

# Connecticut Department of Agriculture Voluntary Small Shell Egg Processing Plant Inspection Program



## Compliance Guide

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DAG) has established a Voluntary Small Egg Processing Plant inspection program. The standards to be applied to the participants in the Connecticut Department of Agriculture Voluntary Small Egg Processing Plant Inspection Program are contained in this document.

This voluntary program is for small egg producers who do not meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) minimum mandatory inspection criteria of 3,000 laying birds who wish to enter “approved” eggs into commerce <sup>1</sup>. This standards used in this program are based on existing DAG statutes and regulations and are consistent with USDA shell egg regulations.

Shell egg producers (or a group of shell producers who pool eggs) with more than 200 birds and less than 3000 birds are eligible.

**To obtain more information about our shell egg inspection program Call 860-713-2513**

**For information concerning poultry disease surveillance and prevention programs, National Poultry Improvement Plan programs and the requirements for importing live birds or hatching eggs. Call 860-713-2504**

**<sup>1</sup> Connecticut like most states and USDA, exempts sales of eggs directly to consumers from regulatory oversight except for adulteration, labeling and refrigeration.**

The USDA has established consumer Grades for chicken eggs. Egg grading at its most basic level involves examining the eggs under certain lighting called "candling" to determine the condition of the egg. Candling reveals conditions such as excessive debris on the shell, cracks, leakers, blood spots or mold growth within the shell. During candling, the candler rejects eggs which do not meet standards based on their observations. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulates egg grading at grading facilities and egg producers with flocks that exceed 3,000 birds. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires producers with flocks of greater than 3,000 birds to have a Salmonella enteritis prevention program and conduct sampling to verify their SE prevention programs' effectiveness.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture, in order to facilitate the ability of small egg producers to sell eggs through retail establishments, through distributors or to food service establishments <sup>1</sup> has agreed to take on the responsibility of providing regulatory oversight of producers with flocks of greater than 200 birds and less than 3,000 birds. The department has egg room sanitation regulations and egg grading regulations that are substantially the same as USDA's. These regulations that are contained in this document provide for a standard of **Grade B or better**. The department does not have the authority to require a Salmonella enteritis (SE) surveillance program similar to FDA's. The department does have a voluntary SE reduction program that is available to shell egg producers.

No egg or lot of eggs is perfect, and no candler is perfect. USDA and state standards such as ours allow for a certain percentage of the eggs to have minor defects. These minor defects are not of public health significance unless the percentage of minor defects exceeds the standard. Serious defects such as excessive debris on the shell, large blood spots or leakers can be of public health significance as they may allow easy entry of contamination such as the Salmonella organism into the egg or may point to a problem in the sanitation of the coop environment or egg collection system or, a failure in the washing, disinfection or candling of the eggs.

In our egg surveillance program, besides inspections for sanitary conditions, we must examine eggs that have been graded by the producer to determine if the grader is properly grading eggs. In order to do this a certain number of eggs are handled by a regulatory official. The number examined by us during an inspection is based on the lot size and must be statistically significant in order for our observations to be considered accurate and valid. We use mathematical tables that tell us what our sample size must be to be statistically significant, based on the lot size. When the lot contains a small number of eggs, for our examinations to be statistically valid, the number of eggs examined approaches the number of eggs in the lot. The minimum sample size is 100 or all the eggs available if less than 100. Depending on the nature of a defect detected during an inspection, as few as 1 defective egg could mean the lot fails. Failure of a lot results in the lot being put into "retention", which means it cannot be sold until it is re-graded and the condition(s) that resulted in the retention are corrected.

### **Eggs other Than Chicken Eggs:**

No formal grades for eggs other than chicken have been established. To introduce eggs other than chicken eggs into wholesale and distribution chains and retail markets, the eggs must have been produced and handled under sanitary conditions, properly refrigerated and properly labeled (except that they **may not** be labeled with a Grade).

If eggs other than chicken eggs are washed/disinfected, then the washing/disinfection must be done in a properly constructed room using properly constructed/maintained equipment and appropriate cleaner/disinfectants registered with EPA used and stored according to label directions. The egg room sanitation, maintenance and construction standards apply, except for the grading equipment and process. Eggs other than chicken eggs which have been produced and handled in substantial compliance with this program may be introduced into wholesale and distribution chains and retail markets.

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# Section 1

## Standards for Egg Room Sanitation

These are not the official versions regulations. This is provided for the convenience of the reader, it may not contain all relevant statutes.

RCSA 22-324-D1

### Definitions

- 1) "Case" means when referring to containers, an egg case as used in commercial practice in the United States, holding thirty dozens of shell eggs.
- 2) "Condition" means any condition, including but not limited to, the state of preservation, cleanliness, soundness, wholesomeness, or fitness for human food, of any product which affects its merchantability.
- 3) "Plant" means any building, machinery, apparatus or fixture, used for the storing, grading of packing of shell eggs.
- 4) "Potable water" means water that has been approved by the State Department of Health, or any agency or laboratory acceptable to the Commissioner of Agriculture as safe for drinking and food processing.
- 5) "Premises" means a tract of land with building or part of building with its grounds or appurtenances.
- 6) "Product" or "products" means shell eggs of domesticated chicken.
- 7) "Shell eggs" means eggs of domesticated chickens.
- 8) "Shell protected" means eggs which have had a protective covering such as oil applied to the shell surface.
- 9) "AA Quality" means the shell must be clean, unbroken and practically normal. The air cell must not exceed one-eighth inch (3.2mm) in depth, may show unlimited movement, and may be free of bubbly. The white must be clear and firm, so that the yolk is only slightly defined when the egg is twirled before the candling light. The yolk must be practically free from apparent defects.
- 10) "A Quality" means the shell must be clean, unbroken, and practically normal. The air cell must not exceed three-sixteenths of an inch (4.8mm) in depth, may show unlimited movement, and may be free or bubbly. The white must be clear and at least reasonable firm, so that the yolk out-line is only fairly well defined when the egg is twirled before the candling light. The yolk must be practically free from apparent defects.
- 11) "B Quality" means the shell must be unbroken, may be abnormal, and may have slightly stained areas. Moderately stained areas are permitted if they do not cover more than one-thirty- seconded (0.8mm) of the shell surface if localized, or one-sixteenth (4.8mm) of the shell surface if scattered. Eggs having shells with prominent stains or adhering dirt are not permitted. The air cell may be over three-sixteenths inch (1.6) in depth, may show unlimited movement, and may be free or bubbly. The white may be weak and watery, so that the yolk outline is plainly visible when the eggs is twirled before the candling light. The yolk may appear dark, enlarged, and flattened, and may show clearly visible germ development, but no blood due to such development. It may show other serious defects that do not render the egg inedible. Small blood spots or meat spots (aggregating not more than one-eighth inch (3.2mm) in diameter) may be present.
- 12) "Dirty" means an individual egg that has an unbroken shell with adhering dirt or foreign material, prominent stains, or moderate stains covering more than one-thirty-second of the shell surface if localized, or one-sixteenth of the shell surface if scattered.
- 13) "Check" means an individual egg that has a broken shell or a crack in the shell, but its shell membranes are intact and its contents do not leak.
- 14) "Leaker" means an individual egg that has a crack or break in the shell and shell membranes to the extent that the egg contents are exuding or free to exude through the shell.

- 15) "Loss" means an egg that is inedible, cooked, frozen, contaminated, sour, musty, or an egg that contains a large blood spot, large meat spot, bloody white, green white, rot, stuck yolk, blood ring, embryo chick (at or beyond the blood ring state), free yolk in the white, or other foreign material.
- 16) "Restricted" means eggs classified as checks, dirties, incubator rejects, inedibles, leakers and loss.

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**Physical requirements of plant**

- A) The plant shall be free from strong foul odors, dust and smoke-laden air.
- B) The premises shall be free from refuse, rubbish, waste, other materials and conditions which constitute a source of odors or a harbor for insects, rodents and other vermin.
- C) The buildings shall be of sound construction kept in good repair, such as to prevent the entrance or harboring of vermin.
- D) Rooms shall be kept free from refuse, rubbish, waste materials, odors, insects and rodents, and from any conditions which may constitute a source of odors or engender insects and rodents. Materials and equipment not currently needed shall be handled or stored in a manner so as to not constitute a sanitary hazard.
- E) Doors and windows the open to the outside shall be protected against the entrance of flies and other insects. Doors and windows serving rooms where edible product is exposed shall be protected against the entrance of dust and dirt. All doors leading into rooms where edible product is processed shall be fitted with self-closing devices.
- F) Doors and other openings which are accessible to rodents shall be of rodent-proof construction.
- G) There shall be an efficient drainage and plumbing system for the plant and premises. All drains and gutters shall be properly installed with traps and vents. The sewerage system shall have adequate slope and capacity to readily remove all waste from the various processing operations. All floor drains shall be equipped with traps constructed so as to minimize clogging.
- H) The floors, walls, ceiling, partitions, posts, doors and other parts of a structure shall be of such materials, construction and finish as to permit their ready and thorough cleaning. The floors and curbing shall be watertight.
- I) Both the hot and cold water supplies shall be ample, clean and potable with adequate facilities for distribution throughout the plant or portion thereof utilized for egg processing handling operations and for protection against contamination and pollution.
- J) Each room and each compartment in which any shell eggs are handled or processed shall be so designed and constructed as to insure processing and operating conditions of a clean and orderly character, free from objectionable odors and vapors, and shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.
- K) Every practicable precaution shall be taken to exclude dogs, cats and vermin including, but not limited to, rodents and insects, from the plant or portion thereof in which shell eggs are handled or stored.
- L) There shall be adequately lighted dressing rooms and toilet rooms, ample in size, conveniently located and separated from the rooms and compartments in which shell eggs are handled, processed, or stored, sufficient in number to accommodate the number of persons employed. The dressing rooms and toilet rooms shall be separately ventilated.
- M) Lavatory accommodations, including, but not limited to, hot and cold running water, towels, and soap which does not impart an odor which interferes with accurate evaluation of the product, shall be placed at such locations in the plant as may be essential to assure cleanliness of each person handling any shell eggs.
- N) Suitable facilities for cleaning and sanitizing utensils and equipment shall be provided at convenient locations throughout the plant.

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### **Equipment and utensils**

- A) Equipment and utensils used in processing shell eggs shall be of such design, material and construction as will (1) enable the examination, segregation and processing of such products in an efficient, clean and satisfactory manner, and (2) permit easy access to all parts to insure thorough cleaning and sanitizing. So far as is practicable all such equipment shall be made of metal or other impervious material, if the metal or other impervious material will not affect the product by chemical action or physical contact. Receptacles and packages used for shell eggs which are not fit for human food shall bear some conspicuous and distinctive identification.

### **Protection of Shell Eggs**

- A) Shell eggs which are not fit for human consumption shall be placed in a conspicuously marked container and shall be treated in such manner as will preclude their use as human food.
- B) No product or material which creates an objectionable condition shall be processed, stored or handled in any room, compartment or place where any shell eggs are processed, stored or handled.
- C) Only germicides, insecticides, rodenticides, detergents or wetting agents or other similar compounds which will not deleteriously affect the egg products and which have been approved and listed in the U.S. Department of Agriculture list of Chemical Compounds, authorized for the use under the U.S.D.A. Poultry and Egg Products Inspection Program, may be used in the plant. The use of such compounds shall be in a manner satisfactory to the commissioner.
- D) Packages or containers for eggs shall be clean when being filled; and all reasonable precautions shall be taken to avoid soiling or contamination the surface of any package or container liner which is, or will be, in direct contact with such eggs. Only new containers or used containers that are clean and in sound condition shall be used for packaging eggs. (1) A used fiber case shall be construed to be good if it is reasonable clean and free from excessive stains and odors. Cases which have lost their original shape, due to warping, bulging, sagging or denting shall not be used. All seams shall be securely fastened without broken stitches or pulled staples. Hand slots and other parts of the case shall be free of tears. (2) Used fillers, flats and filler-flats shall be construed to be good if they are reasonably clean and sufficiently sound to permit the lifting of the layer of eggs from the case without losing eggs. They shall be free of mold, mustiness or off odor. (3) Any material which does not meet the definition of new, good, and used shall not be used.

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### **Candling and Transfer Room: Construction**

- A) The candling and transfer room shall be so constructed that it can be adequately darkened to assure accuracy in removal of inedible or loss of eggs by candling. Equipment shall be arranged so as to facilitate cleaning and the removal of refuse and excess material.
- B) The construction of the floor shall allow thorough cleaning. In any building constructed after the effective date of the regulation, the floors shall be of water resistant composition and provided with proper drainage.
- C) Ventilation shall be such as to provide for the rapid removal of objectionable odors and dust, preferably by means of an exhaust fan.
- D) Candling devices of an approved type shall be provided to enable candlers to detect inedible, dirty or checked eggs, and eggs other than chicken eggs.
- E) Leaker trays shall be made of such material and design as to be conducive to easy cleaning and sanitizing.
- F) Containers made of a material and design conducive to easy cleaning and sanitizing shall be provided for inedible eggs. All such containers shall be conspicuously marked.
- G) Containers made of a material and design conducive to easy cleaning and sanitizing shall be provided for trash unless clean disposable containers are furnished daily.
- H) Shell egg conveyors shall be constructed so that they can be thoroughly cleaned.

### **Candling and Transfer Room: Cleanliness**

- A) Candling and transfer rooms shall be kept clean and free from cobwebs, dust, objectionable odors and excess packing materials.
- B) Floors, benches, and conveyors shall be cleaned as often as necessary to maintain clean operation but at least once daily.
- C) Mechanical candling machines shall be maintained in a clean condition during operations.
- D) Containers for trash and inedible eggs shall be removed from the candling room as often as necessary but at least once daily and shall be cleaned and treated in such a manner as will avoid off odors or objectionable conditions in the plant.

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## Cooler Room Requirements. Shell Egg Protecting and Cleaning Operations.

- A) Cooler room requirements: Shell eggs shall be held under refrigeration meeting the following requirements:
- (1) Cooler rooms shall have refrigeration facilities capable of reducing within forty-eight hours and holding the maximum volume of eggs handled to 45° F or below. Accurate thermometers shall be provided.
  - (2) Cooler rooms shall be free from objectionable odors and from mold and shall be maintained in a sanitary condition
- B) Shell egg protecting operations: Shell eggs protecting (oil processing) operations shall be conducted in a manner to avoid contamination of the product and maximize conservation of its quality.
- (1) Oil having off odor, or that is obviously contaminated, shall not be used in shell egg protection
  - (2) Processing oil that has been previously used and which has become contaminated shall be filtered and heat treated at 180° F for three minutes prior to use.
- C) Shell egg cleaning operations
- (1) Shell egg cleaning equipment shall be kept in good repair and shall be cleaned after each day's use or more frequently if necessary.
  - (2) Waste water from the egg washing operation shall go directly to a drain.
  - (3) Continuous-type washers shall have a complete water change at least once during each day and at the end of each day or more frequently.
  - (4) Bucket type washers shall have a complete water change after every five baskets
  - (5) Wash water used shall be at least 20° F warmer than the eggs. The minimum maintained temperature of the wash water shall be 90° F. The twenty degree differential shall be maintained throughout the cleaning cycle. Pre-wetting by submersion shall not exceed five minutes.
  - (6) During any rest period, eggs shall be removed from the washing and rinsing area of the egg washer and from the scanning area whenever there is a buildup of heat.
  - (7) Only Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S.D.A. approved list cleaning and sanitizing compounds revised April 2006, and as subsequently amended may be used. The use of metered equipment for dispensing the compounds into solution is recommended.
  - (8) The entire shell egg cleaning and drying operation shall be continuous and shall be completed as rapidly as possible.
  - (9) Only potable water may be used to wash eggs.
  - (10) Where practicable all washed eggs shall be spray rinsed with warm, potable water which contains sanitizing compound. Rinse water should be 10° F warmer than wash water. The strength of the sanitizing rinse should be no less than 50 p/m nor more than 200 p/m of chlorine or its equivalent.
  - (11) Washed eggs shall be reasonably dry before cartoning or casing.

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## Section 2

### Consumer Standards, Grades and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs

### Adapted From the U.S. Standards, Grades, and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs

The Connecticut Shell Egg Surveillance Program provides for a standard of Grade B or better

**U.S. Standards for Quality of Individual Shell Eggs** The standards described below are summarized in table 2 and are based on the candled appearance of the egg.

TABLE 2. Summary of U.S. Standards for Quality of Individual Shell Eggs.

#### SPECIFICATIONS FOR EACH QUALITY FACTOR

Quality Factor	AA Quality	A Quality	B Quality
<b>Shell</b>	Clean Unbroken. Practically Normal.	Clean Unbroken. Practically Normal.	Clean to slightly stained.* Unbroken. Abnormal.
<b>Air Cell</b>	1/8 inch or less in depth. Unlimited movement and free or bubbly.	3/16 inch or less in depth. Unlimited movement and free or bubbly.	Over 3/16 inch in depth. Unlimited movement and free or bubbly.
<b>White</b>	Clear. Firm.	Clear. Reasonably firm.	Weak and watery. Small blood and meat spots present.**
<b>Yolk</b>	Outline slightly defined. Practically free from defects.	Outline fairly well defined. Practically free from defects.	Outline plainly visible. Enlarged and flattened. Clearly visible germ development but no blood. Other serious defects.
<b>For eggs with dirty or broken shells, the standards of quality provide two additional qualities.</b>			
<b>Dirty</b>		<b>Check</b>	
Unbroken. Adhering dirt or foreign material, prominent stains, moderate stained areas in excess of B quality.		Broken or cracked shell, but membranes intact, not leaking.***	
* Moderately stained areas permitted (1/32 of surface if localized, or 1/16 if scattered.). ** If they are small (aggregating not more than 1/8 inch in diameter). *** Leaker has broken or cracked shell membranes, and contents leaking or free to leak.			

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## U.S. Consumer Grades and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs

**Consumer Grades.** The standards for shell eggs provide for “origin” and “destination” consumer grades. “Origin grading” is defined as a grading made on a lot of eggs at a plant where the eggs are graded and packed.

Table 3 gives a summary of the consumer grades, while table 4 gives the tolerance for individual cases within a lot.

**U.S. Consumer Grade AA** (at origin) shall consist of eggs that are at least 87 percent AA quality. The maximum tolerance of 13 percent that may be below AA quality may consist of A or B quality in any combination, except that within the tolerance for B quality, not more than 1 percent may be B quality due to air cells over three-eighths inch (9.5 mm), blood spots aggregating not more than one-eighth inch (3.2 mm) in diameter, or serious yolk defects. Not more than 5 percent (7 percent for Jumbo size) checks are permitted and not more than 0.5 percent leakers, dirties, or loss (due to meat or blood spots) in any combination, except that such loss may not exceed 0.3 percent. Other types of loss are not permitted.

**U.S. Consumer Grade A** (at origin) shall consist of eggs that are at least 87 percent A quality or better. Within the maximum tolerance of 13 percent that may be below A quality, not more than 1 percent may be B quality due to air cells over three-eighths inch (9.5 mm), blood spots aggregating not more than one-eighth inch (3.2 mm) in diameter, or serious yolk defects. Not more than 5 percent (7 percent for Jumbo size) checks are permitted and not more than 0.5 percent leakers, dirties, or loss (due to meat or blood spots) in any combination, except that such loss may not exceed 0.3 percent. Other types of loss are not permitted.

**U.S. Consumer Grade B** (at origin) shall consist of eggs that are at least 90 percent B quality or better, not more than 10 percent may be checks, and not more than 0.5 percent leakers, dirties, or loss (due to meat or blood spots) in any combination, except that such loss may not exceed 0.3 percent. Other types of loss are not permitted.

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**TABLE 3. Summary of U.S. Consumer Grades for Shell Eggs.**

U.S. consumer grade (origin)	Quality required <sup>1</sup>	Tolerance permitted <sup>2</sup>	
		Percent	Quality
<b>Grade AA</b>	87 percent AA.	Up to 13 ..... Not over 5 .....	A or B. <sup>5</sup> Checks. <sup>6</sup>
<b>Grade A</b>	87 percent A or better.	Up to 13 ..... Not over 5 .....	B. <sup>5</sup> Checks. <sup>6</sup>
<b>Grade B</b>	90 percent B or better.	Not over 10 .....	Checks.

  

U.S. consumer grade (destination)	Quality required <sup>1</sup>	Tolerance permitted <sup>3</sup>	
		Percent	Quality
<b>Grade AA</b>	72 percent AA.	Up to 28 <sup>4</sup> ..... Not over 7 .....	A or B. <sup>5</sup> Checks. <sup>6</sup>
<b>Grade A</b>	82 percent A or better.	Up to 18 ..... Not over 7 .....	B. <sup>5</sup> Checks. <sup>6</sup>
<b>Grade B</b>	90 percent B or better.	Not over 10 .....	Checks.

<sup>1</sup> In lots of two or more cases, see table 4 for tolerances for an individual case within a lot.

<sup>2</sup> For the U.S. consumer grades (at origin), a tolerance of 0.50 percent Leakers, Dirties, or Loss (due to meat or blood spots) in any combination is permitted, except that such Loss may not exceed 0.30 percent. Other types of Loss are not permitted.

<sup>3</sup> For the U.S. consumer grades (destination), a tolerance of 1 percent Leakers, Dirties, or Loss (due to meat or blood spots) in any combination is permitted, except that such Loss may not exceed 0.30 percent. Other types of Loss are not permitted.

<sup>4</sup> For U.S. Grade AA at destination, at least 10 percent must be A quality or better.

<sup>5</sup> For U.S. Grade AA and A at origin and destination within the tolerances permitted for B quality, not more than 1 percent may be B quality due to air cells over 3/8 inch, blood spots (aggregating not more than 1/8 inch in diameter), or serious yolk defects.

<sup>6</sup> For U.S. Grades AA and A Jumbo size eggs, the tolerance for Checks at origin and destination is 7 percent and 9 percent, respectively.

**TABLE 4. Tolerances for individual cases within a lot.**

U.S. consumer grade	Case Quality	Origin (percent)	Destination (percent)
<b>Grade AA</b>	AA (min) A	77	62
	or B	13	28
	Check (max)	10	10
<b>Grade A</b>	A (min) B	77	72
	Check (max)	13	18
		10	10
<b>Grade B</b>	B (min) Check	80	80
	(max)	20	20

**Additional tolerances.** In lots of two or more cases:

For grade AA — No individual case may exceed 10 percent less AA quality eggs than the minimum permitted for the lot average.

For grade A — No individual case may exceed 10 percent less A quality eggs than the minimum permitted for the lot average.

For grade B — No individual case may exceed 10 percent less B quality eggs than the minimum permitted for the lot average.

For grades AA, A, and B, no lot shall be rejected or downgraded due to the quality of a single egg except for loss other than blood or meat spots.

**Weight Classes.** The weight classes for U.S. consumer grades for shell eggs shall be as indicated in table 5, and shall apply to all consumer grades.

A lot-average tolerance of 3.3 percent for individual eggs in the next lower weight class is permitted, as long as no individual case within the lot exceeds 5 percent.

**TABLE 5. Weight classes of U.S. Consumer Grades for Shell Eggs.**

Size or weight class	Minimum net weight per dozen (ounces)	Minimum net weight 30 per dozen (pounds)	Minimum net weight for individual eggs at rate per dozen (ounces)
Jumbo .....	30	56	29
Extra-large .....	27	50 1/2	26
Large .....	24	45	23
Medium .....	21	39 1/2	20
Small .....	18	34	17
Peewee .....	15	28	—

**U.S. Nest Run Grade and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs**

Table 6 summarizes the nest run grade described below.

**U.S. Nest Run % AA Quality** shall consist of eggs of current production of which at least 20 percent are AA quality; and the actual percentage of AA quality eggs shall be stated in the grade name. Within the maximum of 15 percent that may be below A quality, not more than 10 percent may be B quality for shell shape, for interior quality (including meat or blood spots), or due to rusty- or blackish-appearing cage marks or blood stains; not more than 5 percent may have adhering dirt or foreign material on the shell one-half inch (12.7 mm) or larger in diameter; not more than 6 percent may be checks; and not more than 3 percent may be loss. Marks that are slightly gray in appearance and adhering dirt or foreign material on the shell less than one-half inch (12.7 mm) in diameter are not considered quality factors. The eggs shall be officially graded for all other quality factors. No case may contain less than 75 percent A quality and AA quality eggs in any combination.

**TABLE 6.** Summary of U.S. Nest Run Grade for Shell Eggs.

	Nest-run grade, description <sup>1</sup>	U.S. nest run percent AA quality <sup>2</sup>
<b>Minimum percentage of quality required (lot average) <sup>3</sup></b>	AA quality <sup>4</sup>	20
	A quality or better <sup>5</sup>	85
<b>Maximum percentage tolerance permitted (15 percent lot average) <sup>3</sup></b>	B quality for shell shape, pronounced ridges or thin spots, interior quality (including blood & meat spots) or cage marks <sup>6</sup> and blood stains	10
	Checks	6
	Loss	3
	Adhering dirt or foreign material 1/2 inch or larger in diameter	5

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The weight classes for the U.S. Nest Run grade for shell eggs shall be as indicated in table 7.

TABLE 7. *Weight classes for U.S. Nest Run Grade for Shell Eggs.*

<b>Weight classes</b>	<b>Minimum average net weight on lot basis 30-dozen cases (pounds)</b>
Class XL	51
Class 1	48
Class 2	45
Class 3	42
Class 4	39

### Summary of Nest Run Grade for Shell Eggs

## Inspection and Disposition of Restricted Eggs

- 1) Prohibition on disposition of restricted eggs
  - a. No person shall buy, sell, or transport, or offer to buy or sell, or receive for transportation in any business in commerce any restricted eggs, except as authorized by the Commissioner of Agriculture or the commissioners designated agent.
  - b. No egg handler shall possess any restricted eggs, except as authorized by the Commissioner of Agriculture or the commissioners designated agent.
  - c. No egg handler shall use any restricted eggs in the preparation of human food except as provided under "Disposition of restricted eggs".
- 2) Disposition of restricted eggs
  - a. Eggs classified as restricted shall be disposed of by one of the following methods at point and time of segregation.
  - b. By shipping directly or indirectly to an official egg products processing plant for segregation and processing, if labeled check or dirty then inedible and loss eggs are not intermingled in the same container with checks and dirties.
  - c. Loss and inedible eggs shall be crushed and shall be placed in a container containing a sufficient amount of approved denaturant or decharacterant substance, as approved the Commissioner of Agriculture or the commissioners designated agent.
  - d. The denatured and decharacterized product shall be properly labeled.
  - e. By processing for industrial use or for animal food. Such product shall be denatured or decharacterized, labeled and handled with procedures approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture or the commissioners designated agent.
  - f. Eggs which are packed for the ultimate consumer and which have been found to exceed the tolerance for restricted eggs permitted in the official standards for Consumer Grade B shall be properly identified as Not For Sale For Human Food, Under Grade and shipped directly or indirectly to an official egg processing plant for proper segregation and processing; or be regraded so that they comply with official standards; or used as other than human food. Records shall be maintained to assure proper disposition.

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3) Retention

- a. Retention tags or other devices and methods as may be approved the Commissioner of Agriculture or the commissioners designated agent shall be used for the identification and control of products which are not in compliance with the regulations or are held for examination. No product shall be released for use until it has been made acceptable. Such identification shall not be removed be anyone other than Commissioner of Agriculture or the commissioners designated agent or under the direction of the Commissioner of Agriculture or the commissioners designated agent.

4) Inspections

- a. Inspection of eggs shall be rendered pursuant to these regulations and under such conditions and in accordance with such methods as may be prescribed or approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture.
- b. Periodic inspections shall be made of business premises, facilities, inventories, operations, transport vehicles, and records of egg handlers, and records of all persons engaged in the business of transporting, shipping, or receiving any eggs. In the case of shell egg packers packing eggs for ultimate consumer, such shell egg surveillance inspections shall be made a minimum of once each calendar quarter. In the case of shell egg processing plant sanitation inspection shall be semi-annually.

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## Section 3

### Labeling

Labels must be reviewed by the department, shall comply with FDA regulations and include the "safe handling" statement as follows:

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

In addition to the safe handling instructions the label shall include:

- CT Shell Egg Grading Plant Number
- Name, address and phone number of the grading plant
- The name of the food (species must precede the name of the food if it is not a chicken egg) e.g. Duck Eggs or Eggs
- The net quantity
- The grade and size (chicken eggs only)
- The packing date in Julian date format (numerical day of the year).
- **Optional** - When a "sell-by" date appears on a carton, the code date may not exceed 45 days from the date of pack.

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## Section 4

### Related Connecticut Department of Agriculture Programs

#### Connecticut Voluntary Salmonella Enteritis (SE) Reduction Program

Although this program does not guarantee shell eggs to be free of SE contamination, the program does require a commitment from the producer to implement those SE management and SE monitoring practices most likely to prevent SE contamination. The Connecticut Voluntary Salmonella Enteritis (SE) Reduction Program is operated in partnership with the University of Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory.

Basic preventive measures include placement of SE clean chicks, intensive rodent control, cleaning and disinfecting between flocks, and monitoring the environment for the presence of SE.

Basic Program Requirements:

- Chicks and pullets purchased from SE negative breeder flocks.
- Cleaning and disinfection of the layer environment and egg handling equipment.
- Testing the environment twice for the presence of SE, shortly after chicks arrive and before laying begins.
- Bio-security - All participants must maintain an acceptable bio-security program to secure facilities from outside contamination risks and the introduction of SE.

**To obtain more information about our shell egg inspection program Call 860-713-2513**

Avian influenza and the risk it poses to the Connecticut poultry industry is an important concern of the Department of Agriculture. The Department has an avian influenza surveillance program for poultry owners that provides for testing at no or low cost.

**For information concerning poultry disease surveillance and prevention programs, National Poultry Improvement Plan programs and the requirements for importing live birds or hatching eggs. Call 860-713-2504**

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**Section 5. Example Inspection Form**



**State of Connecticut**  
 Department of Agriculture  
 Agricultural Commodities Division  
 Inspection of Sanitation, Operations and Procedures of Shell Egg Processing Plants

Name of Plant  
 EXAMPLE

Address	Town	State	Zip
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Inspection <input type="checkbox"/> Re-inspection <input type="checkbox"/>	Date ____ / ____ / ____	Plant # _____
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**1. Building and Premises**

Surroundings neat and clean and free of harborage for rodents and breeding areas for insects .....a\_\_\_\_  
 Inspection of premises indicates that the rodent control program is effective .....b\_\_\_\_  
 Inedible product is labeled and disposed of properly.....c\_\_\_\_

**2. Shell Egg Washing, Grading\*, Packing Operations and Equipment** \*applicable only to chicken eggs

Water supply Public  Private  Date Tested \_\_\_\_\_  
 Egg processing equipment clean and sanitary.....a\_\_\_\_  
 Product non-contact surfaces and equipment, clean and sanitary.....b\_\_\_\_  
 Egg wash water temperature at a min. of 90°F and at least 20°F higher than the internal temperature of eggs to be washed.....c\_\_\_\_  
 Packaging and packing materials new, clean and free of mold .....d\_\_\_\_  
 Floors: smooth impervious, in good repair, sloped and floor drains properly trapped.....e\_\_\_\_  
 Doors and Windows: All outside opening protected against insects, rodents and dust. All outside doors tight and self-closing.....f\_\_\_\_  
 Adequate lighting in all processing and storage areas .....g\_\_\_\_  
 Ventilation sufficient to stream vapors generated by washing operation .....h\_\_\_\_  
 Sanitizer system functioning properly and concentration levels of not less than 50 ppm and not more than 200 ppm of chlorine or equivalent.....i\_\_\_\_

**3. Shell Egg Cooling Facilities**

Temperature of 45°F or lower in all egg coolers..... a\_\_\_\_  
 Thermometer provided in all egg coolers ..... b\_\_\_\_  
 Egg coolers maintained in sanitary manner free of odors and mold ..... c\_\_\_\_

**4. Health and Cleanliness of Employees**

Employees in direct contact with eggs wearing clean clothes ..... a\_\_\_\_  
 Hand-washing sink provided in processing area and operating properly ..... b\_\_\_\_

**5. Toilet Facilities**

Restrooms properly constructed and maintained in a clean and sanitary condition ..... a\_\_\_\_

**6. Storage and Use of Chemicals and Compounds**

Use only approved egg cleaning and sanitizing compounds according to manufacturer's instructions  
 Chemical compounds stored separately from edible food products..... a\_\_\_\_

**7. Labeling**

Products properly labeled..... a\_\_\_\_

**8. Recall Procedures**

Customer list maintained and procedures for handling a recall documented..... a\_\_\_\_

Rating - Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

**Remarks:**

**EXAMPLE**

**Inspector:**

**Report Received By:**

## Section 6

### Other Resources

[Egg Grading Statutes](#)

[Egg Room Sanitation Regulations](#)

[Reportable Food Registry](#)

[FDA Small Business Nutrition Labeling Exemption Guidance](#)

[FDA Guidance, Compliance & Regulatory Information](#)

[FDA Food Safety Guidance for Industry](#)

[FDA Egg Safety Final Rule](#)

[USDA Shell Eggs from Farm to Table](#)

[USDA Egg Grading Manual](#)

[Egg Safety Center](#)

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