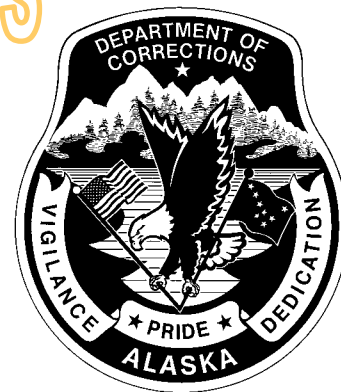


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POINT MACKENZIE CORRECTIONAL FARM RENEWS MOOSE MEAT SALVAGE PROGRAM

(JUNEAU) – A program by which rail-killed moose are salvaged for their meat at the Point Mackenzie Correctional Farm has been renewed for a second year, said Superintendent Joe Schmidt. Last winter some 600 pounds of moose meat was salvaged, processed and distributed to the Food Bank of Alaska.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Food Bank of Alaska, Alaska Department of Corrections and the Alaska Railroad, first signed in November 2005, was designed to more effectively salvage, process and distribute flavorful and relatively low fat moose meat to lower income Alaskans.

Under terms of the agreement, Alaska Railroad staff move salvageable moose killed by trains to a grade crossing within the Mat-Su Borough. After contact by the railroad, a work crew made up of inmates and Correctional Officers from Point Mackenzie take the carcass to the farm where it is prepared and hung in the barn. After proper aging (about a week), inmate workers process the carcass into ground into burger in the meat cutting room. The ground meat is then placed into one-pound packages and frozen.

The Food Bank of Alaska picks up the frozen packs and distributes them to soup kitchens, pantries, senior centers and charities. Formal state or federal inspection of facilities that process game meat is not required.

The program covers moose killed along 68 miles of track between Wasilla and Talkeetna from October through the end of March.

Moose killed by trains outside the designated corridor will be distributed according to current salvage procedures outlined by the Department of Fish and Game, by which Department of Public Safety dispatchers contact charities or individuals from a list.

“We only processed four moose last season. Basically this was because weather conditions were such that very few moose were on the railroad tracks,” Schmidt said. “No two winters are the same, so there’s a pretty good chance that we’ll be processing more meat this winter. That’s bad for the moose, of course, but good for the folks who will benefit through the food bank.”