

Small Egg Production Operation

What is a small egg operator?

A small egg operator is a person that is engaged in the operation of egg production who maintains annually five hundred or fewer birds and wishes to sell the resulting eggs from a location other than from the premises where the eggs are produced.

Where may small egg processors sell their eggs?

Properly labeled eggs may be sold from your farm, from a registered farm market that you own/operate, or a registered farm product auction without any inspection. To sell eggs to a retailer, restaurant or at a registered farmers' market, the processor must register with the ODA Division of Food Safety to be considered an "approved source". NOTE: A small egg processor that is registered with the ODA must also license with their local health department to sell eggs at a registered farmer's market.

What does an inspection involve?

The ODA will come out to the farm and do an inspection to ensure that: the labeling requirements are being met; the eggs are maintained in refrigeration at an ambient temperature that does not exceed forty-five degrees Fahrenheit; and if the home is served by a private well, the well must be tested annually for coliform bacteria, having a negative test result within the past year. Proof of the well test result must be provided to the inspecting food safety specialist. Labels are to be available for review at the time of inspection.

Is there a license fee?

No, a small egg processor is not assessed a fee from the ODA for the registration, but you will be issued a certificate of registration which may be presented to any interested party to support the approved source requirement. There will be a fee assessed from the local health department if you wish to pursue sales at a farmers' market.

What are the labeling requirements?

A small egg processor is held to the same labeling requirements as a large egg processor. The requirements for carton labeling are as follows:

1. The name and address of the operation
2. An accurate statement of the quantity of the contents in terms of numerical count (12, one dozen, etc.)
3. The date the shell eggs were packed into the egg carton
4. Labeled "ungraded" or "unclassified"
5. Labeled "mixed size"
6. The safe handling statement (see below). This can be placed on the outside of the carton or on the inside of the carton lid.

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

Cartons may be reused. However, all non-pertinent information (i.e. original processor's name/address, any graded information, dates, etc.) must be defaced from the carton. The safe handling statement can remain intact. Reused cartons should be in sound condition and free from any visible dirt.

To set up an inspection, contact: ODA, Division of Food Safety; 1-800-282-1955, Ext 4366.; E-mail foodsafety@agri.ohio.gov