RECORDS & SURVEYS
ENGLAND & WALES
BEST PRACTICE GUIDES

CULL RECORDS

the deer
initiative

Introduction

The aim of this guide is to outline which cull data should be recorded, either because it may be required for legal purposes or because it contributes to the process of creating and implementing management and cull plans, either at local or landscape scale.

This guide links to the Management Plans and Cull Planning guides.

Reasons for keeping cull records

Cull (and other mortality) records are used for a number of reasons:

♦ Complying with legal requirements e.g. detail required for completion of AGHE tags

♦ Contributing to meat assurance standards e.g. HACCP based principles of venison hygiene and tracking carcass sales

♦ Recording cull progress against cull plans and planning future culls

♦ Providing information on populations, e.g. ages and performance measures such as body weight and reproductive status

♦ Recording natural mortality and accidental deaths such as deer vehicle collisions

Some cull data should be considered as essential, either because it is required by law for AGHE declarations and certain elements of carcass traceability, or because it has an important role in population management planning. Which additional data is recorded will depend on circumstances and should be reviewed occasionally to ensure that it is still relevant and being used for the intended purpose.

Some data may not appear to have an immediate use but if it is easy to record, do so, as it may turn out to be useful later, for instance recording a best estimate for age in years could be used for building a cohort analysis in later years.

Cull data is readily stored and analysed by computer, either in a simple spreadsheet or using commercially available software. Consider how any paper records are kept in order to make translation to a computer straightforward and less error prone.

Where carcasses are produced as the result of a collaborative cull, or where large numbers have to be recorded on the same day, extra care may have to be taken to ensure that records are kept to the required standard.

A description of the kinds of records that can be kept, together with an indication of the form in which they should be recorded and how they are used, can be seen in Table 1.

An example Deer Larder Record form can be found in the Additional Information section.

Table 1.

Description		Required on AGHE declaration	Cull and management plan	Carcass traceability and HACCP	Financial
Data that should be considered essential					
Tag Number	Unique identifying code or AGHE tag number	√		√	√
Date	Date culled	√	√	√	√
Time	To nearest hour	√	√	√	
Location	As specific as possible, preferably a six figure map reference. Can be used to create cull map	√	√	√	
Species	Use codes e.g. Red, F, S, Roe, M, CWD	√	√	√	
Sex	Use M, F for male, female rather than using traditional terminology (stags, bucks etc)	√	√	√	
Age	Use numbers for individual age classes (young =0, yearling = 1 etc) or codes for age classes e.g. Y (young), YR (yearling), A (adult), O (old)		√		
Weight	Ensure that units, carcass preparation and timing are consistent e.g. in kilos, empty, head/feet off, skin on, 12 hours after hanging	√	√	√	√
Inspected by	Name of "trained person" who carried out inspection to large game meat hygiene standard, requires signature on AGHE tag	√		√	
Abnormalities	Includes abnormal behaviour before culling, or any abnormalities found during inspection	√	√	√	
Additional useful data					
Embryo	Visual check, record as a number not a code. Note: may not be visible in roe before January.		√		
Milk	Visual check, record and a code e.g. Y/N		√		
Corpora lutea	Visual check by incision, record as a number. Used as indicator of breeding condition in females. Not a good indicator of recruitment rates.		√		
Antlers	Description and score		√		√
Kidney fat cover	Visual check, record as percentage fat cover of kidneys. Relates to animal condition		√		
Bullet entry/ exit	Use a code according to placement. Relates to carcass value and welfare				√
Shot by	Name of culler		√		√
Destination	To whom sold or given, could be recorded as a code			√	√
Storage data					
Time into chiller	Usually recorded on chiller record against tag number.			√	
Chiller temperature	Usually recorded on chiller record.			√	