



Background

Anyone who has eaten farm fresh eggs knows how different they look and taste from eggs from industrial supermarket eggs. In addition to their wonderful taste, fresh shell eggs have long been a source of income in rural areas from tiny backyard operations to larger dedicated egg farms. Regardless of the size of the operation, egg sellers must follow certain regulations to conduct businesses legally.



Land Use, Zoning, and Building Permits

Depending on Plumas or Sierra County zoning, certain standards may apply to poultry operations, which are defined as “Livestock Operations, Small Animals (land use)” by the *Plumas or Sierra County Code*. A building permit may be required if a new building is constructed or an existing building is remodeled for the egg business. **Check with respective County Planning Department for detailed zoning/building codes.**

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE KEEPING OF SMALL ANIMALS

(Chickens, Ducks, Exotics, Geese, Guinea Fowl, Peacocks, Rabbits, Roosters and Similar Animals)

PLUMAS COUNTY

Examples:

- Most *Single-Family Residential* and *Multiple-Family Residential* zones do not allow small animals. 4-H/FFA animals are permitted with a Special Use Permit, (no fee required).
- Chickens, ducks, and rabbits allowed in *residential zones* > 1-acre.



SIERRA COUNTY

Examples:

- Raising poultry and egg production is permitted in *Rural Residential (RR) Districts* greater than 1-acre and in *Open Space (OS) Residential Districts* greater than 20-acres.

Licenses and Permits Required

Small-scale production and sales of shell eggs only requires licenses or permits under the following conditions:

1. All egg sales (on-farm, off-farm, farmer’s market, retail, etc.) require an **Egg Handlers Registration**

Egg Handlers Registration information available at:

- Plumas Sierra County Agricultural Commissioner's office in Quincy (530-283-6365) or,

- California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
 - Registration application on CDFA website:
<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/MPES/pdfs/EggHandlersRegistrationApplication.pdf>
 - Current fee \$56.00 (Annual renewal \$38.00). Increases to \$75.00 January 1, 2015 (Annual renewal \$50.00).
- 2. If selling eggs at a stand “off property” then a permit for a Farm Stand/Produce Stand is required from local County Environmental Health (EH) Department
 - [Plumas County Environmental Health](#) (530) 283-6355
 - [Sierra County Environmental Health](#) (530) 993-6701

**Once registered,
Egg Air Cell Gauge & info
will be provided to assist
in grading/ sizing eggs.**



Egg Packaging and Labeling

Labels on packaged eggs (versus loose eggs sold from a wire basket or similar vessel on a farm) must comply with the following labeling requirements:

MARKING REQUIREMENTS

- **Identity:** Eggs
- **Responsibility:** Name, Address, Zip Code
- **Quantity:** 1 dozen, 15 dozen, 30 dozen
- **Size & Grade:** Example - Grade AA, Extra Large (min. height ¼ inch)
- **“Keep Refrigerated”** (Safe Handling Instructions)
- **Sell By Date:** Example - Sell by **June 30 or 6-30**
- **Julian Date:** pack date (January 1 -001 or July 30-212)
- **State Handler Code:** Example - CA 4321
- **Plant of Origin number:** If applicable



*All required markings shall be conspicuous and legible.

*If cartons are re-used, all information from the previous use must be completely obliterated.

*As of January 1, 2015 all egg cartons must be labelled as CA SEFS COMPLIANT (California Shell Egg Food Safety Compliant). Must be in ¼” lettering with size being determined by the shortest letter.

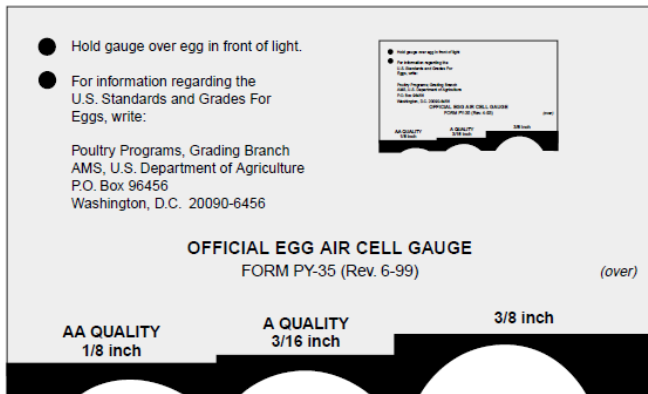
Poultry Management Labeling Claim

The terms cage free, free range, and pasture-raised are currently unregulated.¹ Labels that claim animal care standards including Certified Humane, Animal Welfare Approved, and American Humane Certified all require certification through their sponsoring organizations. The term organic can only be used legally if the producer is registered with the State Organic Program. If expected organic gross sales exceed \$5,000, third party certification is required.



Egg Grade Standards

Grading eggs involves sorting eggs based on quality, size and weight standards. Egg grading involves evaluation of the **interior** and **exterior** of the eggs. ALL eggs should be candled to identify internal defects. The established grades of eggs are AA, A, B.



➤ **Egg Interior:** The size of internal air cell is the initial factor that determines grade. An air cell gauge is used to measure air cell depth (See Egg Handlers Registration). As an egg ages, the liquid contents evaporate through its pores. **The older the egg = larger the air-cell = lower the grade.**

➤ **Egg Exterior:** Grade AA & A must have shell that is clean and no blemishes. Eggs with moderate shell staining can be sold as Grade B. Dirty eggs cannot be sold to consumers.

Example: Grade AA (highest quality) – clean, unbroken, unstained shell; air cell depth 1/8 inch or less.

Egg Size is determined by Weight of the Individual Egg



Size or Weight Class	Grams/egg	Ounces/egg
Jumbo	68.51	2 5/12
Extra Large	61.42	2 1/16
Large	54.34	1 11/12
Medium	47.25	1 2/3
Small	40.16	1 5/12
Peewee		No Minimum

This table shows the consumer egg size standards

Refer to [USDA Egg Grading Manual](#) for detailed information regarding egg grading.

Storage and Handling at Farmers' Markets and Other Retail Sales

Regulations pertaining to storage and handling for retail sales are specified in the California Retail Food Code Section 114373:²

Raw shell eggs may be stored and displayed without refrigeration if all of the following conditions are met:

- (a) The eggs were produced by poultry owned by the seller and collected on the seller's property.
- (b) The eggs are not placed in direct sunlight during storage or display.
- (c) Retail egg containers are prominently labeled "refrigerate after purchase" or the seller posts a conspicuous sign advising consumers that the eggs are to be refrigerated as soon as practical after purchase.
- (d) Retail egg containers are conspicuously identified as to the date of the pack.
- (e) The eggs have been cleaned and sanitized.
- (f) The eggs are not checked, cracked, or broken.
- (g) Any eggs that are stored and displayed at temperatures of 90°F or below **and** that are unsold after four days from the date of pack shall be stored and displayed at an ambient temperature of 45°F **or below, diverted to pasteurization, or destroyed in a manner approved by local Environmental Health.**

Cleaning & Sanitizing Details
[ATTRA - Small Scale Egg Handling](#)

Other Sources of Information

1. **CDFA - Egg Safety & Quality Management Program**
<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/mpes/esqm.html>
2. **USDA – Food Safety & Inspection Service (Informational Factsheets)**
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/home>
 - Go to **Topics → Factsheets → Egg Products Preparation**
 - Egg Products and Food Safety
 - Shell Eggs from Farm to Table
3. **ATTRA - Small Scale Egg Handling (Great information on egg cleaning, grading, candling)**
<http://sd.appstate.edu/sites/sd.appstate.edu/files/egghandling.pdf>
4. **USDA Egg-Grading Manual (Everything you need to know about grading eggs)**
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3004502>

With permission from original authors Lisa Bush and Ellie Rilla who prepared the 2008 Grown in Marin factsheet Holly George & Cheree Childers modified it for Plumas and Sierra Counties in 2014.

¹ Passage of Proposition 2 in 2008 resulted in California Health and Safety Code Chapter 13.8 Farm Animal Cruelty [25990- 25994], regulates the amount of space provided to "covered" farm animals, including poultry, all of the provisions of this statute will come into effect by 2015.

² California Retail Food Code; Chapter 12, Certified Farmers' Markets, § 114373 Farmers' markets