

Requirements for egg producers

This information sheet is for egg businesses that produce more than 20 dozen eggs for sale in any week. These businesses may also assess eggs for quality (eg by weight, size) and dry clean dirty eggs.

Food Regulation 2010 (the Regulation) applies certain requirements to egg producers which are outlined below.

For more guidance on the requirements for egg producers please refer to the following information sheets at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/industry-sector-requirements/eggs/

- **About the NSW Egg Food Safety Scheme**
- **Egg definitions**
- **Requirements for licensed egg businesses**
- **Requirements for egg graders**
- **Requirements for egg processors**

Comply with certain clauses of the Food Standards Code

Egg producers must comply with the following clauses of the Food Standards Code (the Code):

- Standard 1.1.1 – Preliminary Provisions – Application, Interpretation and General Prohibitions
- Standard 1.2.1 – Application of Labelling and Other Information Requirements
- Standard 1.4.1 – Contaminants and Natural Toxicants
- Standard 1.4.2 – Maximum Residue Limits
- Standard 2.2.2 – Egg and Egg Products
- Standard 3.1.1 – Interpretation and Application
- Standard 3.2.1 – Food Safety Programs
- Standard 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements
 - Division 1 – Interpretation and application
 - Division 3 – Food handling controls
 - cl. 6 – Food storage
 - cl. 9 – Food packaging
 - cl. 10 – Food transportation
 - cl. 12 – Food recall
 - Division 4 (subdivision 2) – Requirements for food businesses
 - Division 5 – Cleaning, sanitising and maintenance
- Standard 3.2.3 – Food Premises and Equipment

Implement certain food safety requirements

Egg producers must implement certain food safety requirements to comply with the Regulation. These requirements include basic documentation and record keeping and are outlined below.

The Authority has prepared a template document which meets these minimum requirements. The aim of this document is to reduce the time and resources needed by a business to comply with the Scheme. It is intended that businesses customise this document to reflect the activities they undertake. This document is available at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/industry-sector-requirements/eggs/

Minimum food safety requirements

Stock food (Clause 155 of the Regulation)

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 with this clause egg producers should:

- store stock food in a manner that prevents contamination from pests, vermin and other foreign materials (eg store stock food in sealed feed silos, store feed bags off the ground and keep them sealed when not in use),
- regularly clean feeders, and
- keep records of the name and address of suppliers from whom feed is purchased, and the date and batch details of stock food deliveries.

Eggs for sale to be free of chemical contaminants (Clause 162 of the Regulation)

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 with this clause egg producers should:

- use pesticides and veterinary medicines that are registered for use with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (this register is available at www.apvma.gov.au),
- 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 (eg shed number), and
 - observance of withholding period.

Health and hygiene (Clause 18 of Standard 3.2.2 of the Code)

To comply with this clause 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.

Pest control (Clause 3 of Standard 3.2.3 of the Code)

To comply with this clause 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 (Clauses 19 and 20 of Standard 3.2.2 of the Code)

To comply with these clauses egg producers should:

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

Use of cracked and broken eggs (Clauses 159 and 160 of the Regulation)

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

Broken eggs (ie leakers) must not be sold for human consumption. To comply with this clause egg producers should dispose of leakers hygienically away from clean intact eggs.

Processing of dirty eggs (Clause 161 of the Regulation)

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 (Clauses 19 of Standard 3.2.2 of the Code)

To comply with this clause 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 (Clause 6 of Standard 3.2.2 of the Code)

To comply with this clause egg producers should store dirty and cracked eggs separately from whole eggs to prevent or minimise the growth of *Salmonella* in eggs.

Sale and labelling eggs (Clause 159 of the Regulation)

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.

Cleaning (Clauses 19 of Standard 3.2.2 of the Code)

To comply with this clause 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 (eg no mould or algae) source,
- 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), and
- remove manure often enough to minimise cross contamination between egg, bird and manure.

Design, construction and maintenance of premises, equipment and transportation vehicles (Clause 21 of Standard 3.2.2 and Standard 3.2.3 of the Code)

To comply with this clause 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
 - 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 Authority recommends that egg producer should also implement the following practices. The use of the word 'should' means that these practices are recommended but not legally required.

Receipt of sourced birds

Egg producers should keep records of the following:

- 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 program¹,
- 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 (eg 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.

Litter

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

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, Fisheries and Forestry in May 2009 (this document is available at www.daff.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.

Environmental surveillance

Egg producers should participate in the Industry & Investment NSW – 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 ≤ 1,000; *E.coli* (Faecal coliforms) NIL; Coliforms ≤ 100

Egg collection

Eggs should be collected at least once per day.

Storage of eggs

Eggs should be stored at < 15°C and supplied for retail packing (where applicable) within 96 hours of lay², or stored at an equivalent temperature/time combination to maintain the suitability of eggs (outlined in Table 1). For example, eggs stored at 20°C should be supplied for packing within a maximum of 48 hours of lay.

Table 1: Egg storage temperature/time combinations

Storage temperature (°C)	Maximum storage time prior to packaging (days)
5	11
15	4
20	2

Daily product and/or air temperature records (eg 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 ±1°C.

1 **Industry & Investment NSW – Primary Industries** administers a *Salmonella Enteritidis* Monitoring Program. For more information about this program contact Primary Industries at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

2 *Code of Practice for Shell Egg, Production, Grading, Packing and Distribution* (Australian Egg Corporation Limited, 2008)

Cleaning of premises and equipment

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

More information

- visit the Food Standards Australia New Zealand's (FSANZ) website at www.foodstandards.gov.au
- visit the NSW Food Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry
- phone the helpline on 1300 552 406