

Eggs Requirements

Marketing and minimum labeling requirements

Producers selling shell eggs of their own producing at farm stands, farmers' markets or direct to household users are exempt from having to grade and size shell eggs and are not required to put a net weight on the carton. Shell eggs must be labeled with the name and address of producer or distributor, and grade or size, if applicable. New cartons naturally present a stronger marketing advantage. However, if used cartons are employed, they must comply with the following:

- USDA shield must be obliterated
- Original plant code, expiration/sell by date must be obliterated
- Original trade name/address must be obliterated
- The name and address of the current producer or distributor and a phone number to receive complaints must be included on the carton and clearly legible
- Safe handling statement must be legible

The surface of the egg should be cleaned in an approved manner; that will remove dirt and debris without damaging the egg's natural coating.

Eggs not subject to USDA inspection and regulation cannot be sold to other retail establishments or food service establishments.

Sizing and grading

Eggs cannot be sold as graded eggs or sized eggs unless those eggs originate from a USDA or state inspected grading facility using USDA grading and sizing guidelines.

Handling

Shell eggs must be kept in a cooler or refrigerated enclosure that is maintained at a temperature at or below 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a final rule in the Federal Register of December 5, 2000 (65 FR 76092) entitled, "*Food Labeling, Safe Handling Statements, Labeling of Shell Eggs; Refrigeration of Shell Eggs Held for Retail Distribution.*" The final rule applies to shell eggs that have not been specifically processed to destroy all live *Salmonellae* before distribution to the consumer. For these shell eggs, packers must include a safe handling statement on the carton. This statement must appear on the label prominently, conspicuously, and in a type size no smaller than one-sixteenth of one inch. The statement must appear in a hairline box and the words "safe handling instructions" must appear in bold capital letters (see next page).

SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: To prevent illness from bacteria: keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.

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For further information on the safe handling of eggs:

“Guidance for Industry -Food Labeling: Safe Handling Statements, Labeling of Shell Eggs; Refrigeration of Shell Eggs Held for Retail Distribution - Small Entity Compliance Guide” at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/eggsguid.html>

Questions regarding the sale of eggs at retail or wholesale should be directed to:

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Last edited 4/1/2009