



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada

**FOOD QUALITY SPECIFICATIONS -  
FOOD PURCHASED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENTS**

**Game**

**April 1, 2018**

**The following specifications are used by federal government departments purchasing the items listed below for their departmental food requirements**

### **FQS-38 – Game**

Any items listed in all Food Quality Specification that are **bolded and in brown** are part of the current National Standard Cycle Menu (NSCM) Standing Offer. Other items that are not on the NSCM but are on the Standing Offer may not be listed in **brown**.

[FQS-38-01 – Mammals](#)

[FQS-38-02 – Birds/Wild Fowl](#)

[FQS-38-03 – Reptiles and Amphibians](#)

[Applicable Regulations and Resources for Game](#)

#### **Description**

1. Game or wild game refers to a variety of animals, birds and amphibians that are not normally consumed in North America. Although the term “game” refers to those creatures hunted and caught in the wild, today, most of these creatures are ranched and farmed. Game mammals are sometimes referred to as “alternative livestock”.
2. Ranched game is raised under free-range conditions and develop a more complex flavour and less body fat than farmed animals. The meat from farmed game compared to ranched game is typically milder to the taste and somewhat fattier. Game raised by either method is usually more tender than true wild game and more consistent in flavour. Large game animals are prepared and processed like beef; small animals, like poultry. Game raised on farms or ranched are slaughtered and inspected prior to consumption.
3. Any raw game or meat can contain harmful bacteria such as E.coli and enteridis. Parasites are also another concern in wild game as well as fish. There are a variety of diseases present in game – trichinosis in bear, boar and venison; tularemia in rabbits; and salmonellosis.
4. Not all suppliers carry fresh game but many can order it given a few days’ notice. In judging the quality of game, the same standards used for equivalent domestic products should be used. While fresh products are preferred, properly frozen game is superior to a poorly processed fresh product.
5. Any game procured in Canada must:
  - a. Come from a facility licensed and inspected by CFIA. A list of facilities licensed and inspected by CFIA can be found at [CFIA Registries of Meat Establishments](#);
  - b. come from a facility that meets the criteria as outlined in [Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Meat Hygiene Manual of Procedures](#);
  - c. be manufactured in an establishment that was operating under a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles based system;
  - d. meet all the requirements as outline in the [Food and Drugs Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. F-27\)](#);
  - e. meet all the requirements as outlined in [Codex Alimentarius - General Principles of Food Hygiene](#);
  - f. come from a facility that meets HACCP System and Guidelines including its annex as outlined in the Recommended Code of Practice: [Codex Alimentarius - General Principles of Food Hygiene](#) and is a Canadian Federally Inspected processing plant;
  - g. comply with food packaging and labeling requirements specified by the Food and Drugs Act and Regulations and the [Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. C-38\)](#), [Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 417\)](#)
  - h. Portion Controlled Game Products are to be supplied according to the following portion sizes, unless otherwise specified

- i. Bone in Raw weight 250 g
    - ii. Boneless Raw weight 225 g
  - i. meet the specification set out for that game specified; and
  - j. comply with food packaging and labeling requirements specified by the Food and Drugs Act and Regulations and the [Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. C-38\)](#), and the [Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 417\)](#),
6. Any cut of fresh/chilled and/or frozen game procured from countries other than Canada must:
- a. Only be procured/supplied from countries that are permitted to export these game products to Canada. [Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Meat and Poultry Products](#) current information on Countries from which commercial importation of game products is permitted, and come from a facility that meets HACCP criteria as outlined in the Annex to the [Codex Alimentarius- General Principles of Food Hygiene](#)
  - b. meet all requirements as outline in [Food and Drugs Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. F-27\)](#), or meet all the requirements for the [USDA United States Standards for Grades of Beef Carcasses](#) and/or meet all the requirements as outlined in the [Codex Alimentarius - Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat](#)
  - c. meet all regulations as outlined in [Meat Inspection Regulations, 1990 \(SOR/90-288\)](#), and the [Health of Animals Act \(S.C. 1990, c. 21\)](#), or
  - d. meet all the requirements of applicable local food legislation whenever those requirements are stricter. All game shall be obtained by sources approved by the applicable local and international laws, regulations, procedures and requirements
  - e. meet all the requirements as outlined in the Recommended Code of Practice - [Codex Alimentarius- General Principles of Food Hygiene](#)
  - f. be marked with the official inspection mark of the government of the country of origin, prescribed by the national legislation of that country, to indicate that the game product has been prepared in an establishment operating in accordance with the national meat inspection legislation of that country

### **Packaging**

7. Every package and/or container of game in a registered establishment must be included in the “[Reference Listing of Accepted Construction Materials, Packaging Materials and Non-Food Chemical Products Database](#)”.
8. Every material used in packaging and/or wrapping game products in a registered establishment shall:
- a. Protect the game product sufficiently to prevent contamination,
  - b. be free from noxious substances,
  - c. not impart any undesirable substance to the game, either chemically or physically,
  - d. be sound in construction, clean and free from discolouration and objectionable odours,
  - e. be durable and effective in regard to the manner it is used and will not tear if wet,
  - f. be lined for frozen game products with moisture proof film or material that provides similar protection, so that each individual wrapped game meat product, must be capable of being removed without defrosting the remaining packaged products, and that each layer of product can be extracted separately.
  - g. Any game product packaged into a container/box must correspond to the game type specified.
  - h. Any game container/box marked with appropriate label, must correspond to the variety game type in that container/box.
9. No material used in packaging or labeling a game product in a registered establishment shall come into contact with the game product; if the contact might prevent the product from conforming to the requirements to the Canadian Food and Drug Regulations.

**Storage and Distribution**

10. Any fresh/chilled and/or frozen game supplied shall:
- a. be transported in a cleaned and sanitized (where applicable) transport vehicle of suitable design, to prevent microbial, physical and chemical contamination of the meat product;
  - b. be in a vehicle with the internal vehicle's finishes in a good state of repair and made of corrosion-resistant material which cannot affect the organoleptic character of fresh game products or otherwise render them unwholesome. Interior of the vehicle must be smooth, impervious, and easy to clean and disinfect;
  - c. be transported in a refrigerated vehicle equipped to hold the game products at the appropriate temperature, either fresh and/or frozen and that both of these temperature conditions be maintained throughout the whole period of transport to include:
  - d. Game requiring to be "Kept refrigerated":
    - i. shall be maintained at no higher than 4°C;
    - ii. shall not have been frozen at any time, and;
    - iii. shall not show evidence of off condition, including but not restricted to off odor, stickiness, gassiness, rancidity, sourness, dehydration, discoloration or mishandling, exception shall be made for the normal confinement odor and discoloration related to aging in vacuum packaging.
  - e. Game requiring to be "Kept frozen":
    - i. shall be maintained at a frozen state no higher than -24°C, and;
    - ii. shall not show evidence of defrosting and/or freezer deterioration.
  - f. Not be carried in the same vehicle used for conveying live animals, controlled products (as defined in the [Pest Control Products Act \(S.C. 2002, c. 28\)](#) or other substances that might adulterate the game product.
  - g. Not be carried in the same vehicle as other goods in a manner which may adversely affect game quality.

**FQS-38-01 – Mammals**

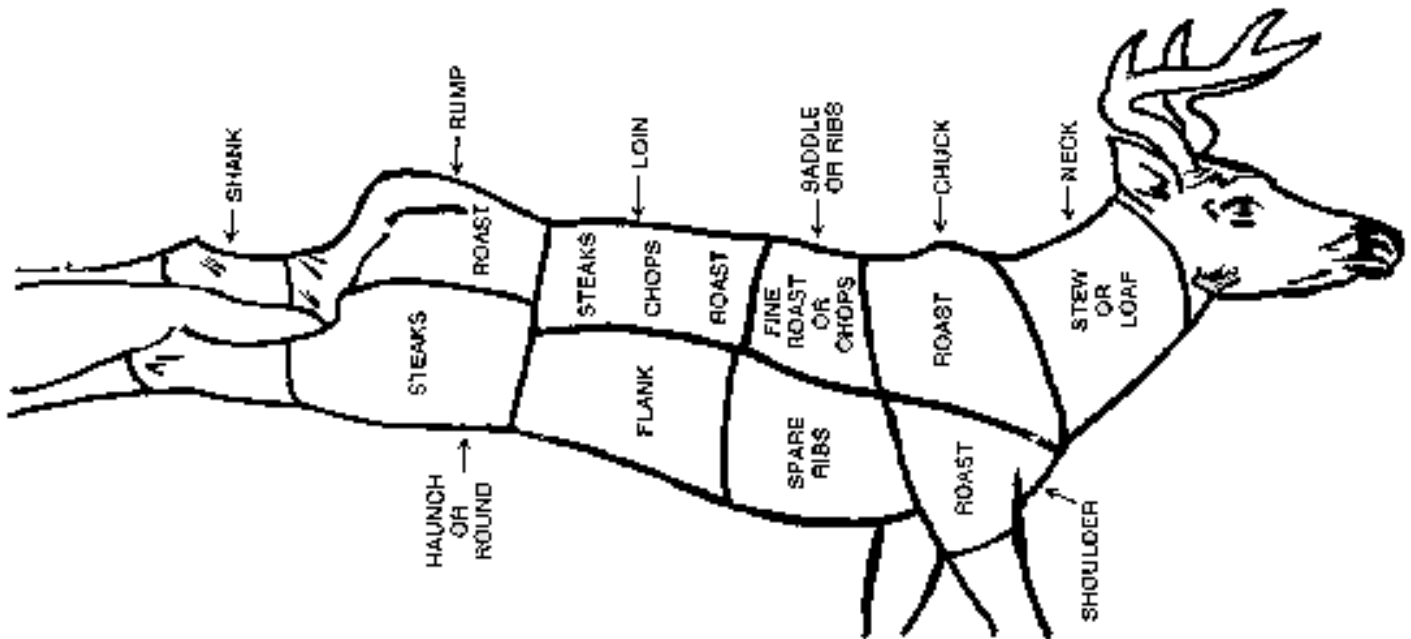
11. It is highly recommended that all game meats only be purchased fresh if they are to be used on the day of purchase or in all other cases, purchased frozen. Because game is lower in fat than other meat, it cooks quickly. In general, the red meat of buffalo and venison is best cooked to medium rare.

12. Domesticated **rabbits** have been bred to be much larger than wild rabbits. Rabbit meat is available both fresh and frozen. Rabbit meat is a source of high quality protein and is leaner than beef, pork and chicken. Rabbit meat can be used as a substitute meat in many chicken recipes. Hares, which are mainly dark meat and are tough and bony. Hare meat should be marinated or stewed slowly.

13. **Alpaca** is as a mild meat which is slightly salty, tender and lean, high in protein with no fatty after taste. Alpaca meat is not only rich in proteins, but also low in fat & has the lowest level of cholesterol of any meat. Approximately 50% of a carcass is used as prime cuts, such as loin cutlets and steaks, which are sold either fresh or frozen. Secondary cuts are processed into sausages, hot dogs, ground meat and processed alpaca hams. Alpaca meat should be cooked quickly on a high heat, to retain its natural tenderness. For the best results, alpaca meat should be served rare or medium and allowed to rest before serving.

14. **Venison** refers to all large antlered game animals, including **elk**, **caribou**, and **antelope** as well as **deer**. All venison is lean red meat. All these animals are currently raised domestically in North America. In general, their meat is more tender and less strong tasting than that of their truly wild counterparts. Differences in species,

age and methods of rearing may account for differences in taste and texture. Venison, which has little intramuscular fat or marbling, should be cooked over high heat for a short time to rare or medium-rare. The tougher cuts braised. Venison meat should remain crimson. The chart below shows some of the more common venison cuts, which are very similar to beef.



15. **Buffalo (Bison)** meat is higher in protein, low in cholesterol (approximately 30 percent less than beef) and half the calories and fat of beef. A dense meat, it has a slightly sweeter and richer taste than beef. It can be used in any beef recipe, although it cooks more quickly than beef. Buffalo meat should be cooked to rare or medium rare. Ground buffalo is low in fat and should be combined with other ground meats to add fat and moisture.
16. **Muskox** meat is very tender and flavourful. It should be cooked to medium-rare.
17. **Camel** meat is popular in Asian cuisine. and is very mild in flavor, somewhat close to beef. Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cooking includes this natural protein in curries cooked with fruit and spices, as well as, traditional European dishes such as roasts, steaks, sausages and burgers. It is common to marinate camel meat. Braising works very well on camel. Camel burgers are cooked like any other burger.
18. **Wild Boar** is a misnomer since wild boar is farmed in Canada. Boar is a cousin of the domesticated hog but its meat is leaner and more flavourful.

**Game Mammal Specifications**

19. All meat shall be prepared from inspected animals and cut to specifications.<sup>1</sup>

<b>Animal</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Alpaca</b>	Alpaca is a dark meat. The meat needs to be cooked and served rare to medium rare. The meat to a cross between bison and beef. It is available fresh or frozen. Available cuts include striploin, shanks, hamburger, tenderloins and steaks.
<b>Antelope</b>	Antelope meat is delicately flavoured, lighter in colour than other venison and is closer to veal.
<b>Rabbit/ Hare</b>	All rabbits and hares provided shall be skinned and dressed with the head removed. If specified, the carcass shall be cut in four parts - the two hind quarters and the two forequarters and the backstrap (the loin meat that runs along the backbone, below the stomach, ribs, and above the hind legs. The snowshoe rabbit weighs 1.4–1.9 kg. (3-4 pounds). The Arctic hare weighs 2.8 – 4.5 kg. (6-15 pounds).
<b>Bear</b>	All bear is edible. Because bear, like pigs and boars, can carry trichinosis it must be cooked thoroughly.
<b>Wild Boar</b>	Boar can range in flavour from very mild and delicate to distinctly pungent, depending on the animal's age and diet. Younger animals are preferred for flavour and tenderness. Wild boar can be prepared like pork and is sold in familiar pork cuts. The most popular come from the loin or saddle. The tougher less expensive cuts like the hind leg should be braised or stewed. Because boar can carry trichinosis it must be cooked thoroughly.
<b>Buffalo (Bison)</b>	Buffalo is now raised for meat on numerous ranches in Canada. The preferred cuts are steaks, chops and roasts from the rib, loin, and sirloin.
<b>Camel</b>	Camel Meat is full of flavour, lean and tender. Select Cuts: Striploin, Rump, Ground, Burgers (4 oz) and Trim.
<b>Caribou</b>	Caribou, which has been domesticated in the North, has a juicy and flavourful meat.
Deer	Deer is the most common type of venison and the animals are both farmed and ranches extensively.
Elk	Elk meat is sometimes considered to be the best venison and is often compared to prime beef.
Goats	Wild goats live in rugged terrain in the western parts of the United States and Canada. The meat of wild goats is distinct and flavourful yet mild.
Llama	Llama is a South American ruminant mammal, directly related to the camel. The taste of Llama meat is somewhere between beef and lamb, though described often as a lighter, sweeter beef. Llama is an extremely tender, succulent and versatile meat. Llamas are farmed in North America. Llama meat is available as steaks, boneless stewing beef, organ meats, processed sausages, and ground meat products.
<b>Moose</b>	Moose is not farmed and the meat is not government inspected.
Muskox	Muskox meat is well marbled but leaner than beef or pork and slightly more moisture than beef. It has an appearance similar to prime beef and a smooth texture similar to beef or buffalo. Selected cuts available - Tenderloin, Striploin, Frenched Rack, Frenched Chops, Rib

<sup>1</sup> Portion Standard outline in A-85-269-001/001 – Food Services Direction and Guidance Manual Chapter 2 – Standards & Procedure - Annex C – Portion Size Standard.

Animal	Description
	Eye Roll, Hind Leg Bone In/Boneless, Denver Hind Leg, Escallops/Tournedos, Boneless Shoulder (chuck), Stewing Meat, Ground, Trim, Burgers, Westphalian Ham & Mipkuzola ("Eskimo-style" Prosciutto).
Bighorn Sheep	There are four kinds of sheep that are called Bighorn: Rocky Mountain, desert, Dall's and stone. The desert sheep are on the endangered list. The meat of wild sheep is distinct and flavourful yet mild with a texture like lamb.

Note: There are no known federally inspected sources for animals marked in **red**.

### FQS-38-02 – Game Birds

20. Game birds shall be provided according to the specifications indicated by the North American Meat Institute (NAMI) manual, where those specifications exist.

21. Some ranchers or farmers of game birds also provide their **eggs** for purchase. For purchase of game bird eggs, the specifications as outlined in FQS 1 – Eggs will apply.

22. **Ostrich** and **emu** can be ranches or farm raised. Their meat tastes and is prepared using techniques the same as for venison. Therefore, any lean venison or beef recipe can be used in the preparation of ostrich and emu. The preferred cooking methods are sautéing or quick grilling to medium-rare. Overcooking will make the meat dry and tough.

### Game Bird Specifications

Game Bird	Part	NAMI <sup>2</sup>	Description
<b>Guinea Fowl</b>	<b>Young guinea fowl</b>	P5000	Guinea fowl are often referred to as guinea hen or African pheasant. The species originated in Western Africa and was later domesticated in other countries. A young guinea fowl can be of either sex and is usually about 11 weeks old.
	<b>Whole young guinea fowl with giblets</b>	P5001	This item consists of the whole carcass packaged with the giblets and neck normally wrapped in parchment paper or plastic material and stuffed into the body cavity. Due to the processing procedures the included giblets or neck parts may not be from the same bird. A ready-to-cook guinea hen weighs about 900 gms to 1.4 kgs. (2-3 pounds). The skin is a mottled whitish grey colour and the flesh is a light red. Due to their small size, guinea hens are usually sold as whole carcasses and not processed into parts like chicken and turkey.
	<b>Airline Breast</b>	P5016	This item is a boneless half breast skin on with the first wing joint attached. It weights 180-270 gms (6-9 ounces). The airline style is also available as a double breast with the first wing joint attached on each side.

<sup>2</sup>The North American Meat Institute (NAMI) (formerly NAMP)'s *Meat Buyers Guide* 8th edition is produced by NAMI and is based on IMPS (Institutional Meat Purchasing Specifications) of the USDA (United State Department of Agriculture's AMS (Agricultural Marketing Services)).

Game Bird	Part	NAMI <sup>2</sup>	Description
	<b>Leg Quarter</b>	P5030	The leg quarter is the rear quarter of the guinea fowl carcass that consists of the drumstick, thigh and back portion attached in one piece. The part may also include a portion of the tail, abdominal fat, and up to two ribs.
<b>Squab</b>	<b>Squab (Young Pigeon)</b>	P6000	Squab are young pigeons and are approximately 28-30 days old when processed. They may be of either sex. The species originated in the Middle East and Asia and is one of the oldest birds known to humans. In North America, most of the available squab is from domesticated stocks. They are commercially raised and have never flown.
	<b>Whole Squab (Young Pigeon) with Giblets</b>	P6001	This item sold with the giblets and neck wrapped or bagged and stuffed into the body cavity or as a whole carcass. A ready to cook squab weighs 360 to 480 gms (12-16 ounces), including the gizzard, liver, heart, and neck. The skin is a mottled whitish colour and the flesh is tender and dark in colour.
	<b>Airline Breast</b>	P6016	This item is a boneless half breast skin on with the first wing joint attached. It is also available as a double breast with the first wing joint attached on each side.
<b>Quail</b>		P7000	Quail is one of the most popular game birds eaten in the United States. In some instances, the terms <i>quail</i> and <i>partridge</i> can be used interchangeably but primarily the term is used to identify the species. The common quail originated in Europe and seasonally migrates into Africa and India.
	<b>Whole Quail</b>	P7001	<p>This item sold with the giblets and neck wrapped or bagged and stuffed into the body cavity or as a whole carcass. Due to the processing procedures the included giblets or neck parts may not be from the same bird. A ready to cook quail weighs 90 to 210 gms (3-7 ounces), including the gizzard, liver, heart, and neck. The skin is whitish in colour.</p> <p>PSO (Purchaser Specified Options) - <b>Semi-Boneless (European Style) Quail</b> – This item, also referred to as sleeve-boned, is a partially boneless skin-on whole carcass with attached wings and all bones other than the femur bones excluded.</p>
	<b>Pharaoh Quail</b>	P7002	This species was imported from Europe and has been



Game Bird	Part	NAMI <sup>2</sup>	Description
			scientifically bred to produce consistent quality and has a mixture of white and dark meat. Today this is the most widely found variety in North America.
<b>Pheasant</b>		P7200	This species was first found in the Far East but is now quite common world-wide. It was originally wild or home raised. It is still found in the wild but in North America most pheasants are domestically raised either for the food industry or for use in hunting preserves. Pheasants are classified as young or mature by their age. There are presently more than 50 different breeds of pheasants.
	<b>Whole Pheasant</b>	P7201	Pheasants are sold as both whole carcasses or processed into parts. A ready-to-cook pheasant weighs .8 to 1.8 kg. (1.75- 4 pounds). The breast meat is white and the leg meat is dark coloured. The breast meat is the most popular portion since the pheasant legs unlike those of the guinea fowl have tendons.
	<b>Young Pheasant</b>	P7203	Young pheasant are normally 12-16 weeks of age and weigh 420-600 gms (14-20 ounces). Pheasant produced especially for food services or retail marketplace have been bred so as to provide larger breasts and clearer flesh.
	<b>Airline Breast</b>	P7316	This item is a boneless half breast skin on with the first wing joint attached. It weights 180-300 gms (6-10 ounces). The airline style is also available as a double breast with the first wing joint attached on each side.
<b>Partridge</b>	<b>Partridge</b>	P7400	There are no native partridge species in North America, though other species, some nearly extinct, including the grouse are substituted as partridge when available. The terms partridge and quail are sometimes used interchangeably. Most partridges available in the market are derived from European or African varieties. Partridges are identified as young up to a year and are considered mature once they are more than 15 months old. Due to their small size partridges are usually sold whole and are not processed into parts like chickens and turkeys.
	<b>Common or Grey Partridge</b>	P7400	This is a European species found as far away as the Middle East. Many were imported from Hungary and raised in England and are of the same species as the common or grey partridge. This variety is sometimes referred to as the

Game Bird	Part	NAMI <sup>2</sup>	Description
			Hungarian partridge.
	<b>Chukar</b>	P7500	This partridge species is found from Asia Minor to China and in the mountains of India. The various partridge of the species are different in size and plumage depending on the climate in which they are found.
<b>Emu</b> <b>Ostrich</b>			The meat is deep red and low in fat. The meat of the emu is more finely grained than that of the ostrich. The most tender cuts are referred to as the fan file, inside strip, tenderloin and oyster. Next in tenderness are the tip, top loin, and outside strip. The tougher cuts come from the leg area.

### FQS-38-03 – Reptiles and Amphibians

23. **Alligator** meat and eggs are available from farmed alligators. The meat can be marinated or tenderized and then deep fried, braised, roasted, smoked or sautéed. It is used in Southern US dishes such as gumbo or in sausages.

24. Although **turtle** meat can be used in a variety of ways, the most common use for turtle meat is in turtle soup or turtle stew, considered a delicacy. Turtle meat available commercially comes from fresh water species. Saltwater turtle meat should not be consumed as it could cause a type of food poisoning called chelonitoxism for which there is no known antidote.

25. Canned **snails** should be rinsed and simmered briefly in consommé and wine before use as “escargot.”

26. For **frogs’ legs** allow 2-3 large or 6 small legs for a portion.

### Reptile and Amphibian Specifications

Reptile or Amphibian	Description
<b>Alligator</b>	Alligator meat is high in protein and low in fat. It is mild in flavour and firm textured meat slightly chewier than chicken. Alligator is farmed and most of the meat available is from the tail of the alligator.
<b>Rattle Snake</b>	Rattlesnake meat is another game meat that is compared to tasting like chicken or other meats and some fishes e.g. tuna but tougher in consistency. It is white in colour with a delicate flavour. It is usually barbecued or fried.
<b>Turtle</b>	Only farm-raised fresh water and limited species of wild fresh water turtles can be used for food. Turtle meat is available either cooked and canned or frozen raw. Alligator snapping turtle meat is usually available frozen in a 1.2 kg (2.5 pound) package.
<b>Snails/ Escargot</b>	Snails are farmed and then processed by canning. Cans are available in 796ml or 96ct 850g sizes.
<b>Frogs’ Legs</b>	Light pink meaty frogs’ legs are often compared to chicken in texture and flavour. They are available skinned, frozen and ready to use.



**Applicable Regulations and Resources for Game**

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Registry of Meat Establishments](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Meat Hygiene Manual of Procedures](#)

[Fish Inspection Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. F-12\)](#)

[Fish Inspection Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 802\)](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency Fish and Seafood](#)

[Food and Drug Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. F-27\)](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - General Principles of Food Hygiene](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - Code of Hygiene Practice for Meat](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - Code of Hygienic Practice for the Processing of Frog Legs](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - Code of Hygienic Practice for Eggs and Egg Products](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - Code of Hygienic Practices for Fish and Seafood Products](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for Food Additives](#)

[Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. C-38\)](#)

[Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 417\)](#)

[Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grading Regulations \(SOR/92-541\)](#)

[Canadian Beef Grading Agency – Grades](#)

[Food and Drug Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 870\) – Para. 14.015B,](#)

[Meat Inspection Regulations, 1990 \(SOR/90-288\)](#)

[Guidance Document Repository \(GDR\). - Annex A: Approved Countries](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Meat and Poultry Products](#)

[Meat Inspection Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. 25 \(1st Supp.\)\)](#)

[Health of Animals Act \(S.C. 1990, c. 21\)](#)

[Reference Listing of Accepted Construction Materials, Packaging Materials and Non-Food Chemical Products Database](#)

[Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 \(S.C. 1999, c. 33\)](#)

[Pest Control Products Act \(S.C. 2002, c. 28\)](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Guide to Importing Food Products Commercially](#)

[Canadian Bison](#)

[Muskox](#)