

Requirements for egg producers

This factsheet outlines general food safety requirements for egg businesses producing more than 20 dozen eggs for sale in any week. These businesses may also assess eggs for quality (for example, by weight, size) and clean dirty eggs.

Overview

Egg producers are required to meet relevant requirements outlined in the:

- NSW Food Regulation 2025, including:
 - Part 10 – Egg Food Safety Scheme
 - Schedule 8 – hygiene measures for the control of *Salmonella* Enteritidis
 - Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code), including:
 - Part 1.2 Labelling and other information requirements
 - 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 Product.
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General requirements

Food Authority licence

Egg businesses producing more than 20 dozen eggs for sale in any week are required to hold a NSW Food Authority licence.

Egg producers can [apply for a Food Authority licence online](#).



Businesses producing less than 100 dozen eggs per week are entitled to a licence fee waiver and a one-off licence application fee waiver. These are calculated as part of the licence application.

Food safety program

Licensed egg producers are required to implement a documented food safety program. A food safety program is a written document identifying all potential food safety hazards during production.



The program must outline how these hazards are controlled, corrective actions if they are not controlled and the records to be kept. It must also be regularly reviewed.

For more information, see [Food safety programs](#).

Premises and equipment

Egg producers must ensure the areas where eggs are handled, and the fittings, equipment and vehicles used in production, are designed and constructed to:

- minimise the risk of contamination of eggs
- allow for effective cleaning and sanitisation
- minimise the entry, and harbourage of, pests and vermin.



The premises, equipment and vehicles must also be kept clean, sanitised (where applicable) and in good repair.

- Construct and maintain the laying environment, including feed and water facilities, to minimise entry of pests and the congregation of wild birds.
- Implement a cleaning schedule that identifies all equipment and fixtures used in production, for example, laying sheds, feeders and drinkers, and outlines cleaning frequency.
- Clean conveyors (if applicable) and other equipment that contacts eggs often enough to ensure they are free from heavy soiling (this includes brushes used to clean conveyors).
- Clean and sanitise sheds thoroughly between flocks to prevent *Salmonella* transmission.
- Only use cleaning chemicals suitable for use in a food premises for cleaning equipment and surfaces that contact eggs.
- Use cleaning chemicals as per the manufacturer's instructions and label, and store and handle chemicals in a way that prevents contamination.

Pest control

Egg producers must take all practicable measures to:

- prevent pests entering the laying environment and all areas where eggs are handled
- eradicate, and prevent harbourage of, pests.



Any pest control chemicals used in production areas must be safe for use in a food premises.

- Prevent the entry of wild birds and vermin in all poultry housing, egg packing facilities, egg grading facilities and storage areas for packaging, feed and litter.
- Develop, document and implement a pest and vermin control strategy. The strategy must include measures to prevent vermin entering poultry housing, egg handling, and storage areas. Include the use and management of bait stations, and what records will be kept.
- Keep outside areas clean and tidy to minimise pests. This includes mowing or reducing excess grass or weeds, removal of rubbish or unused equipment.

Waste disposal

Egg producers must store, handle and dispose of waste in a way that will not make eggs unsafe.



- Develop and implement a litter management procedure that includes cleaning out sheds between laying cycles and removing spent litter.
- Promptly remove dead birds from the laying environment and dispose of them in a designated facility.
- Dispose of leaking eggs (leakers), and dirty and cracked eggs (where applicable), hygienically and away from clean intact eggs.

Skills and knowledge

Egg producers and their workers need to have skills and knowledge in food safety and hygiene.



Workers need to understand food safety risks and follow appropriate procedures. Formal qualifications are not required.

Training should be appropriate to duties performed. For example, someone feeding birds may have different skills and knowledge to the person who cleans eggs, but both need to know their responsibilities and do their part to keep produce safe.

Health and hygiene

All workers and visitors must take reasonable measures not to compromise the safety and suitability of food.



Workers and visitors must clean their hands with soap, water and paper towels, or hand sanitiser, and either clean their boots or use shed boots or boot covers before entering a production area.

Egg producers should also ensure staff wash their hands after handling sick or dead birds to prevent cross contamination with live birds or eggs.

Bird health

Eggs must not be sold for human consumption from birds that are:

- affected by a disease or a condition that makes eggs unsafe to eat
- administered a veterinary chemical product in contravention of the Stock Medicines Act 1989 or the Pesticides Act 1999.
- Only use pesticides and veterinary medicines that are registered for use with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Use and store them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Maintain records to demonstrate correct withholding periods for veterinary medicines, including:
 - date treated
 - drug used
 - animal treated (for example, shed number)
 - observance of withholding period.
- Promptly remove sick birds from the laying environment and treat or cull them.



Stock food and water

Birds producing eggs for human consumption must not be fed anything likely to cause the eggs to be unsafe to eat.

Eggs may become contaminated if the layer hens are fed stock food or water that contains microbiological or chemical contaminants.



Stock food

- Regularly clean feeders.
- Protect stored stock food from contamination from pests, vermin and other foreign materials, for example, in sealed feed silos. Keep feed bags off the ground and sealed when not in use.
- Keep records of feed suppliers and details of deliveries. 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.
- When making your own feed:
 - protect stored ingredients from contamination from pests and other material
 - mix feed in a clean, enclosed environment, away from wildlife.

Drinking water

- Drinkers must be at a height that prevents fouling by birds.
- Use only drinking-quality water (containing *E.coli* <1 cfu/100ml) for birds. Town water is generally suitable.
- If non-reticulated water is used as drinking water for birds, it must be tested in accordance with the [NSW Food Safety Schemes Manual](#). Tank water must be protected from contamination from pests, vermin and other material.
- Regularly clean drinkers (no mould or algae).

Managing Salmonella Enteritidis

Egg producers must manage additional food safety risks from Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) as a condition of their Food Authority licence.



These requirements include:

- demarcation of production areas and entry point signage
- providing dedicated shed boots, boot covers or boot scrapers and footbaths, and hand washing stations at all entrances
- equipment and materials to wash wheels of vehicles entering production areas, and separate parking for non-entering vehicles
- strict hygiene measures for all people entering the production area
- additional records
- mandatory SE testing at each individual shed and each individual poultry housing area
- notifying the Food Authority verbally within 24 hours, and in writing within 48 hours, of an SE detection.

For more information on these requirements, see: [How to comply with Schedule 8 – control of Salmonella Enteritidis](#) (PDF, 2.9 MB).

Sale and processing of eggs

Egg collection

Eggs should be collected often, at least once per day, to help reduce dirty and cracked eggs.

The method for daily egg collection will depend on farm size and design. Custom systems, such as elevators, lift systems, curve and rod conveyors as well as multi-tier, multi-level egg collection systems, can all be used.



Cracked eggs

Egg producers must not sell cracked eggs, except to an egg processor licensed by the Food Authority.

Cracked eggs include eggs with a cracked shell, where the crack is visible to the naked eye, and hairline cracks detected by candling. It includes a broken egg.

All egg producers need to check for cracks before offering eggs for sale.

Cracked eggs can only be either:

- sold to an egg processing business licensed with the Food Authority. Producers should maintain a copy of the current Food Authority licence
- used to produce a pasteurised egg product or pasteurised egg product mixture – but only if the egg producer is approved by the Food Authority to do so.

Otherwise, producers should dispose of cracked eggs hygienically, away from clean, intact eggs.



Dirty eggs

Dirty eggs must not be sold for human consumption.

Dirty eggs are those with visible faeces, soil or other matter on the shell. Dirty eggs must be either:

- cleaned to remove visible faeces, soil or other matter from the shell (see below)
- sold to an egg business licensed to wash or dry clean eggs
- discarded hygienically, away from clean, intact eggs.



Cleaning dirty eggs

Egg producers that clean or wash eggs must implement appropriate cleaning procedures to ensure eggs remain safe to eat.

Acceptable egg cleaning methods include:

- dry cleaning eggs (for small farms)
- egg washing (wet cleaning). Producers that wash eggs must do so according to a documented procedure, approved by the Food Authority, which minimises contamination from wash water.

Details on both methods are outlined in the factsheet [Egg cleaning procedures](#) (PDF, 191 KB).



Egg storage

Eggs need to be stored in a way that keeps them safe to eat.



Minimise storage time between egg collection and grading.

- Eggs should be stored at <math><15^{\circ}\text{C}</math> and either:
 - supplied for retail packing (where applicable) within 96 hours of lay
 - stored at an equivalent temperature/time combination (see table 1 below) to maintain the suitability of eggs. For example, eggs stored at
- If storing ungraded eggs for an extended period, keep them at - Store dirty and cracked eggs separately from whole eggs.
- Cracked eggs intended for on-sell to a licensed egg processor must be stored under hygienic conditions at - Egg products (egg contents with the shell removed) intended for on-sell to a licensed egg processor must be stored under hygienic conditions at

Table 1: Egg storage temperature/time combinations

Storage temperature	Maximum storage time prior to packaging (days)
<math>5^{\circ}\text{c}< math><="" td=""> <td>11</td> </math>5^{\circ}\text{c}<>	11
<math>15^{\circ}\text{c}< math><="" td=""> <td>4</td> </math>15^{\circ}\text{c}<>	4
<math>20^{\circ}\text{c}< math><="" td=""> <td>2</td> </math>20^{\circ}\text{c}<>	2

- Record daily product and/or air temperature records using a thermometer or a continuous data logger to demonstrate compliance with the requirements in Table 1 above.
- Temperature measuring devices should be easily accessible and demonstrate accuracy of $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$ (for more information, see [Calibrating thermometers](#)).

Labelling

Egg producers need to meet labelling requirements of Chapters 1 and 2 of the Code.



Wholesale sales

Egg producers selling by wholesale (business to business), including to processors, restaurants, grocery stores and other food businesses, need to provide the following with each delivery:

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

The information required for retail sales (below) must also be available to purchasers on request.

Containers of unpasteurised egg product sold to a processor must be labelled as 'unpasteurised'.

Retail sales

Egg cartons for retail sale (sold directly to consumers) must be labelled with:

- the name of the food
- the business name and address
- lot identification (date marking may be used instead of the lot identification)
- nutrient information panel
- country of origin.

For more information on labelling, see [Labelling laws](#).

Egg stamping

All eggs must be individually stamped with a unique identifier (usually a number or code).



Stamping ensures eggs can be traced back to the producer in the event of a food poisoning incident or outbreak. The Food Authority will supply a free manual egg stamp, and one pack of ink refills, to businesses producing fewer than 1,000 eggs per day.

Small egg farms producing less than 20 dozen (240) eggs per week are exempt from egg stamping requirements in NSW if they:

- sell those eggs direct from the farm gate, or
- use those eggs for a fundraising activity where the eggs will be cooked.

For more information on egg stamping, see [egg stamping](#).

More information

- Visit www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- Contact the Food Authority helpline:
 - Email food.contact@dpird.nsw.gov.au
 - Phone 1300 552 406

For information on the Food Standards Code visit the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) website at www.foodstandards.gov.au

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