



**NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION PROGRAM**

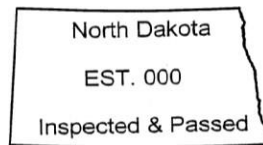
Donating Meat Frequently Asked Questions

Questions often come up about what kind of meat products people can donate to food banks and food pantries. There are several regulations surrounding donations and the purpose is to prevent people from getting sick.

1) What type of meat products **can** be donated in the state of North Dakota?

The regulations allow:

- a) State officially inspected product-product bears ND “inspected and passed” inspection legend.
- b) Federally inspected product-product bears USDA “inspected and passed” (meat) or “inspected for wholesomeness” (poultry) inspection legend.
- c) Retail exempt product-product produced by a retail exempt establishment that originated from state or federally inspected product. Product will not bear an inspection legend.
- d) Legally harvested, pure wild game may be donated IF it is not mixed with any other species. Processed wild game will bear a statement “Not For Sale.”



2) What type of meat products **cannot** be donated in the state of North Dakota?

- a) Custom exempt slaughtered or prepared "Animals" which includes cattle, swine, sheep, goats, farmed cervidae, llama, horses, equines, other large domesticated animals, and poultry as defined in North Dakota Century Code 36-24 (NDCC 36-24). Products will bear a statement “Not For Sale.”
- b) Legally harvested wild game that is mixed with cattle, swine, sheep, goats, farmed cervidae, llama, horses, equines, other large domesticated animals, and poultry.
- c) Home butchered animals.

3) Why can't legally harvested wild game be mixed with traditional meat products and be eligible for donation?

- a) NDCC 36-24 requires official inspection to sell or donate parts from "Animals" which includes cattle, swine, sheep, goats, farmed cervidae (deer, elk, moose, etc.), llama, horses, equines, other large domesticated animals, and poultry. Pure wild game is “non-amenable” (does not apply) to NDCC 36-24 and thus is exempt from inspection. Once wild game is mixed with one of the above species, the mixed product is regulated under NDCC 36-24 and loses the ability to bear the mark of inspection, be sold at retail, and be donated.

- 4) A producer has a live animal that they want to donate to a food pantry, where can they take it to have it slaughtered?
 - a) The animal must be slaughtered and processed at an official state or federal slaughter establishment. The producer should also inform the plant that they want the animal slaughtered and processed under inspection as some official plants also do custom exempt work. An updated list of ND official state slaughter establishments can be found at: <https://www.ndda.nd.gov/divisions/livestock-industries/meat-inspection/north-dakota-meat-processors>
- 5) Can farm-raised elk or deer be donated?
 - a) Yes, the animal would need to be slaughtered and processed under official state or federal inspection. See link above for a list of official state plants.
- 6) A producer has a beef slaughtered and processed under custom exemption, all packages bear “not for sale.” Why can’t the producer donate some or all of this animal?
 - a) There is no third party verification (inspection personnel) present to verify the health of the animal or the safety of the products. NDCC 36-24 clearly states custom exempt processed products are for the exclusive use of the individual, members of the individual's household, the individual's nonpaying guests, and employees.
- 7) A person wants to donate some or part of a wild game animal they harvested, where can they take it?
 - a) The carcass needs to be processed at an approved plant to ensure the food bank/pantry will accept it, an updated list along with additional information can be found at: <https://www.capnd.org/programsandinitiatives/statewideprograms/sportsmen-against-hunger/overview.html>
- 8) Do donated products have to bear any special labels?
 - a) Yes
 - i) State or federal officially inspected products must meet the labeling requirements in 9 cfr 317.2. These requirements include: the name of the product; an ingredient statement if the product is fabricated from two or more ingredients; the name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor; an accurate statement of the net quantity of contents; an official inspection legend; any special handling statements; safe handling instructions.
 - ii) Retail exempt product must meet the following requirements: the name of the product; an ingredient statement if the product is fabricated from two or more ingredients; the name and place of business of the manufacturer; an accurate statement of the net quantity of contents; any special handling statements; safe handling instructions.
 - iii) Pure wild game labels must include: the words “not for sale” this cannot be abbreviated or modified and must be in letters at least three-eighths of one inch in height; the name of the facility or the registration number.

If you have additional questions or would like clarification on any of the above questions please contact our department.