

EGGS FROM SMALL FLOCK PRODUCERS

Many individuals with small flocks of laying hens prefer to market their own eggs. If a producer meets all the following requirements, they are exempt from retail licensing. Although exempt from licensing, producers are not exempt from requirements within the Retail FDA Food Code and may be subject to inspection.

- Has less than 3,000 laying hens.
- Sells eggs within 5 days from the date of lay.
- Sells directly on their farm or distributes within a 100-mile radius of their production or processing facility.
- All eggs must be maintained in 45°F or less ambient air temperature within 24 hours of lay until the time of sale.

Labeling:

- At any location, each carton, flat, or container of eggs must be labeled with the following information:
 - Name and complete address including zip code
 - Date of lay (if eggs of different lay dates are in the same carton/container, use the oldest date as date of lay)
 - List of acceptable forms of date of lay:
 - “Date of Lay May 1, 2019”
 - “Date of Lay 5/1/19”
 - “Julian Date of Lay 121” (Julian Date is to be expressed in three digits; example: Jan 1 is 001)
 - “Lay date 5/1/2019”
 - Statement of identity (eggs)
 - Net Contents (at least 3/16-inch-high letters)
 - "Keep Refrigerated"
 - Safe Handling Instructions (To prevent illness from bacteria: keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.)
 - If you are grading your eggs for US grade standards and US weight standards, then you **may** put the grade and size on the carton/container. If you are not grading your eggs to meet the US grade standards or US weight standards, then you must mark each carton/container of eggs as **“Unclassified”**. The Retail Food Code requires that eggs sold directly to the consumer or used in Retail Food Facilities must meet or exceed US Consumer Grade B standards.
- Eggs which are offered for sale from a retail bulk display shall have the date of lay and the identity of the small processor posted on the display in a clean and conspicuous manner.
- If other than chicken, the name of species of fowl the eggs came from (examples: ducks, quail, goose, turkey, guinea)

Washing/sanitizing:

- Must remove dirties, leakers, or loss (bloody, rot, or similar) eggs.
- If you choose to wash your eggs:
 - Never submerge the eggs in; instead, use a container with holes (like a colander) and let the water run over. Do not allow the eggs to sit in the water.
 - If you are using a wash compound to clean the eggs, make sure it is specifically made for cleaning shell eggs.
 - You can wipe the shell of the egg with a disposable towel.
- If you choose to sanitize your eggs, follow the same procedure as washing.
 - Do not submerge them in the sanitizer solution or let them stand in the sanitizer solution
 - Use only sanitizers that are approved for sanitizing shell eggs
- Make sure to check labels before buying a compound to wash or sanitize eggs to ensure that it can be used on shell eggs.
 - You can check the NSF White Book of Non-Food Compounds at: <http://www.nsf.org/usda/psnclistings.asp>. Once on the website, look for category codes Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4.

Packaging:

- For sale to grocery stores or restaurants, new cartons and/or filler flats must be used and properly labeled.
- Egg cartons are designed to protect eggs. New egg cartons are clean and free from any contaminants. Many cartons can be purchased with most of the required labeling already printed.
- Used egg cartons are not prohibited; however, you should ensure the carton is clean and if the carton is printed with brand name, store names, size, grade, a distributor or packer, production codes, etc., **all information must be covered or removed**

Licensing:

- A Retail license will be required if eggs are being sold at a different location other than the farm, such as a farmer's market.
- A Food Establishment registration under the Food Safety Act (3 Pa. C.S.A. §§ 5721-5737) is required for facilities that hold, wash, and/or package eggs intended for retail sale. This included those operating under the 3,000 bird exemption who are packing and distributing for others.
- Facilities with less than 3,000 birds who are packing and selling their own eggs within 100 miles or any offline facilities that do not package eggs onsite, intended for retail sale, are exempt from registering.
- Eggs from small flocks, meeting the above requirements, may be sold to and purchased by food processors, restaurants or other retail facilities within the 100-mile radius, for use in their manufactured products/facilities or sold direct to consumers.

If you have any questions about egg production or retail sales of eggs, please contact the Department at 717- 787-4315 or ra-foodsafety@pa.gov.