



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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GUIDANCE FOR GAME BIRD PROCESSING and SALE

Background

In accordance with Missouri Food Law (Chapter 196 of the Missouri Revised Statutes) the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) has the authority to assure that any food offered to the public is safe, wholesome, unadulterated and properly labeled, and the authority to inspect any premises being used for the production of food. While the United States and the Missouri Departments of Agriculture (MDA) have jurisdiction over many types of meat inspection, quail, pheasant, and partridge (defined as “game birds” per this guidance) are non-amenable species per the Poultry Products Inspection Act and thus fall under the jurisdiction of MDHSS. To provide a legitimate outlet for small farmers to produce game birds and bring them to market in a safe and wholesome manner MDHSS has created the following guidance. This guidance is intentionally very similar to those regulations for limited exempt amenable poultry and rabbit processing under MDA, and provide the same safeguards in protecting the food supply while allowing Missouri farmers to bring locally raised foods to the consumer.

Guidance

A Limited Game Bird Farm Operation is defined as a farm-based firm which directly produces and offers dressed quail, pheasant, and partridge for sale. No additional processing or food preparation is allowed. These small farm operations are limited to up 4,000 quail, 3,000 partridge, and 2,000 pheasant annually for production and sale of dressed birds, with the Department establishing the yearly limit in consultation with, and upon review of, the operation. Anyone wishing to process beyond these limits, wholesale product, or sale product interstate must process these game birds in an approved slaughter and processing facility under the inspection of a certified veterinarian in accordance with guidance from MDHSS meeting all applicable state and federal meat inspection regulations. Dressed quail, partridge, and pheasant being offered to the public outside the parameters of this guidance will be considered to be adulterated.

Specific Requirements

- The game birds must be raised and processed on the farm of the owner (i.e. birds cannot be brought in from other farms to be processed to be offered to the public.)
- The operation must register with MDHSS (i.e. provide basic information such as owner name, address, contact information, to DHSSFoodSafety@health.mo.gov.)
- Only whole processed birds are allowed to be sold.
- The game birds must be sold within the state of Missouri.
- Quail, pheasant, and partridge can be sold at a roadside stand, farmers market, and other similar open-air market locations or by direct delivery to the purchaser. No internet sales are permitted.
- Quail, pheasant, and partridge can be sold directly to hotels, restaurants and similar institutions for the preparation of meals sold directly to the customer, and for these sales these products will be considered to be from an “approved source” per the Missouri Food Code. The birds cannot be sold for further retail sale, such as to a grocery store.
- The birds must be healthy upon slaughter.
- Slaughter and processing must be done under clean and sanitary conditions and the final product must be fit for human consumption and unadulterated.

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- MDHSS may inspect the operation to verify compliance with sanitary requirements upon receipt of a complaint that food was produced under adulterated conditions and/or the dressed birds were associated with a foodborne illness.
- MDHSS will conduct a once per year farm visit. This is not an inspection of processing operations but to observe general conditions, meet with the farmer, answer questions, provide education, and so forth.
- The quail, pheasant, and partridge shall be packaged and labeled with the processor's name, the farm address, the statement "Exempt Per MDHSS", and required Safe Handling Instructions.
- Trace back and trace forward records (i.e. sales and product delivery records) must be maintained for two years.
- The game birds shall be maintained at 41 o F or less after processing.

Before moving forward with the operation all owners are encouraged to comply with any other applicable federal, state, county and municipal laws and ordinances regulating the buying, transport, raising, feeding, preparation, processing (including disposal of waste) storage and sale of game birds processed for meat. City and County ordinances may be more stringent than state laws.