

This month's newsletter focuses on the upcoming deer hunting season.

Here are some dates to keep in mind:

- Youth-only Firearms Season: October 11 – 19, 2025
- Early Muzzleloader Season: October 18 – 19, 2025
- Special Season: September 27 – 28, 2025 (Youth-only Firearms)
- Modern Firearms Season: November 8 – 23, 2025

We will be offering the ANR Monthly newsletter via email, if you prefer to receive the newsletter virtually, please call the office and provide your email address.

Beekeeper Club



The next Beekeeper meeting is
October 20th at 6:30pm.
Newcomers and those curious
about beekeeping are welcome
to join!



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Garden Club



The Garden Club is NOT
meeting on October 16th. Instead
Garrard Extension will host a
“Winterizing Your Garden”
Workshop at the office on
November 3rd at 4:00pm

REMEMBER:
Fall is the optimal
time to conduct
soil testing

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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WINTERIZING YOUR GARDEN WORKSHOP



**November 3rd, 2025 at 4 pm
at the Garrard County Extension Office**

We have limited space for this class so please RSVP to reserve your spot by calling our office at 859-792-3026.

Discover techniques to protect your plants and ensure healthy growth come springtime.

Please dress appropriate for outdoors as we will have some hands on time outside! Dinner provided.

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FARMERS MARKET INTEREST MEETING

Help bring back our community Farmers Market!

We are hosting an **Interest Meeting** to find someone (or a team) willing to manage the market. Dinner will be provided so please RSVP by November 14th.



Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025



Time: 6:00pm



Location: Garrard County Extension Office



What to Expect:

- Sharon Spencer from the KDA will be here to answer your questions!
- Learn what is involved in being a market manager
- Ask questions about responsibilities and support available
- Meet others who care about local food and community connections
- See how you can help bring fresh produce and goods by local vendors back to our county



For questions, contact Casey Byrd via email (casey.byrd@uky.edu) or call the office at 859-792-3026.





COOK WILD *Garrard County*

**GARRARD COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE
NOVEMBER 6TH AT 6PM**

**COME JOIN US FOR A FUN EDUCATIONAL NIGHT WHERE WE WILL BE
SAMPLING DELICIOUS WILD GAME RECIPES**

DINNER WILL BE PROVIDED

PLEASE CALL TO REGISTER 859-792-3026

LIMIT OF 50 PARTICIPANTS

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.



Cook Wild Kentucky

A Beginner's Guide to White-Tailed Deer

Kentucky has a mixture of woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, and farmland. This makes it a great habitat for wildlife species such as white-tailed deer. The white-tailed deer is common throughout Kentucky, with a population close to one million. You can see white-tailed deer grazing in forests, pastures, and crop fields. They are a prized resource, supplying food, clothing, and fun.

White-tailed deer are the leading game species in North America. Kentucky offers some of the best hunting opportunities in the country. Deer season starts as early as September and can run through the middle of January, depending on *method of take*. Visit the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources website at <https://fw.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx> for information about licenses, season dates, permits, bag limits, and other tips. Hunters over the age of 12 need a valid hunting license, deer permit, and hunter education certification to hunt deer in Kentucky. Get your hunter education certification card by going to an in-person class, or you can complete an online course, followed by attending a live-fire-experience range day. Information on Hunter Education can be found at fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/Hunter-Education.aspx.



(Photo by Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources)

Field Dressing

All deer hunters need to know the right way to *field dress* their deer. If not, contamination can happen. Follow these steps:

- Wear rubber gloves, and use a sharp, clean knife.
- Use a head lamp or flashlight if doing it in the dark, or establish a well-lit area for field dressing.
- With care, open the abdominal cavity to remove the organs. Do not cut into the organs, as this could cause bacteria to get on the meat. Take special care not to nick the bladder, intestines, or stomach, which have waste matter.
- Remove all the inside organs first to allow the body cavity to cool down. You can either leave the organs in the field or get rid of them in the trash. Some people keep the heart and liver to eat.
- Move the deer back to your vehicle, using a method that keeps the body cavity clean. Carts, sleds, tarps, ATVs, frame packs, or other methods can make moving the animal easier, depending on the spot where the animal was harvested.
- Keep the animal dry. Do not rinse with water from a stream or lake. Raw water has germs that could be a food safety issue.
- Get the animal to a cool setting as quickly as you can.
- Do not move the deer on the hood of any vehicle. The heat will speed up germ growth and likely spoil the meat.
- Butcher the meat off the bone in a place that is cool and out of sunlight. Germs grow in warm settings. Work quickly to get meat into the refrigerator or freezer. You can find a deer-processing video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=PBzsMrUhfKI&feature=youtu.be>.

Safe Food Handling

Process your deer in a clean and disinfected space. Be sure to clean and disinfect the area again when you are done. Use a bleach solution made of two tablespoons bleach to one quart of water.

Venison is the name for the meat of larger wild game, such as bison, elk, moose, and deer. Prepping venison is like working with any other meat: it is best to use safe food-handling habits. When storing and handling venison, stop raw meat juice from dripping onto other items in the refrigerator. Do not let raw meat juice spread to other foods on cutting boards. Clean and sanitize all tools that touch raw meat or its juices with warm soapy water. Never thaw frozen deer meat at room temperature. You should thaw meat at a cool temperature in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. Cook raw meat right away after thawing. The color of fresh deer meat is a dark, reddish-brown color. If the meat has a green tint, it has gone bad. The texture should be firm and feel smooth and slick to the touch. If the meat looks loose or has started to break apart, it has begun to spoil. There should not be any odor.

Storage

You can store deer meat in the refrigerator at 40 degrees F or below if it will be eaten within two to three days. Freezing is a great choice for long-term storage. Trim off fat you can see. Use packing methods designed for the freezer. For the best results, wrap the meat tightly in waxed paper, plastic freezer wrap, or heavy-duty aluminum foil. Remove as much air as you can. You can seal wrapped meat in plastic containers or freezer bags

for added safety. Home vacuum sealers work well for packing venison for freezing. Don't forget to label and date each package. Freeze at 0 degrees F or below.

You can also make deer meat into jerky or can it using a pressure canner. Tips on making jerky can be found in the UK Cooperative Extension Service publication [Jerky Safety \(FCS3-594\)](#). Tips on canning deer meat can be found in the publication [Home Canning Meat, Poultry, Wild Game, and Fish \(FCS3-585\)](#). You can also find a video on pressure canning wild game at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZmY31M7swk>.



Meat stored in a home freezer should be labeled with date and cut of meat. (Photo by Alex Cline, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources)



(Photo by James Inman)



Cooking

Eating deer meat is healthy. Venison is one of the leanest red meats. It is high in protein and low in saturated fat. A three-ounce serving of venison has 45% less fat than beef, making it a lower-fat alternative to red meat. Venison is low in sodium and rich in vitamins and minerals. It is a good source of iron, zinc, and vitamin B. You can cut venison to use for steaks, ground burgers, sausage, meatballs, stew meat, or roasts. A great way to use deer meat is in place of red meats or proteins; try venison as a substitute for ground beef in your chili or tacos.

Venison meat can become tough when cooked too long. To help make the meat tender, marinate before grilling. Use low, moist heat for a longer cooking time, such as in a slow cooker or roaster. This can help make the meat more tender and flavorful. You should cook whole cuts of meat such as steaks and roasts to an internal temperature of 145 degrees F. Cook ground deer meat to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F. Cook soups, stews, casseroles, and leftovers to 165 degrees F. Use a *calibrated metal stem thermometer* to check the internal temperature.

Avoiding Sick Animals

In general, you should avoid harvesting animals that look sick or show signs of injury, infection, or illness. Hunters should not bring home a deer that looks sick or unwell. If the muscle tissue is discolored or has an off odor during the butchering process, throw away that part of the meat. The public can email wildlife health concerns to info.center@ky.gov or call 800-858-1549. For more tips on wildlife health in Kentucky, visit <https://fw.ky.gov/wildlife/Pages/Wildlife-Diseases.aspx>. In addition, as of December 2023, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is present in Kentucky. CWD is like mad cow disease, but it affects deer and elk. It is a neurological disease that slowly changes the brain of deer. Deer that look confused or very thin, or those that are stumbling, may be showing signs of CWD. If a deer has CWD, its meat is affected too, and you should not eat it. Unfortunately, deer can have CWD and not show any symptoms, so it is important to get your deer checked for CWD if it is harvested in a county within or adjacent to the CWD surveillance zone set by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. For more facts on CWD or information on how to have your deer sampled for it, check the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service publication [What is Chronic Wasting Disease? \(FORFS 21-08\)](#).



Canned venison. (Photos by Elizabeth Coots, University of Kentucky)

Glossary

Calibrated metal stem thermometer

A thermometer that has been tested for accuracy in a substance with a known temperature and then changed to match that temperature. (For more information on calibration, check the UK Extension publication [How to Calibrate a Bimetallic Stemmed Thermometer Using the Ice-Point Method](#) online.)

Cross-contamination

The movement or transfer of harmful bacteria from one person, object, or place to another.

Field dressing

The act of taking out the internal organs of a harvested game animal to help the quality of meat and stop bacteria growth on the meat.

Method of take

Type of weapon (rifle, crossbow, muzzleloader, or archery) used to harvest a game animal. (Refer to Kentucky revised statute [KRS 150](#) for more information.)

Resources

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife

Deer hunting regulations: <https://fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/Deer.aspx>

Hunter education course: <https://fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/Hunter-Education.aspx>

Field-dressing video: <https://youtu.be/XdYUjH7ZzCM>

Chronic wasting disease: <https://fw.ky.gov/wildlife/Pages/Wildlife-Diseases.aspx>

University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

Home Canning Meat, Poultry, Wild Game, and Fish (FCS3-585) <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/FCS3/FCS3585/FCS3585.pdf>

Deer Processing Demonstration video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=PBzsMruHfKI&feature=youtu.be>

Pressure Canning Wild Game video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZmY31M7swk>
Jerky Safety (FCS3-594): <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/FCS3/FCS3594/FCS3594.pdf>

Chronic wasting disease: <http://forestry.ca.uky.edu/cwd>
What is Chronic Wasting Disease? (FORFS 21-08): https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/sites/forestry.ca.uky.edu/files/what_is_chronic_wasting_disease_forfs21-08.pdf

Should my Harvested Deer be Tested for CWD? (FORFS 21-09): https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/sites/forestry.ca.uky.edu/files/shoulditest_my_deer_forfs21-09.pdf

Deer Processing Guide for Animals Harvested in CWD Areas (FORFS 21-10): https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/sites/forestry.ca.uky.edu/files/deer_processing_guide_forfs21-10.pdf

Kentucky General Assembly

KRS 150: <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/statutes/chapter.aspx?id=37729>



(Photo by Joe Lacefield, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources)

BBQ Venison Meatballs

Servings: 6

Serving Size: 2 meatballs

Ingredients

Meatballs

- 1 pound ground venison (may substitute elk or beef instead of deer)
- 1/2 cup 2% milk
- 3/4 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup fresh onion, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Sauce

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup onion, grated
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Directions

1. Wash hands with warm water and soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, especially after handling raw meat.
2. Combine venison, milk, oats, onion, salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Use a sturdy spoon or clean hands to mix well.
3. Shape meat mixture into 12 one-inch balls, and place in a shallow, 9-by-13-inch baking pan.
4. Combine all the sauce ingredients in a bowl and stir well. Pour sauce over meatballs.
5. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees F for 1 hour, turning over twice.
6. Store leftovers in the refrigerator within 2 hours. Divide leftovers into smaller containers to allow quick cooling.

Nutrition facts per serving: 160 calories; 3g total fat; 1g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 65mg cholesterol; 220mg sodium; 14g total carbohydrate; 1g dietary fiber; 6g total sugars; 3g added sugars; 20g protein; 0% Daily Value of vitamin D; 4% Daily Value of calcium; 15% Daily Value of iron; 6% Daily Value of potassium.

Adapted from "Fish and Game Cookbook" (2013) by Bonnie Scott.

Deer Camp Breakfast Sausage

Servings: 16

Serving Size: 1 patty

Ingredients

- 2 pounds ground venison
- 1 pound ground pork
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram or oregano
- 1 tablespoon dried sage
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup cooking oil

Directions

1. Wash hands with warm water and soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, especially after handling raw meat.
2. Combine meat and seasonings.
3. Add egg and breadcrumbs. Stir well.
4. Shape into 16 patties.
5. Fry in oil until golden brown on each side and internal temperature reaches 165 degrees F.
6. Store leftovers in the refrigerator within 2 hours.

Nutrition facts per serving: 190 calories; 12g total fat; 4.5g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 75mg cholesterol; 220mg sodium; 1g carbohydrate; 0g dietary fiber; 0g total sugars; 0g added sugars; 18g protein; 0% Daily Value of vitamin D; 2% Daily Value of calcium; 10% Daily Value of iron; 6% Daily Value of potassium.

Adapted from "Wild Game: From Field to Table" by Sandra Bastin, Extension food and nutrition specialist. Revised July 2007.