

• If the weather is warm, it is important to take the carcass to the processing plant as quickly as possible. If this is not possible and the weather is warm and the animal is to be left in the field for a day or more, it is possible to take further precautions to assure that the meat brought to the processor is in good condition.

Skin the deer except for the head, and wash it clean of dirt and hair. The skinned deer can then be placed in a shroud sack or wrapped with porous cloth to cool (cheesecloth is recommended). The cloth covering should be porous enough to allow air circulation but firmly woven enough to prevent contamination by insects and dirt. If you do not have porous cloth, you can coat the inside of the body cavity with black pepper to repel insects.

Thank you for helping your fellow Texans by donating to Hunters for the Hungry!

To learn more, please contact our hotline at 1-800-992-9767, ext. 506

This handout is produced by the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc., administrator of the Texas Hunters for the Hungry program. For more information, please visit www.tacaa.org or call the TACAA Hunger-Relief Hotline at (800) 992-9767, ext. 506.

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Texas Hunters For the Hungry



Maximize Your Meat!

Field Dressing Tips

Texas Hunters for The Hungry

The most important step you can take is to field dress your deer immediately!

Field dressing wild game is an important step in the hunting adventure, and proper care can result in the maximization of the meat that you will bring home at the end of the day. Field dressing also lightens your load when transporting your deer to the processor.

When possible, it is preferable that animals to be donated to the Hunters for the Hungry program not be skinned before bringing them to the processor. By leaving the skin in place, the underlying meat is protected from contamination during transport to the processing plant.

By following these important tips, you can assure that all of your hard work does not go to waste and that you, or the recipient of your meat, will get the most out of your donation.

Field Dressing Tips*

Before starting the field-dressing process, keep in mind that it is important to REMOVE THE INTERNAL ORGANS IMMEDIATELY after the kill without contaminating the body cavity with dirt, hair, or contents of the digestive tract, and to DRAIN ALL EXCESS BLOOD FROM THE BODY CAVITY. Disposable vinyl or latex gloves lessen the chances of passing infectious diseases and makes hand cleaning easier.

- To begin, roll the carcass over on its back and spread the hind legs. Make a cut along the centerline of belly from breastbone to base of tail, first cutting through the hide, then through muscle. (If you will not be mounting the head, the cut should extend up the neck to the chin to allow removal of as much of the windpipe as possible. The windpipe sours rapidly, and is a leading cause of tainted meat.)
- Before removing the intestines, cut around the anus and draw it into the body cavity, so it comes free with the complete intestines. BE CAREFUL NOT TO CUT OR BREAK THE BLADDER. Loosen and remove the stomach and intestines.

- If you puncture the entrails, wipe the body cavity as clean as possible or flush with water and dry with a cloth. Do not use water to wash out the body cavity unless the paunch or intestines are badly cut.

- To remove the heart and lungs, cut around the edge of the diaphragm and split the breastbone. Cut through the windpipe and gullet, and remove the lungs and heart from the chest cavity. ALL PARTS DAMAGED BY GUNSHOT SHOULD BE TRIMMED AWAY.

- Drain excess blood from the body cavity by turning the body over or hanging upside down.

- Following field dressing and prior to delivery to the processing plant, the carcass should be kept as cool as possible. To allow for better air circulation and faster cooling, prop the body cavity open with a stick. To hasten cooling, split the pelvic bone. Adequate cooling may take six hours or more, depending on weather conditions.