

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Selling Farm Fresh Eggs in Nevada**

### **Do I have to have a “Producer’s Certificate” issued by the Nevada Department of Agriculture to sell my eggs?**

The Nevada Department of Agriculture does not require you to have a producer’s certificate to sell eggs either from your farm or off-farm. However, farmer’s market managers, stores and restaurants may request that you provide them with one before buying your eggs. The Department therefore issues the certificates to facilitate the sale of locally produced eggs. Health departments around the state differ in what they require. Health departments in Clark and Washoe County may require you to have a producer certificate to sell your eggs in areas under their jurisdiction. It’s a good idea to check with the health department in your area before selling your eggs. Health departments may also require additional permits/licenses to sell your eggs.

### **Is there a fee for producer certificates?**

Yes. An application fee is required. The fee is \$50.00 for the first year, and \$30.00 each year to renew.

### **Will there be an inspection?**

Yes. The Nevada Department of Agriculture will visit your farm to verify the information on your application and egg production questionnaire are correct. Due to a limited numbers of inspectors plan ahead and be prepared to wait for an inspection.

### **How do I get an application?**

An application for a Producer Certificate can be downloaded from the Nevada Department of Agriculture’s website at [www.agri.nv.gov](http://www.agri.nv.gov). Follow the links to Farmer’s Markets, then “So You Want to Sell Farm Fresh Eggs?” on the Farmer’s Market page.

### **What are the minimum requirements to sell eggs?**

It is unlawful to sell eggs in Nevada which do not meet the minimum requirements specified in Nevada Revised Statute 583.110 through 583.210. Eggs must be graded for size and quality and must be labeled accordingly. They must at the minimum meet requirements for “Grade A”. Containers in which eggs are sold must be labeled with egg size and grade, the name and address of the producer, the “safe handling statement” required by federal law, and a “pack date” or a “sell by” date.

The “pack date” is a three digit code representing the consecutive day of the year starting with January 1 as 001 and ending with December 31 as 365. This is also known as a “Julian date”. If eggs are packed on January 30<sup>th</sup>, the “pack date” would be “030”.

The “sell by date” is the *day the eggs were packed plus 29 days afterwards*, or 30 days including the day the eggs were packed. For example, if eggs were packed on January 1<sup>st</sup>, the “sell by date” would be January 30. In Nevada, a sell by date may be used.

### **What does “grading” mean?**

“Grading” is a classification system based on interior and exterior quality and designated by the letters AA, A and B. The eggs are examined for interior characteristics either by “candling” or by breaking them open, and exterior characteristics by visually examining the outside of the egg. They are then sorted according to weight (size). **Grade A** eggs have whites that are reasonably firm;

yolks that are high, round, and practically free from defects; and clean, unbroken shells. This is the quality most often sold in store and is the state minimum grade that can be sold in Nevada.

**What is the “safe handling instruction” statement that has to be on the container?**

The statement, “Safe Handling Instructions: To prevent illness from bacteria keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.”

**Does my name have to be on the label?**

Yes. Your farm or business name and address must be on the label.

**What if my hens produce eggs of various sizes? Do I have to sell different sizes separately?**

No. You may label your eggs as “assorted sizes” or “mixed sizes”.

**What is candling?**

Candling is a step in grading eggs that lets you look inside the egg without breaking it to judge its quality and freshness. Long ago this was done by holding the egg tip before a candle. Eggs are rotated so all parts can be seen. This allows you to check the size of the air cell at the blunt end with an air cell gauge. Imperfections such as “blood spots” or “meat spots” can also be seen in this way.

**What is the “air cell” and why is it important?**

The air cell is the empty space between the white and the egg shell at the large end of the egg. The egg cell is used to determine freshness – generally speaking, the smaller the air cell, the fresher the egg.

**Where can I learn about how to grade my eggs?**

The internet is a great source of information about grading eggs for sale.

**Where can I buy a candler?**

Many books on raising chickens include information about candling eggs and how to build your own candler. There are various sites in the internet with directions to make your own candler as well. Some feed stores sell candlers although they may have to special order one for you.

**Do I have to use new egg cartons or can I re-cycle used ones?**

If eggs are sold in cartons, both Clark and Washoe County require the cartons to be new.

**Can I sell my eggs in bulk (not in cartons)?**

Yes. When eggs are sold from flats, basket, box, bucket, etc. there must be a label or a placard posted in a conspicuous place stating the grade and size, the farm name and address, the safe handling statement, and a “sell by date”.

**Do I have to follow all of these same requirements if I just sell eggs from my farm?**

Your eggs must, at a minimum, meet the requirements for Grade A eggs. Other requirements vary location to location, depending on which agency has jurisdiction. Such agencies may include the health department and/or permits and licensing departments of cities or counties.

**Where can I learn more about egg grades and Nevada’s requirements for selling fresh eggs?**

The brochure “Know Your Eggs” can be downloaded from the Nevada Department of Agriculture’s website at [www.agri.nv.gov](http://www.agri.nv.gov) . Follow the links to Farmer’s Markets.