and game-farmed birds raised intentionally for food and not wild).

Raising pronghorn antelope, deer, and elk on farms is illegal in Washington with some rare exceptions. Retail establishments can import meat from out-of-state under certain conditions. If offered “farm-raised” antelope, deer, or elk, an EFO should verify the meat’s source to avoid being complicit in possible illegal activity.

A Food Processor License issued by WSDA Food Safety is needed to slaughter and process exotic meat regardless of whether the meat is for sale or donation to an EFO. No wild game can be processed as exotic meat.

# EXOTIC MEAT Donations Guide



## Slaughter/Processing

Donated exotic livestock must be slaughtered and processed in a facility licensed by WSDA for food processing. Visit our website for a list of WSDA licensed processors.

## Labeling

Donated exotic game must be labeled and include: Product name and animal type (ex. ground buffalo meat); processor name and address; all allergen information; and safe handling instructions.

## Handling

Follow these safe handling instructions:

- Keep refrigerated or frozen.
- Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.
- Keep raw meat separate from other foods.
- Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.
- Cook thoroughly.
- Keep hot foods hot.
- Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

## Transportation and Storage

Meat must be transported frozen or at a temperature of 40°F or lower. Frozen meat must remain frozen at all times. Refrigerated meat should be distributed or used within 3-5 days, and frozen meat may be kept frozen for 4-12 months. Thermometers should be used at all stages of storage and transport for any meat and/or egg product.



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Find your local health jurisdiction at [doh.wa.gov/about-us/washingtons-public-health-system/washington-state-local-health-jurisdictions](https://doh.wa.gov/about-us/washingtons-public-health-system/washington-state-local-health-jurisdictions).

**DOH:** Department of Health

**EFO:** Emergency Food Organization  
(food banks, food pantries, meal programs)

**USDA:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

**WSDA:** WA. Department of Agriculture

**Exotics:** buffalo and buffalo-cattle hybrids, antelope, reindeer, water buffalo, alpaca, llamas, and game-farmed birds raised intentionally for food and not wild

**Meat:** Muscle from a slaughtered animal

**RCW:** Revised Code of Washington



Washington  
State Department of  
Agriculture

**Food Safety and  
Consumer Services Division  
Food Assistance**

[foodassistance@agr.wa.gov](mailto:foodassistance@agr.wa.gov)  
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Please call the WSDA Receptionist at 360-902-1976 or TTY 800-833-6388.

## A Note About the Good Samaritan Donation Act

RCW 69.80.031 offers food donors protection from criminal and civil liability. However, it does not relieve donors and EFOs of their duty to act responsibly. The Act requires donated food be “apparently wholesome.” Animal products can visually look fine but still carry E. coli, Salmonella or other illness-causing microbes. Food donors and EFOs should be able to help verify whether food is “apparently wholesome” by knowing the food safety standards and how food was handled before donation.