



Newsletter

October 2025 - Issue 1

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Spotlight WG 1



©Arja Helena Kautto

The Working Group Hunting and Processing assesses the European hunting sector, including the legislation applied to the game meat chain, training schemes regarding the initial examination of game on the spot and official meat inspection. This will help to identify areas where the actors can ensure safe food and contribute to One Health goals.

WG1 Lead.

Arja Helena Kautto

DVM, M.Sci.biol, Dipl ECVPH.

Dep. Animal Biosciences, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,

I am motivated to work on wild game meat safety on union level, creating new co-operative groups through Europe and connected countries.

We have already managed to map the basic hunting information concerning number of hunters, hunted species and different training demands in different member states and connected third countries. Many other projects are up and running with active and interested colleagues.

News

- Niels Kanstrup (Aarhus University) handed over the lead of Working Group 3 “Chemical Hazards” to Rafael Mateo (IREC & IDAEA).
- Selene Rubiola (University of Turin) was elected Co-Science Communication Coordinator.
- Daniel Bures (Czech University of Life Sciences Prague) was elected Co-Grant Awarding co-ordinator.
- Riikka Laaukkanen-Ninios (University of Helsinki) was elected Co-Lead of WG1.
- Daniel Vecchiato (University of Padua) was elected Co-Lead of WG2.
- Mark Taggart (University of the Highlands and Islands) was elected Co-Leader of WG3.
- Madalena Vieira-Pinto (University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro) was elected Co-Leader of WG4.
- Rafael Hernan Mateus-Vargas (University of Goettingen) was elected Co-Leader of WG5.



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Upcoming

Webinar Series
Safety in the Game Meat Chain
#7



12.11.2025
New knowledge and hunters training

More information available at:
www.safegamemeat.eu/webinars/

SAVE THE DATE

Our next General Meeting will take place in the 2nd week of June 2026 in Bucharest.

Upcoming workshop in 2026:

- SWOT analysis on hunter training (Naples, Italy)
- Fragment distribution and contaminants (Barcelona, Spain)
- Biological hazards and knowledge gaps
- Methods for elicitation of consumers preferences for game meat (Mailand, Italy)

More information will follow soon.



Kick-Off Meeting

Onsite meeting in Brussels, Belgium
29.09.23

The official launch of the COST Action SafeGameMeat took place in Brussels, marking the beginning of an exciting journey in advancing game meat safety. The Kick-Off Meeting brought together representatives from 17 European countries at the premises of the COST Association in Brussels.

During the meeting, the Management Committee was formed, electing:

- Annelise Mader as Action Chair
- Peter Paulsen as Vice Chair
- The members of the Core Group (find more details here: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA22166/#tabs+Name:Main%20Contacts%20and%20Leadership>).

This gathering set the stage for collaborative efforts in enhancing game meat safety, with the team ready to lead the initiative forward.



4th National Congress Wild Game Meat Chain

Hybrid conference session, organized by CA SafeGameMeat
11.04.25

The 4th National Congress on Wild Game Meat Chain in Turin addressed a wide array of health, managerial, ethical, and economic challenges within the wild game meat chain. This year, the event featured something special: an international session dedicated to the SafeGameMeat COST Action.

The session provided a valuable platform for sharing knowledge, with presentations from the four thematic Working Groups of our COST Action, each offering insights into the latest developments in game meat safety.



1st General Meeting

Hybrid meeting in Vienna, Austria
02.-03.05.24

The 1st General Meeting was an important opportunity to get to know each other, the network, the Action mission, and the Working Groups. Held in a hybrid format at the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES), the meeting brought together experts from a wide range of fields, including hunting, economics, microbiology, hygiene training, parasitology, epidemiology, chemistry, and meat technology.

The event marked a key step in building connections across these diverse sectors and ensuring a unified approach to advancing the goals of SafeGameMeat.

For registered members only, meeting materials can be accessed here: <https://social.bscw.bund.de/sec/bscw.cgi/22054825>



1st SafeGameMeat Conference

Hybrid conference in Porto, Portugal
26.-28.05.2025

How do hunting practices, processing, inspection, trade, legislation, and consumption of game meat differ across Europe? What chemical and biological risks must be considered to ensure consumer health and food safety? These critical questions, along with many others, were addressed at the 1st SafeGameMeat Conference. The conference featured 30 oral presentations, 30 poster presentations, and numerous interdisciplinary discussions, creating an invaluable opportunity for experts to share their knowledge and experiences in game meat safety.

For those who missed the conference or wish to explore the findings further, here are the materials:

[Abstract Book](#) & [Other Conference Materials](#)


WS Health risks and bioavailability of metal residues from hunting ammunition in game meat

*Hybrid workshop in Billund, Denmark
10.-11.09.2024*

Lead has traditionally been the primary material used in hunting ammunition due to its density and malleability. However, it is also a significant source of contamination because it fragments extensively on impact. This workshop emphasized the importance of hunter education, public awareness and interdisciplinary research in facilitating the transition to non-toxic ammunition and reducing contamination.

Link to report: <https://zenodo.org/records/15088415>


WS Mapping the Invisible: Trade, Logistics and Flows of Game Meat in Europe

*Hybrid workshop in Domodossola, Italy
26.-27.06.2025*

How is game meat traded? How is it transported? And how is it consumed across different regions? The workshop enabled a multidisciplinary reflection on the European game meat market, highlighting first results from the European Game Meat Survey. The workshop marked an important step toward a more systematic understanding of the sector that, while rich in tradition and cultural value, remains underexplored.


WS Hunting and the Game Meat Chain

*Hybrid workshop in Riga, Latvia
01.-03.10.2024*

What does “wild”, “game”, or “meat” mean? This workshop enabled an interdisciplinary exchange on definitions, hunting practices, hunting laws and huntable species between the different European countries. Workshop participants highlighted national similarities and differences that relate to the game meat chain.


WS Animals as Bioindicators

*Hybrid workshop in Krakow, Poland
16.-18.09.25*

The workshop focused on wildlife and game species, exploring how animals like brown bears and other mammals serve as indicators of environmental contamination, human and ecosystem health. The workshop also covered methods for biomonitoring, including GIS for pollinator conservation, non-invasive techniques with honeybees, and strategies to link wildlife health to public awareness and policy. The event, a joint initiative of the BeSafeBeeHoney and SafeGameMeat COST Actions, concluded with a "World Café" session for collaborative strategy development.

Webinars



The webinar series on the safety of game meat was launched by Working Group 1 - Hunting and Processing on the 13th of June 2024. The first session featured insightful presentations from two prominent organizations, the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation (CIC) and the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE). Both organizations presented their missions and ongoing activities, providing a broad perspective of hunting and conservation efforts and their importance in game meat safety.



Working Group 3 “Chemical Hazards” tackled the question “How are Per- and Polyfluoralkyl Substances, short PFAS, relevant for game meat safety?” PFAS are highly fluorinated environmental contaminants which are associated with several adverse health effects. Experts from Poland, Denmark and Germany presented research results from past and ongoing monitoring projects on PFAS contamination in game animals. The presenters pointed out that PFAS may indeed reach critical levels in some regions, rendering products such as livers of wild boars unsafe to eat. However, the monitoring studies showed that PFAS contamination was uncritical in the majority of investigated game meat.



Working Group 2 - Trade Networks and Supply Chain continued the webinar series by discussing the risks associated with game meat consumption, featuring presentations on hunting activity, contaminants, food safety, and product adulteration. Speakers discussed research on Italian hunters' behavior and consumption habits, the implementation of monitoring plans, and the detection of food fraud in game products. The session ended with discussions on improving awareness and the implications of the research for ensuring the security and integrity of wild meat products.



Working Group 4 - Biological Hazards organized the 4th webinar in the series, focusing on the risk of meat-borne pathogens. Zoonotic pathogens such as foodborne parasites, bacteria, viruses, and prions, are a significant public health risk. Experts discussed how zoonoses in large game can be transmitted through improper handling or consumption of undercooked or raw game meat. Presentations addressed various meatborne hazards and highlighted the importance of proper meat handling for disease prevention.



Working Group 1 “Hunting and Processing” opened the second round of the webinar series by discussing the vital role of hunters in initial checks of game meat safety to place game meat on the market, hunters are required to complete training that meets the standards of competent authorities to qualify as a ‘trained person’ under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004. However, training in game meat hygiene and food safety is just one aspect of their overall qualification. In this webinar, experts from Finland, Portugal, and Sweden shared positive examples of national training schemes for hunters in hygiene.



The webinar focused on the topic of game meat by-products. Key regulatory definitions and categories of animal by-products were explained, including unfit parts, skins, bones, and organs. Also, disposal methods such as burial, incineration, and processing for pet food were covered. Risks associated with improper disposal were discussed, especially the potential transmission of zoonotic diseases like tuberculosis or trichinosis. The speakers emphasized the importance of education and training for hunters and food processors to ensure food safety. Pet food safety was highlighted as a key area of concern, particularly regarding potential lead contamination.



SafeGameMeat in numbers

Action Start Date: 26/09/2023

Action End Date: 25/09/2027

Countries represented: 42

COST Members: 35

Working Group members: 209

WG1 Hunting and Processing: 80

WG2 Trade Networks and Supply Chain: 63

WG3 Chemical Hazards: 71

WG4 Biological Hazards: 129

WG5 Exploitation and Dissemination: 78

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This publication is based upon work from Safety in the Game Meat Chain COST Action (SafeGameMeat, CA22166), supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.

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