

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION FOR DEER HANDLING FACILITIES AND HOUSING

The receiving of this specification does not imply approval of a grant application. However, if written approval is issued, then this specification becomes part of the contract between the applicant and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

This is a minimum specification. Where the word “SHALL” is used, then that standard (at least) must be followed in grant-aided buildings. Where a procedure is “RECOMMENDED”, this is advice only on good practice.

Note that all references to other Department Specifications are to the current edition of that specification [available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Website (www.agriculture.gov.ie) under Farm buildings]. Similarly, references to Standards are to the current edition of the Irish, British or European Standard, as appropriate.

1. Safety

APPLICANT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

Applicants are reminded that they have a duty under the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to provide a safe working environment on the farm, including farm buildings, for all people who may work on that farm. There is a further duty to ensure that any contractor, or person hired to do building work, provides and/or works in a safe environment during construction. It is the farmer's responsibility to provide a construction stage project supervisor.

SAFETY DURING CONSTRUCTION

Farmer/Applicant Responsibility: Certain construction dangers may be encountered in the course of building or conversion work. Neither the Minister or any official of the Department will be in any way liable for any damage, loss or injury to persons, animals or property in the event of any occurrence related to the development and the applicant shall fully indemnify the Minister or any official of the Minister in relation to any such damage, loss or injury howsoever occurring during the development works.

Dangers: If any or all of the work is undertaken by the applicant/farmer he/she should seek competent advice and undertake all temporary work required to ensure the stability of excavations, superstructure, stanchion foundations and wall foundations, also to divert any drains, springs or surface water away from the works, and to guard against possible wind damage, or any other foreseeable risk.

Power lines: Farm buildings shall not be constructed under or nearer than 10m to an overhead power supply. If advice is required, or if power lines need to be diverted, it is the applicant's responsibility to contact, in writing, the local ESB supervisor before construction commences, and then to follow the ESB conditions.

Danger to children: It is the applicant's responsibility to prevent children from playing or spending time in the vicinity of any building work.

2. Concrete Specification

Concrete shall be to the standard set out in the Department's specification S101 and shall be certified in the same manner.

3. Site

Site for deer handling facilities and housing shall be dry and not subject to flooding. Handling facilities and housing shall be located preferably on an existing farm roadway. Both shall be as close as possible to the deer paddocks to minimise the length of raceways.

The site shall be carefully chosen with a view to minimising operational and constructional problems. It shall be well separated from potential fire hazards and sheltered if possible. As a general guide, deer handling facilities and housing should be located not less than 50m from any waterbody in the case of new farmyards, and not less than 10m in the case of extensions/modifications to an existing facility. The minimum distance between a deer handling facilities and housing and a public/private water supply source, either surface or ground, shall be 60m. In vulnerable situations this distance shall be increased up to 300m.

Note: Any land drains shall be stopped at least 10m on the upstream side of a site and diverted around to re-connect with the drainage system at least 10m on the downstream side of the storage area.

4. Housing

4.1 General

Calves and adult deer are normally housed in loose housing, or in large pens in loose houses. A suggested floor area per animal is 3 - 4m² for adult reds, 2m² for red calves and adult fallow deer and 1m² for fallow calves. If pens are required they shall be constructed as per section 5.4. The height of pen divisions shall be not less than 2.44m.

4.2 Structure

All building work shall be completed in accordance with the Department's specification S101, minimum specification for the Structure of Agricultural Buildings.

4.3 Floor

All floors of deer housing shall have concrete floors of 125mm thick, laid to a fall of 1 in 60, on 150mm of well-compacted hardcore.

4.4 Doors/Gates

Gates are preferable for deer housing, to allow for mechanical cleaning out.

Lower part of gate may be sheeted with 12mm plywood (as at 4 above) or the equivalent and 25mm steel mesh may be used on the upper part so that animals can see out.

For operator safety reasons external doors shall be sliding.

4.5 Water / Food

Suitable drinking and feeding arrangements shall be provided in each loose house.

4.6 Ventilation

All ventilation shall be as per the Department's specification S101.

4.7 Waste Disposal

All effluent and washings from the building and the handling facilities shall be channeled to a trapped gully within or directly outside the enclosure and piped to the existing wastewater disposal system in accordance with the EU -Nitrates Directive requirements.

All solid farmyard manure and soiled water shall be stored in compliance with the Nitrates Directive S.I.378 (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters Regulations 2006) where a manure pit is required, it shall be constructed in accordance with Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food specification S108.

4.8 Electrical Work and Lighting

Artificial lighting to 50-lux level shall be provided. All electrical work and lighting shall be as per the Department's specification S101, minimum specification for the structure of Agricultural Buildings.

5. Handling Facilities

5.1 General

Simple handling facilities may be provided for small herds, consisting of a few pens, one of which forms a crush. As herd numbers increase most of the following facilities will become necessary.

1. a circular or square "sweep pen" with two centrally-hung gates
2. pens, preferably of a variety of sizes, to accommodate from 5 - 20 animals
3. a crush
4. a weighing pen
5. a loading ramp

For fallow deer the following will additionally be required:

6. facilities to ensure complete darkness in the sweep pen and in the enclosed tunnel.

7. a tunnel connecting the sweep pen to the crush with a light source at the far end of the crush.

Deer handling facilities may be constructed in existing structurally sound and otherwise suitable farm buildings. However grant aid will only be paid in respect of new materials used in modifying them. Similarly, deer may be housed in existing buildings and the same principle will apply.

5.2 Timber

All timber fences shall be treated as outlined in the Department's specification S148. Plywood for external and internal use shall be (a) Marine Ply or (b) WBP quality ply, treated with two coats of preservative and edges sealed with bitumen or mastic-type product.

5.3 Lead-In Race

The end of the raceway approaching the handling unit becomes the "lead in race" and requires special treatment. The lead-in race shall be at least 8m long and shall preferably include a bend.

Close boarding shall form the lead-in race where a holding pen is not used. Where there is a holding pen, plastic screening or running boards may be used instead. These are fixed on to the standard deer fencing, preferably tight-lock or stiff-stay.

5.3.1 Close Boarding

Close Boarding shall be formed of 150mm x 25mm boards fixed to 125mm x 125mm posts sunk 0.9m into the ground. Gaps between boards shall be 50mm at the bottom increasing to 100mm at the top. Spacing between posts shall not exceed 2m. Height shall be a minimum of 1.9m.

5.3.2 Plastic Screening

Windbreak (e.g. Tensar), or equivalent, shall be fixed inside the fencing mesh and attached to the posts using 25mm x 50mm laths. Posts shall be as specified for raceway fencing in specification S148, but the maximum spacing between posts shall be 3m. In very exposed sites horizontal line wires may be needed inside the plastic screen for extra support.

5.3.3 Running Boards

Running Boards. e.g. 75mm x 12mm shall normally be fixed on to the standard deer mesh using galvanised steel wire or threaded through the vertical lines of the mesh where the spacing is adequate. A minimum of 4 boards shall be used.

Note: With fallow deer the tensor type plastic screening is preferable. The lead in race may also be used as a meal feeding area, in which case the surface may be gravelled.

5.4 Pens

Pen divisions and doors shall be 2.44m high and be formed of 12mm plywood fixed to 40mm galvanised box profile steel framing or equivalent. Steel mesh may also be used. Doors may be hinged or sliding.

In the case of fallow deer it is easier to handle them if animals are broken down into small groups in small pens before they enter the sweep pen, and it is preferable if these small pens are in seem (apparent) darkness.

In the case of red deer most tasks can be carried out in small pens, 1.5m x 1.5m in size, with small groups of animals.

5.5 Sweep Pen

5.5.1 Size

A circular or octagonal sweep pen is preferable. It shall have a minimum diameter of 3m or if square be a minimum size of 3m x 3m. The maximum size is 5m in diameter or 5m x 5m square. Sides and gates shall be 2.44m high, or where a ceiling is provided, 2.1m high.

5.5.2 Construction

Sweep pens shall have two centrally hung gates, which shall rotate through 360°. These gates shall normally be hung on a 100mm diameter tubular steel post. Gates shall be formed of 12mm plywood, fixed to 40mm x 40mm or 25mm x 50mm painted or galvanised steel framing, or equivalent. The top half of gates may alternatively be constructed of 25mm steel mesh. Hinged panels and slip-doors may be incorporated into the sweep-gates. Sides of the pen shall be of a combination of doors and fixed panels. Doors and panels shall be constructed of 12mm plywood fixed to painted or galvanised steel framing as specified above. Hinges may be formed of 50mm lengths of 55mm diameter tubular steel rotating around fixed 50mm tubular steel. Door latches shall be located so as to avoid injury to animals.

In the case of fallow deer access openings for hands to open door latches etc. shall be fitted with flaps to exclude light.

5.6 Tunnel for Fallow Deer

In the case of fallow deer a tunnel is required to bring animals from the light control sweep pen to the restraint or crush. The longer the tunnel the better. A suggested size is 350mm wide and 1200mm high. It may be formed of 12mm plywood or of other timber construction. Openings on top are useful for reading tag numbers. Sliding or guillotine type doors are best at exit from the sweep pen and entry to the crush. The source of light to the tunnel shall be beyond the end of the crush and visible through it.

5.7 Crush

Crushes are necessary for full veterinary inspection, foot treatments etc. but for smaller herds they may not be required initially. They are normally of proprietary design and construction and are sized according to the species of deer handled. Red deer require a crush to immobilise a fully-grown stag, usually by use of a drop floor system. If fallow deer only are farmed a smaller crush may be installed.

5.8 Weighing System

Several scale systems are available for weighing the animals, the main types being electronic or mechanical, either suspended or as a platform. In the case of fallow deer a weighing platform can be built into the tunnel.

5.9 External Holding Pen

When holding pens are provided, approximately 1m² floor area per adult red deer is required, and 0.6m² for smaller breeds. Height shall be 2.44m.

5.9.1 Construction

Holding pens shall be formed of; (a) Close Boarding as at 5.3.1 above; (b) Plywood Sheeting or (c) existing wall or walls of farm buildings.

5.9.2 Plywood Sheeting

Plywood sheeting shall be as specified in 4 above. Sheets shall be fixed to three 100mm x 75mm timber horizontals which in turn are fixed to 200mm x 200mm posts. The latter are sunk 1m deep in concrete. Spacing between posts shall not exceed 3.66m.

5.9.3 Surface

Gravel, or concrete may be used.

5.10 Loading Ramp

Loading ramps are not essential. They can be formed of concrete or timber to the height of the chosen means of transport. The surface shall be non-slip to avoid injuries to animals.

5.11 Exit Race

The exit race is constructed as per Lead-in Race, see section 5.3.

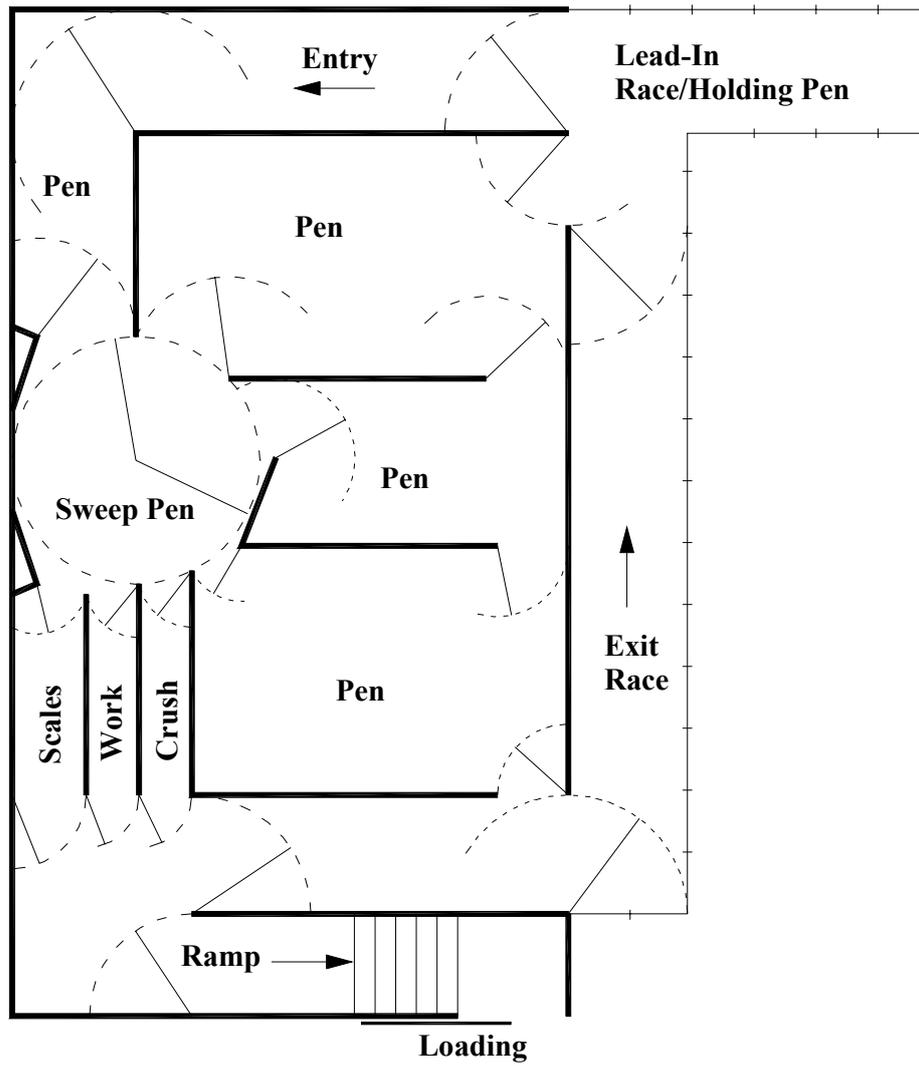


Figure 1 Diagrammatic layout of handling facilities for a large Red Deer herd built within an existing haybarn