



2 April 2009

To: the egg producer named in address

## Marketing standards for eggs

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to bring to your attentions certain aspects of the legislation on the marketing standards for eggs.

### Salmonella testing

Since 1 January 2008 flocks of layers must be tested for salmonella at least every 15 weeks in the manner set out in legislation. Details of this were provided in a letter dated 13 August 2007. A list of laboratories approved for testing is attached.

The first sampling should take place at the age of 22 to 26 weeks. The method of sampling is:

- (a) In cage flocks, 2 samples each weighing 150 grams of faeces made up of sub-samples shall be taken from all belts or scrapers in the house after running the manure removal system. In the case of step cage houses (deep pit) without scrapers or belts, 2 samples each weighing 150 grams of mixed fresh faeces must be collected from 60 different places beneath the cages in the dropping pits. Samples can be placed in 500 ml screw-cap containers (obtainable from companies such as Sarstedt). Ensuring containers are not overfilled, taping the lids and posting in "Jiffy" bags will help avoid spillage.
- (b) In barn or free-range houses, two pairs of boot swabs shall be taken from each house, taking a swab from each half of the house. Place each pair of boot swabs in a separate plastic container.

Department officials will, in addition, occasionally oversee the taking of official samples and inspect the records and results of your private testing.

Eggs may not be sold for consumption as table eggs if they originate in flocks that are not complying with the testing regime or that are of unknown salmonella status.

### Industrial eggs

Eggs that are not going to be used for human consumption must not be fed to animals. They must be treated as Category 3 material for the purposes of the by-products legislation and be processed and handled accordingly.

### Hygiene inspections

All food producers must comply with hygiene legislation and this includes egg producers. The objective of this is the protection of public and animal health. Cage, free-range, barn and organic egg producers will be inspected from time to time by Department officials for the purpose of verifying compliance on the hygiene front. Your co-operation during the course of these inspections will be greatly appreciated. For your information, I enclose a checklist of items that inspectors will examine.

Yours sincerely

Marie Hoban

Meat Policy Division

European Communities (Control of salmonella in laying flocks of domestic fowl)  
Regulations 2008  
(S.I. No. 247 of 2008)

**Laboratories approved to conduct salmonella testing of flocks**

Anser Laboratories Ltd  
69A Killyman St  
Moy BT7I  
Co. Tyrone

Monaghan Veterinary Laboratory  
Clones Road  
Monaghan

Complete Laboratory Solutions  
Ros Muc  
Connemara  
Co. Galway

Oldcastle laboratories Ltd  
Cogan Street  
Oldcastle  
Co. Meath

Envia Ireland Ltd  
Raheen Industrial Estate  
Ringaskiddy Road  
Monkstown  
Co Cork

Q-Lab Ltd  
P.O. Box 27  
Kerlogue Industrial Estate  
Drinagh  
Co Wexford

Microlab Ltd  
Drumillard Little  
Monaghan Road  
Castleblaney  
Co. Monaghan

Mid-Antrim Laboratory Service  
42A Broughshane Rd  
Ballymena  
Co. Antrim

## Hygiene Checklist - Egg Producers

### A. Egg Storage Area:

1. Are the eggs protected against contamination?
2. Do the facilities allow the eggs to be kept clean, dry, free from extraneous odour, effectively protected from shocks and out of direct sunshine?
3. Is the egg handling equipment clean and in good condition?
4. Is there a proper cleaning / disinfection programme in place?

### B. Site Security:

5. Is there adequate site security to prevent entry by other animal species including livestock?
6. Is there adequate site security to prevent entry of unauthorised personnel?
7. Is there adequate biosecurity?
8. Are there on site foot dips and facilities for changing of footwear in place?
9. Are there adequate procedures in place to prevent the spread of contagious diseases?
10. Are there general guidelines in relation to Good Hygiene Practice in place?
11. a) Are mortalities recorded daily?  
b) Are mortalities properly disposed of?

### C. Hygiene During Production Process:

12. Are there adequate facilities for the disposal of waste?
13. Are there adequate rodent and pest control measures in place?
14. Are there adequate facilities for the handling, storage and disposal of slurry and litter and hazardous substances?

### D. Feed and Record Keeping:

15. Are feed storage facilities in good condition, and is there a regular cleaning programme?
16. Are adequate feed records indicating the nature and origin and delivery of the feed maintained?
17. Are adequate records maintained indicating when the feed bin was last emptied?
18. Are there adequate records in relation to prescribed veterinary medicinal products or other animal remedies, dates of administration and withdrawal periods?

### E. Water:

19. Is the drinking water holding tank covered to prevent contamination?
20. Is there a system in place which facilitates cleaning of water lines following administration of medications?
21. Is the water quality being monitored annually in a laboratory officially approved to carry out such testing, to ensure potable water?

### F. Health and Welfare:

22. Are the birds clean, visually healthy and well feathered?
23. Are records maintained on the occurrence of disease?

### G. Transport and Conveyance

24. Is there a register of all company owned vehicles/ containers used for transporting eggs (if applicable)?
25. Are vehicles/containers used solely for transporting eggs?
26. Are vehicles/containers suitable for transporting eggs with regard to cleanliness?