

# REQUIREMENTS FOR EGG PRODUCERS

Egg producers need to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Code and the Food Regulation 2015

This factsheet is for egg businesses that produce more than 20 dozen eggs for sale in any week. These businesses may also assess eggs for quality (e.g. by weight, size) and dry clean dirty eggs. Egg producers that also grade eggs, should also refer to the egg graders factsheet.

## Meet the requirements of the Food Standards Code

Egg producers need to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Code as set out in:

- Standard 2.2.2 Egg and Egg Products
- Standard 3.2.1 Food Safety Programs
- Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and General Requirements
- Standard 3.2.3 Food Premises and Equipment
- Standard 4.2.5 Primary Production and Processing Standard for Eggs and Egg Products

## Meet the requirements of the Regulation

Egg producers need to meet the requirements of the Regulation. These requirements include basic documentation and record keeping and are outlined below.

## Minimum food safety requirements

### Stock food

Birds being kept to produce eggs intended for sale for human consumption must not be fed any stock food that is likely to cause the eggs to be unsafe or unsuitable. Eggs may become contaminated if the layer hens are fed stock food that contains microbiological or chemical contaminants.

To comply egg producers should:

- store stock food in a manner that prevents contamination from pests, vermin and other foreign

materials (e.g. store stock food in sealed feed silos, store feed bags off the ground and keep them sealed when not in use)

- regularly clean feeders
- keep records of the name and address of suppliers from whom feed is purchased, and the date and batch details of stock food deliveries, and
- when making your own feed:
  - store stock food ingredients in a manner that prevents contamination from pests and other foreign material, and
  - mix feed in a clean, enclosed environment, away from wildlife.

## Eggs for sale to be free of chemical contaminants

Eggs must not be sold for human consumption if they have come from a bird that has been administered a veterinary chemical product in contravention of the *Stock Medicines Act 1989* or the *Pesticides Act 1999*.

To comply egg producers should:

- use and store pesticides and veterinary medicines according to the manufacturer's instructions, and
- maintain records to demonstrate observance with the correct withholding periods for veterinary medicines, including:
  - date treated
  - drug used
  - animal treated (e.g. shed number), and
  - observance of withholding period.

## Health and hygiene

To comply egg producers should ensure staff wash their hands after handling sick or dead birds so that there is no cross contamination between sick or dead birds and live birds or eggs.



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## Pest control

To comply egg producers should:

- construct and maintain the laying environment, including feed and water storage facilities, to minimise the entry of pests and the congregation of wild birds
- promptly remove dead birds from the laying environment and dispose of them in a designated facility on a daily basis, and
- promptly remove sick birds from the laying environment and treat or cull them.

## Egg collection

To comply egg producers should:

- clean or discard egg collection trays that are visibly dirty, damp or contain egg liquid, and
- remove and dispose of cracked eggs (i.e. leakers) from the laying environment frequently enough to minimise any build-up of egg product and shell.

## Litter

Egg producers should implement a litter management procedure that includes the cleanout of sheds between laying cycles and the removal of spent litter.

## Use of cracked eggs

Cracked eggs are eggs with a cracked shell (where a crack is visible to the naked eye or by candling) and includes a broken egg.

Cracked eggs must not be made available for retail sale or catering purposes (Standard 2.2.2 of the Code).

, Egg producers should dispose of leakers hygienically away from clean intact eggs.

## Processing of dirty eggs

Dirty eggs must not be sold for human consumption.

Dirty eggs must be either:

- dry cleaned so that visible faeces, soil or other matter is removed from the shell
- sold to a licensed egg business, or
- discarded.

## Dry cleaning dirty eggs

To comply egg producers should clean dirty eggs with a dry cloth that is changed when visibly dirty. Dirty cloths should be cleaned and sanitised after each use.

The material used to clean dirty eggs should be suitable for contact with food.

Eggs with visible faeces, soil or other matter that cannot be removed by dry cleaning should be segregated and disposed of hygienically away from clean intact eggs.

## Storage of eggs after collection

To comply egg producers should:

- store dirty and cracked eggs separately from whole eggs to prevent or minimise the growth of *Salmonella* in egg, and
- minimise storage between eggs collection and grading, or store ungraded eggs at 8°C or less for extended periods.

## Sale and labelling eggs

Eggs must not be sold for retail sale unless crack detection (for visible and hairline cracks) has been undertaken by a licensed egg business authorised to conduct this activity.

Egg producers that sell eggs within NSW (including obviously cracked and dirty eggs) must demonstrate that they are only sold to a licensed egg business by maintaining a copy of their current licence.

The following core information must be provided with each delivery of eggs sold (Standard 1.2.2 of the Code):

- the name of the food
- the egg producers name and address, and
- lot identification (date marking may be used in lieu of the lot identification).

Additionally, the rest of Part 1.2 *Labelling and Other Information Requirements* of the Code must be available upon request. This non-core information enables the purchaser to comply with the rest of the labelling requirements in the Code.

## Egg stamping

From November 2014, all eggs must be uniquely and individually stamped with a unique identifier (usually a number or code) so that they can be traced back to the producer.

The Food Authority can supply a free manual egg stamp and one pack of five ink refills to small producers (those who produce fewer than 1000 eggs per day).

## Cleaning

To comply egg producers should:

- only use cleaning chemicals that are suitable for use in a food premises when cleaning equipment and utensils that come into contact with eggs
- use cleaning chemicals as per manufacturer's instructions
- label, store and handle cleaning chemicals to prevent contamination
- supply the birds primary drinking water from a clean, good quality (e.g. no mould or algae) source,
- store tank water for hen drinking in a manner that prevents contamination from pests, vermin and other foreign material
- regularly clean drinkers
- clean conveyors (if applicable) and equipment that come into contact with eggs often enough to ensure they are free from heavy soiling (this includes brushes used to clean conveyors)
- remove manure often enough to minimise cross contamination between egg, bird and manure, and
- clean and sanitise sheds thoroughly between flocks to prevent *Salmonella* transmission.

### Design, construction and maintenance of premises, equipment and transportation vehicles

To comply egg producers should:

- design and construct the premises, equipment and transport vehicles to:
  - minimise the risk of eggs being contaminated
  - allow for the premises, equipment and transport vehicles to be effectively cleaned and sanitised, and
  - minimise the harbourage of pests.
- properly maintain premises, equipment and transport vehicles in good working order, and
- ensure drinkers are at a height that prevents fouling by birds.

### Recommended practices that should also be implemented by egg producers

The Food Authority recommends that egg producers should also implement the following practices. The use of the word 'should' means that these practices are recommended but not legally required.

### Receiving of sourced birds

Egg producers should keep records of:

- names and addresses of the suppliers from whom birds are purchased
- for birds purchased from a hatchery, written advice that the hatchery participates in a *Salmonella Enteritidis* monitoring program <sup>1</sup>,
- details of bird deliveries to allow for traceability, including date of delivery and quantity of birds delivered, and
- details of veterinary chemicals administered to birds at a hatchery (e.g. vaccinations and observance to any withholding periods).

### Stock food

Incoming stock food should be purchased from reputable suppliers.

Pellets or mash should be accompanied by a supplier declaration indicating they are free from harmful microbiological contaminants and chemical residues.

### Biosecurity

Egg producers should implement the biosecurity standards outlined in the *National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Poultry Production* published by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources in May 2009 (this document is available at [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au)), and where applicable, the NSW biosecurity guidelines for free range poultry farms available from [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)).

Protective clothing (eg overalls, boot covers, dust masks) should be supplied to all staff and visitors to minimise external contamination.

Sanitised foot baths should be located at the entrance of the laying sheds (if applicable), with the concentration of the sanitiser maintained as per manufacturer's instructions.

The daily bird mortality rate should be monitored as an indicator of disease within the flock. A daily mortality limit should be identified and documented (eg 0.1% mortalities per week). If the limit is exceeded, details of an investigation and any corrective action taken should be recorded.

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<sup>1</sup>NSW Department of Primary Industries administers a *Salmonella Enteritidis* Monitoring Program. For more information about this program contact Primary Industries at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)



## Environmental surveillance

Egg producers should participate in the NSW Department of Primary Industries *Salmonella Enteritidis* Monitoring Program.

## Drinking water

Drinking water for birds, as well as cooling water used in sheds (if applicable), should be tested annually to check that it meets the water standards outlined in the *National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Poultry Production*, ie. Total colony count  $\leq$  1,000; *E.coli* (Faecal coliforms) NIL; Coliforms  $\leq$  100

## Egg collection

Eggs should be collected at least once per day.

## Storage of eggs

Eggs should be stored at  $< 15^{\circ}\text{C}$  and supplied for retail packing (where applicable) within 96 hours of lay<sup>2</sup>, or stored at an equivalent temperature/time combination to maintain the suitability of eggs (outlined in Table 1).

For example, eggs stored at  $20^{\circ}\text{C}$  should be supplied for packing within a maximum of 48 hours of lay.

Table 1: Egg storage temperature/time combinations

Storage temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )	Maximum storage time prior to packaging (days)
5	11
15	4
20	2

Daily product and/or air temperature records (e.g. using a thermometer or a continuous data logger record) should be maintained to demonstrate eggs are being stored and maintained in accordance with the requirements outlined in Table 1.

Temperature measuring devices should be easily accessible and demonstrate accuracy of  $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

## Cleaning of premises and equipment

Egg producers should implement a cleaning schedule that identifies all equipment and fixtures (e.g. laying sheds, feeders, drinkers) used in the production of eggs and outlines the frequency of cleaning.

## More information

- visit the NSW Food Authority's website at [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry)
- phone the helpline on 1300 552

For information on the Food Standards Code:

- visit the Food Standards Australia New Zealand's (FSANZ) website at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

About the NSW Food Authority: The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled. It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to minimise food poisoning by providing information about and regulating the safe production, storage, transport, promotion and preparation of food.

Note: This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).