



Ministry for Primary Industries
PO Box 2526, Wellington
NEW ZEALAND
0800 00 83 33
www.mpi.govt.nz

DISCLAIMER

Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this guide is accurate. The Ministry for Primary Industries does not accept any responsibility or liability whatsoever for any error of fact, omission, interpretation or opinion that may be present, however it may have occurred.



Making sure your meat and seafood is legal

Buying your meat and seafood only from legal sources plays a vital part in ensuring the food you serve is safe and suitable as the law requires.

Keeping **illegal meat** and **seafood** off the menu

Any food service business (such as restaurants, catering companies, cafés and takeaway shops) that serves meat (including pork and poultry) or seafood to their customers must source it from the regulated system.

Businesses that operate within the regulated system have approved processes in place to manage any food safety risks associated with slaughtering and processing meat, and harvesting seafood.

Sourcing your meat from a regulated supplier ensures that the animal was slaughtered and processed under hygienic conditions in registered premises and inspected by trained professionals.

It is against the law to buy or receive meat or seafood from anyone who is operating outside of the regulated system. This includes:

- recreationally hunted meat (including wild goat, rabbits or pigs, venison, or game birds) that has been shot in the wild;
- homekill meat;
- recreationally collected seafood.

This is because there are no guarantees that illegal meat, poultry, and seafood has been produced in ways that manage the food safety risks associated with these foods – unlike regulated product that has been slaughtered/harvested and processed according to the rules.

Risks associated with **illegal meat** and **seafood**

Because illegal meat and seafood is not subject to the same rigorous regulatory controls it could be unfit for human consumption.

Illegal meat could contain illness-causing bacteria because of sick or diseased animals being slaughtered, cross-contamination from unhygienic conditions occurring during processing and transportation, or finished product being handled incorrectly (such as unrefrigerated storage and transportation).

Illegal meat could also be contaminated with chemicals if the animal has eaten poisoned bait (such as wild deer or wild pigs eating poison pellets) or it has been given a veterinary medicine and then been slaughtered before the chemical could pass through the animal's system.

Illegal shellfish could be contaminated with illness-causing bacteria if it has been collected from areas where the seawater is contaminated with sewage or they may contain biotoxins from toxic algae. Illegal fish that hasn't been chilled properly could contain histamines which cause allergic reactions in people.

Penalties for serving **illegal meat** and **seafood**

Saving a bit of money by buying and using illegal meat, poultry or seafood could be the costliest decision you ever make. Anyone who knowingly sells, offers for sale or has in their possession illegal meat or seafood faces fines of up to \$500 000 for a corporate body (such as a company or partnership), and up to \$100 000 and two years imprisonment for an individual.

Anyone found guilty of knowingly preparing or selling meat or seafood that is unfit for human consumption faces fines of up to \$100 000 and a term of imprisonment of up to one year.

If you are concerned that meat or seafood you are being offered has not come through the regulated system, ask your supplier to provide proof they are registered with MPI or their local council.

If you are not satisfied you are being offered product that can legally be sold, find a different supplier.

Also, keep proof of purchase to show who you bought your meat or seafood from.

Anyone can confidentially report the suspected unregulated killing and sale of meat to MPI on 0800 69 37 21.

