Maryland
Department of Agriculture
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GUIDELINES FOR SMALL PRODUCERS SELLING EGGS

1. All producer/packers of shell eggs must register with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) annually. Layer premises are subject to random testing by MDA to monitor for salmonella of public health concern. There are no registration or assessment fees due for producers with less than 3,000 chickens that only sell from their own flock.

2. The principal display panel is the top and the information panel is any side of the carton. Cartons of eggs are required to be labeled with the word grade followed by the grade (A or AA) with minimum lettering height of ¼" on the principal display panel, the size (Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, Small or PeeWee) with a minimum lettering height of ¼" on the principal display panel, the FDA required safe handling statement on the outside of the carton, the packer or distributor name and address (city, state and zip if in phone book, complete address if not in phone book) with a minimum lettering height of 1/16" on the principal display or information panel, lot number (should identify the flock - if you only have one flock "Lot 1" is acceptable) with a minimum lettering height of 1/16" on the principal display or information panel, registration number of the packer (MDA FQAP issued number) with a minimum lettering height of 1/16" on the principal display or information panel, quantity or net weight of eggs with a minimum lettering height of 3/16" on the principal display panel, and the identity of the product as eggs with a minimum lettering height of ¼" on the principal display panel. Many office supply stores can make an inexpensive stamp with this information.

3. Reuse of cartons is strongly discouraged as it can result in contamination of the eggs. The use of dirty cartons is prohibited. Clean cartons that are reused must bear only the correct information. All other markings must be obliterated (Ex. USDA Grade Shield; name, address or registration number of previous distributor/packer; specialty egg status such as organic, omega 3, cage free, pastured, etc. unless the producer has documentation they meet the standards for the labeling).

4. All eggs must meet the standards for the grade and size for which they are labeled. Grade AA and Grade A are the only consumer grades permitted to be sold in Maryland. The sale of cracked and dirty eggs (producers should contact MDA for information on proper washing to prevent contamination) is restricted by law. Eggs cannot be sold as ungraded and/or mixed size.

5. Eggs must be held at 45°F or below ambient temperature. Freezer packs or mechanical refrigeration may be used. Direct contact with water, ice or conditions that cause eggs to sweat is prohibited. Eggs on display that are not held at 45°F or below must be clearly labeled as "Display Only - Not for Consumption". Unrefrigerated hatching eggs must be clearly labeled "Not for Human Consumption" and cannot bear any of labeling indicating they meet the standards for human consumption.

6. Producers registered with the MDA are **not** required to obtain licenses from State or Local Health Departments to sell/transport their own eggs at a farmer's market, to restaurants or other retailers (e.g. Food Service license, Mobile Farmers Market license, On Farm Home Processing license). Producers are not required to have invoices or equivalent records at Farmers Markets, however, they are required to provide invoices with their name and address, the buyer's name and address, grade, size, quantity and date of delivery when selling to restaurants or retailers.