

The Deer Initiative

Deer, Habitats and Impacts Conference March 2007

Game hygiene legislation – is it working?

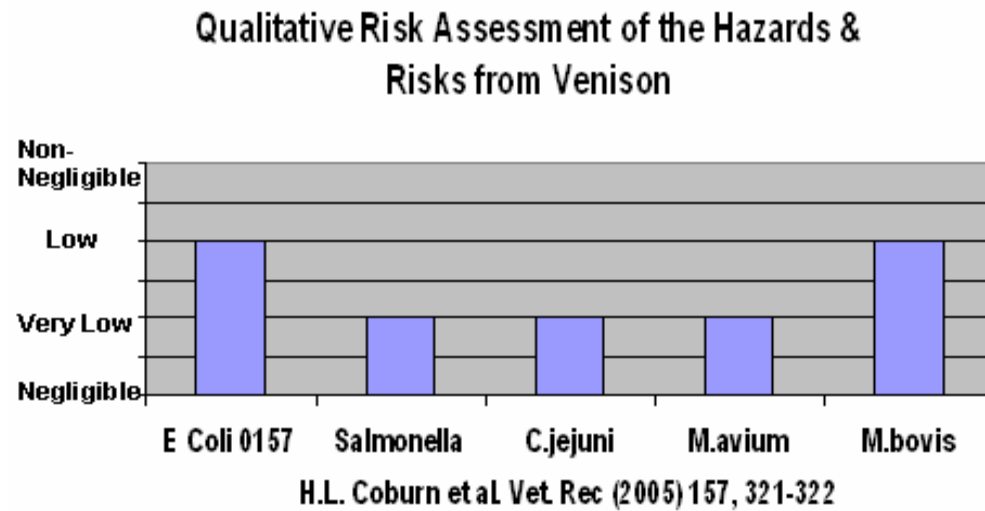
Peter Hewson – Food Standards Agency

This presentation covers:

- What are the risks from game meat?
- What is the law?
- How is implementation going?
- The review of meat hygiene control delivery

What are the risks?

- Little evidence that game meat is causing public health problems
- >40% food borne illness is due to meat and the pathogens involved occur in healthy game



What is the law?

Food business operator is responsible for food safety – includes land owner and hunter.

Unless exempt, to be sold, wild game meat must:-

- come from animals & birds examined by a trained person

- be processed in an approved game handling establishment (GHE)
- be inspected by an official veterinarian or meat inspector

What are exemptions?

- Small quantities of in-fur/in-feather game sold by the producer/hunter to the final consumer/local retailers are totally exempt
- Small quantities of game meat sold by the hunter to the final consumer/local retailers are exempt from the trained hunter, GHE and official inspection, but not registration and basic hygiene requirements

What are the controls?

Trained hunter examination

- hygiene of shooting/gralloching
- identification of M.bovis & M.avium

Chilling

- prevents multiplication of E.coli 0157, salmonella, campylobacter

Post mortem inspection

- removes aesthetic abnormalities

Some examples:

- Leakage of stomach contents due to bullet damage (discard whole carcass)
- Grossly enlarged intestinal mesenteric lymph glands - TB
- Suspicious multiple abscesses on lungs – notifiable

Best practice: Larder with overhead hanging rail and impervious walls and floor – carcasses stored at below 7c

How is implementation going?

- Hunter training – very successful uptake. May be extension to exempt sector??
- Chilling – some reluctance
- Approval of GHEs – Once approved must operate to one standard. All will have to be at least conditionally approved to operate from 1st September 2007

Who can I supply?

- final consumer/local retailer
- GHEs
 - transported to GHE asap after examination by trained person
 - chilling begins within a reasonable period
 - traceable
- Producer is responsible

What does approval mean?

- Basic structure & hygienic operation
- Veterinary audit
- Official post mortem inspection – but pilot project envisaged to give operator responsibility
- Meat hygiene charges – moving towards full cost recovery

Review of meat hygiene control delivery

Objective to produce a system to provide:-

- Consumer protection
- Targeted, risk based and proportionate controls
- value for money for operators, taxpayers, consumers and government

We are working in partnership with the industry.

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Speaker's biography

After qualifying from the Royal Veterinary College in 1971 and spending a few years in mixed practice, Peter joined the State Veterinary Service, working both in the field and head office and eventually specialising in the meat hygiene area.

He transferred to the Food Standards Agency on its launch in 2000 and was responsible for meat hygiene (including game meat) policy and negotiation in Brussels of the meat aspects of the new hygiene regulations.

He is presently largely occupied with a review of the delivery of meat hygiene controls in the UK.