

## Shell Egg Producer Guidelines



**These Guidelines are intended for producers who sell eggs and are exempt from USDA requirements (flocks 3,000 or fewer hens). The guidelines are designed to help producers handle, store and transport eggs in a safe and sanitary manner and in compliance with Nevada's requirements for the grading and labeling of eggs.**

### PRODUCER CERTIFICATE

1. Contact the Nevada Department of Agriculture for an Egg Information Packet. The Egg Information Packet includes an application for a producer certificate, an egg questionnaire, and the brochure "Selling Farm Fresh Eggs in Nevada" ([http://agri.nv.gov/Plant/Producer\\_Certification/Producer\\_Certification\\_Home](http://agri.nv.gov/Plant/Producer_Certification/Producer_Certification_Home)) or call 775-353-3670. Both the application and fee, and the questionnaire must be completed and submitted to NDA before the required on-site inspection will be made.
2. It is unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to represent, advertise or sell as fresh eggs any eggs that do not conform to Nevada's egg laws and regulations (NRS 583.170 to 583.210 and NAC 583.080 to 583.201).
3. Fresh eggs sold in Nevada must meet the minimum quality of Grade A, must not have acquired any offensive odors or taste (such as onion, garlic, processed meats or citrus) and must be labeled according to state requirements.
4. A valid producer certificate for eggs is required to sell in farmers markets, wholesale or to retail stores and restaurants.

### FACILITIES

1. It is recommended that you establish a designated work area separate from domestic living areas. It is not recommended that the handling area be in the domestic kitchen, laundry room or bathroom.
2. The work surface where eggs are taken after being collected should have a work surface that is smooth, durable, and easy to clean. It should be cleaned after each use.
3. Packaging materials (egg cartons, flats, etc.), utensils, grading equipment should all be protected from contamination from poultry and other livestock, moisture, odors, dust, insects, rodents, etc.
4. Potable water should be used for cleaning eggs and egg handling surfaces and equipment.
5. Clean water and soap should be available for washing hands near the work area where eggs are being handled.
6. Eggs will acquire offensive odors or tastes if stored with other foods. To prevent this, it is recommended that eggs be stored in a refrigerator dedicated to storing eggs. The refrigerator does not have to be new or of a commercial type. Equip the refrigerator with a suitable thermometer so you can routinely verify that the 40-45 degrees F egg storage temperature is being maintained.

## EGG HANDLING

1. Wash hands with soap and water before starting egg handling and during egg handling to minimize cross contamination of “finished” eggs.
2. Maintain clean and dry nest boxes, change nest material as needed to reduce dirty eggs. Gather eggs at least once daily.
3. Clean eggs as needed soon after collecting. Minimal cleaning protects the natural protective covering on the shell. If eggs aren’t dirty they do not need to be cleaned! If it is necessary to clean the eggs do it before the eggs are placed in the cooler to avoid temperature extremes between wash water and the shell that will result in impurities on the shell being drawn into the egg.

Acceptable egg cleaning methods include:

- dry cleaning by “dry sanding” the stains or minimal dirty area with sand paper;
  - using potable water in a hand spray bottle and immediately wiping dry with a single service paper towel;
  - *briefly* rinsing with running water spray and immediately wiping dry with a single service paper towel. The “wash water” should be a minimum of 90 degrees F, which is warm to the touch.
  - Unacceptable egg cleaning methods include:
    - submerging the egg in water or any other solution or using cleaners that are not food grade and approved for shell egg cleaning. The porous egg shell is not impervious to odors, chemicals and “off” flavors.
4. Refrigerate the “cleaned” eggs immediately to 45 degrees F or less. The “cleaned” eggs can be packaged for sale later. Store “finished” packaged eggs at 45 degree F or less.

## STORING FEED

1. To prevent disease contamination and spoilage of feed:
  - Feed and scratch should be stored to prevent the entrance of rodents, poultry, wild birds, water, and pest insects, etc.

## SORTING AND CANDLING

1. All eggs sold in Nevada must meet standards for Grade AA or A. Grade B eggs cannot be sold.
2. Eggs should be sorted before they are stored or sold.
3. Eggs must be graded to be sold in Nevada and must meet Grade AA or A.
3. The best way to sort eggs into grades is to candle them. This process helps determine the air cell size and helps eliminate eggs with cracked shells and eggs with foreign materials inside like blood spots.
4. Information about how to candle eggs for grading and how to build your own inexpensive egg candler can be found on the internet.

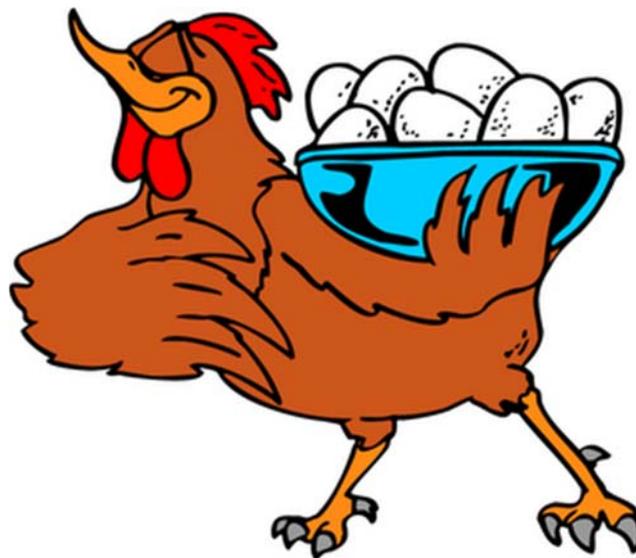
## PACKAGING AND LABELING

1. Containers of eggs should be labeled with the following. Items marked with an asterisk (\*) are mandatory for egg sales in Nevada:
  - Name and address of the egg producer (email address OK)\*
  - The grade of the eggs: “Grade AA” or “Grade A”\*
  - The size of the eggs. Nevada allows the term “Assorted sizes” to be used for eggs produced on an exempt farm.\*
  - The common name of the food: “Eggs”
  - Quantity, the number of eggs: “One Dozen”
  - The statement “Keep Refrigerated” (\*)

- 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.”\*
  - If an expiration date is used, it must be printed in month/day format and preceded by the appropriate prefix, for example, “EXP”, “Sell by”, and “Not to be sold after”. Expiration dates can be no more than 30 days from the day the eggs were packed into the carton. You may also use the terms “Use by”, “Use before”, or “Best before” to indicate the period that the eggs should be consumed before overall quality diminishes. Code dating using these terms may not exceed 45 days including the day the eggs were packed into the carton.
2. If cardboard cartons are used for off-farm sales the cartons should be new. Plastic flats can be re-used and should be cleaned and disinfested between uses.
  3. Acceptable labeling includes stick on labels used on generic cartons.
  4. If selling eggs from or in flats, a single placard with the same information listed above is acceptable.
  5. When selling to retail stores or restaurants, you must provide an invoice listed the source of the eggs (your name and contact information).

## DISTRIBUTION

1. Transport refrigerated eggs in an easily cleanable, portable cooler with frozen gel packs (**not ice**) to maintain a temperature of 45 degrees F or less until the eggs are distributed the buyer.
  - When selling at farmers markets you must keep your eggs at temperatures between 40 -45 degrees F *at the shell*. Health department inspectors will check!
2. A receipt or invoice listing the egg producer’s name and contact information and the quantity of eggs sold should accompany sales of eggs to restaurants and retail stores. Producer’s may also want to list their “NDA Certified Producer # XXXXXX) on any invoices or receipts. This allows health department inspectors to quickly verify that the eggs come from an “approved source”.



**She's done her part - it's up to *you* to make sure the eggs you sell are fresh, healthy and accurately labeled!**