

Factsheet

Country Food and Food Safety Regulations



New Food Safety Regulations went into effect in Nunavut on May 1, 2024.

The new Food Safety Regulations recognize the importance of country food and the rights of Inuit under the *Nunavut Agreement*.

Importance of Country Food

Country food has significant health benefits related to nutritional value, food security, and social/cultural aspects. It is important to maintain access to country food. Like any other food, country food may be associated with health risks related to harvesting, butchering, transporting, and handling the product. Animals harvested for country food can be infected or ill with diseases that can also make people sick. Trichinosis from eating walrus infected with *Trichinella* is the most common example.

Situations where the Food Safety Regulations Apply to Country Food

Country food is generally exempt from the *Food Safety Regulations*. However, the regulations apply in the following situations:

- Country food that is mixed with a food that is not country food is no longer considered country food and the regulations apply. Note that ingredients needed to brine or pickle country food for the purpose of preserving it, is not considered adding other food.
- Places used for the commercial processing of country food.
- Places for which a licence is required under section 108 of the *Wildlife Act*.

A food premise such as a restaurant can serve country food if certain precautions are followed and it is made clear to customers that the country food is not inspected.

Country food may also be sold outside of a food premise. However, a person who sells uninspected country food must clearly indicate in any written, published, or broadcast advertisement, or offer for sale:

- That the country food has not been inspected.
- In the case of walrus or bear, whether it has been tested for trichinella and, if so, whether it tested negative or positive.

Country food guidelines for institutions

The Department of Health has developed a guideline called “Serving Country Food in Government-Funded Facilities and Programs” that must be followed by institutions such as hospitals, personal care homes, correctional centres, schools, and childcare centres etc. that serve country food.

Community freezers

- Community freezers are exempt from the *Food Safety Regulations*.
- However, they will be inspected by Environmental Health Officers when visiting communities for educational purposes.

