

## CASE STUDY: THE WILD JURA VENISON APPROVED GAME HANDLING ESTABLISHMENT

### ENABLING SUSTAINABLE DEER MANAGEMENT THROUGH CRITICAL RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Effective and sustainable deer management is a cornerstone of the Scottish Government's goals for biodiversity recovery, woodland regeneration, and climate resilience as well as adding local employment opportunities and sustainable local food chains. However, the missing link in this national strategy is local, game specific processing infrastructure. Without localised, approved high-capacity venison cooling and processing facilities, the ecological and economic value generated by responsible land management is lost. As national cull targets scale up to protect landscapes across island, highland, and lowland communities, the lack of regional cold storage for the game industry physically blocks progress and strips rural areas of economic and ecological value.

The **Wild Jura Venison Approved Game Handling Establishment (AGHE)**, designed, engineered, and built by Tarrant Refrigeration, provides a proven, repeatable blueprint to solve this challenge. Situated on one of Scotland's most remote islands, this facility transforms sustainable deer management into a localised source of community resilience, local employment, and food security. By handling **5 tonnes of venison** in its first year and retaining the majority of that food within a **25-mile radius**, this project demonstrates how targeted investment in modern refrigeration infrastructure and cool chain solutions directly unlocks the full value of Scotland's wild venison supply chain.

#### 1. THE CHALLENGE: RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICITS

While the policy necessity of sustainable deer management is universally acknowledged, executing it across remote island, highland, and lowland communities presents severe logistical, regulatory, and environmental barriers:

- **The National AGHE Shortage:** Scotland faces a critical macro-shortage of AGHEs and compliant local processing hubs. As national cull targets increase to protect biodiversity, the existing infrastructure is entirely overwhelmed. Without a massive expansion of high-capacity, legally compliant and game specific cold storage, large-scale deer management is physically and logistically bottlenecked.
- **The Infrastructure Gap:** Traditional supply chains require unprocessed carcasses to leave rural areas immediately. This strips remote communities of economic returns, local processing jobs, and access to sustainable, low-carbon protein.



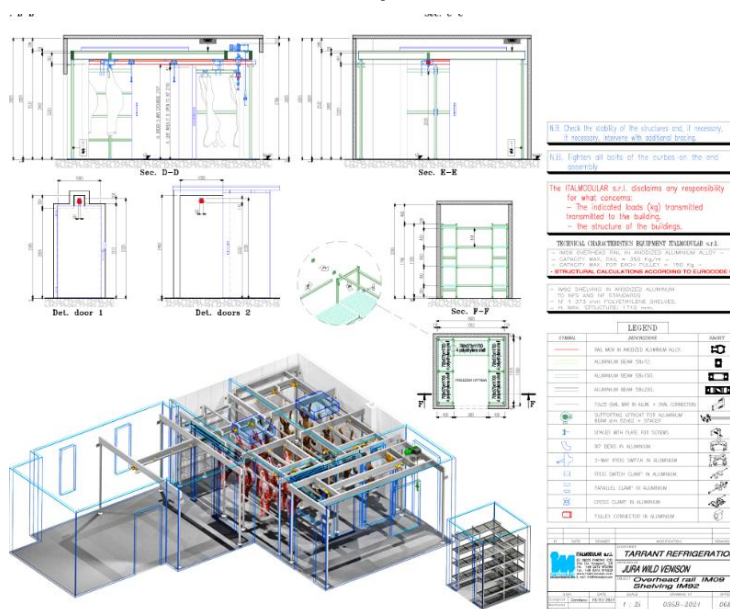
Wild Jura Venison AGHE, Jura

- **Logistical Extremes:** Building infrastructure in remote or underserved settings is highly complex. The Jura project required overcoming a tight three-month construction programme that demanded transporting heavy, specialist refrigeration equipment via multi-day ferry routes.
- **Agricultural Protection:** Local crofting and farming communities face heavy deer grazing pressures. Without immediate, compliant and game specific local cold storage, out-of-season deer management is commercially unviable, leaving crops, gardens, and young forestry highly vulnerable to damage.

## 2. THE SOLUTION: THE JURA INFRASTRUCTURE MODEL

Tarrant Refrigeration designed and built a permanent, highly efficient processing facility tailored specifically to handle game within the harsh environmental demands of the Inner Hebrides. Rather than treating remoteness as a barrier, the project treats local capacity as an asset.

### Technical & Environmental Specifications:



Technical drawing of Wild Jura Venison AGHE

- **Rigorous Food Safety Compliance (FSS & FSA):** The facility is engineered to meet the stringent structural and hygiene criteria required by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA). This ensures flawless climate control to hold carcasses at or below the legal 7°C threshold, alongside easy-clean surfaces and drainage designs necessary for full AGHE registration.
- **Scottish Quality Wild Venison (SQWV):** Beyond legal baselines, the larder's layout satisfies the strict handling and traceability requirements of the Scottish Venison quality assurance standards. This enables local estates to secure premium market positioning for their meat through Wild Jura Venison.

- **Renewable Energy Integration:** To combat high rural energy costs and carbon output, the facility features a **10kW solar photovoltaic array**, generating roughly 30% of the site's electricity, paired with a solar thermal hot water system.
- **Radical Food Mile Reduction:** Prior to this installation, carcasses faced an arduous journey off the island. The Jura AGHE saves **150 food miles per animal processed**, significantly shrinking the carbon footprint of local land management.
- **Green Packaging:** To match the sustainability of the meat itself, the facility utilizes 100% biodegradable, compostable, or recyclable packaging materials.

### 3. THE RESULTS: STRONGER COMMUNITIES & HEALTHIER LANDSCAPES

The annual red deer cull on Jura stands at **around 900 deer**. The Jura AGHE processes deer across **7 estates on Jura** and has already captured a significant portion of this cull, with explicit plans to expand.

#### First-Year Impact Metrics:

- **Carcasses Processed:** Just over **100 red deer**
- **Meat Production:** Handled **5 tonnes of wild venison**, yielding **2.5 tonnes of finished, high-quality product**.
- **Targeted Crofting Support:** **10%-12%** of the processed deer were taken as part of out-of-season management to control animals roaming in villages and damaging local forestry.
- **Local Consumption:** Demonstrating true food security, the **majority of the meat does not travel more than a 25-mile radius** from the AGHE.

#### Community Supply Chain:

The facility ensures wild venison, one of Scotland's most sustainable, low-impact proteins, directly feeds the local population, supplying:

- **Education:** 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school across Jura and Islay, with plans to extend school supply to the mainland in Argyll.
- **Commerce & Hospitality:** 3 local retail shops, 2 hotels, and regional restaurants.
- **Tourism & Events:** CalMac ferry services, local distillery events, and a secured catering contract for Argyll and Bute Council at the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race in Oban.



*During construction of Wild Jura Venison AGHE*



*Processed Wild Jura Venison inside the AGHE*

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### 4. STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT POLICY

The Scottish Government has set legally binding and ambitious targets for biodiversity recovery, peatland restoration, and woodland expansion. However, none of these statutory commitments can or will be realised without a national network of purpose-built, game specific and legally compliant AGHEs such as that on Jura.

By establishing localised AGHE networks, the industry can secure a reliable, traceable supply chain that rewards stalkers, reduces food miles, and matches large-scale conservation culls with consistent commercial demand.

**The Logistics of Lawful Culling:** Increasing cull numbers to protect young forestry and lowland agriculture requires a massive surge in harvesting. Legally, this meat cannot enter the commercial food chain or be stored safely out-of-season without highly regulated and FSS-compliant game specific refrigeration infrastructure.

- **Grant Viability:** While schemes like the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society Low Ground Venison Supply Chain Project provide excellent 50% match-funding for chillers and larders, a larger, coordinated national infrastructure strategy is required to build industrial-scale capacity across Scotland's rural and island landscapes for game meat. Directing rural development, agricultural supply chain, and net-zero capital grants toward specialised game specific refrigeration systems allows the government to maximize the value of its environmental funding.
- **The Strategic Ask:** Tarrant Refrigeration has developed the unique technical expertise of the game specific cool chain, logistical capability, and field-tested designs needed to deliver these facilities in Scotland's most challenging environments. The Scottish Government should view Jura Wild Venison's AGHE and our more general refrigeration products as standard-setting infrastructure with a repeatable blueprint that is ready to be deployed via national grant schemes. The model is deliverable across the full spectrum of industry needs and scalable as the video tour of a recent project on the QR code shows:



*Video tour of Oakland Park AGHE*

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## CONCLUSION:

The Jura AGHE proves that when sustainable land management is backed by high-quality, game specific refrigeration infrastructure, it simultaneously delivers on biodiversity, rural economic growth, food security, and climate resilience.

The Jura model should not be viewed as an isolated project, but as the essential infrastructure template required to turn national environmental promises into reality, not just on the mainland but in remote, rural and island communities.