

AMERICA'S EGG FARMERS

Caring For Our Hens and Producing Safe, Quality Eggs

CARING FOR HENS

Ensuring the health and well-being of hens is the responsibility and commitment of all egg farmers; healthy hens produce safe, nutritious, quality eggs. The farmer-members of United Egg Producers (UEP) produce nearly all the eggs in the United States, and more than 85 percent of all egg farmers participate in the UEP Certified voluntary hen care certification program.



Eggs from UEP Certified farms are marked with the UEP Certified seal, which customers know gives consumers the added assurance that egg-laying hens are raised under rigorous standards for animal care.

UEP provides details on the standards at UEPCertified.com.

■ About UEP Certified

The UEP Certified program is an acknowledged leader in the establishment of science-based guidelines on hen well-being. Egg farmers know excellent hen care can be provided using a variety of housing options. The UEP Certified program currently provides standards, developed by an independent Scientific Advisory Committee, for traditional cage and cage-free housing environments.

Some core hen well-being requirements of the UEP Certified program include:

- Code of conduct signed by employees trained in animal care processes
- Annual compliance audit conducted by independent, third-party auditors
- Scientifically supported space designations for hens in a variety of housing environments
- Feed, clean water and fresh air at all times

■ Today's Housing Environments

Regardless of the type of production, hens always have access to feed, clean water and fresh air. Today's housing systems ensure the health and welfare needs of the hens are met and allow for proper flock management, while also ensuring a safe, fresh, affordable supply of eggs for consumers.

In addition to the UEP Certified traditional cage and cage-free housing standards, other common egg production methods include:

- Enriched colony housing
- Organic production (standards set by USDA)
- Free-range or pasture-raised

■ Keeping Hens Safe

Hen housing practices used today, most of which include housing hens indoors, eliminate many hen diseases and provide the hen with protection against the weather and predators, while improving food safety, the environment and animal welfare. Extensive biosecurity protocols and strict requirements for farm employees and visitors that prevent avian diseases are implemented on farms to further protect the flocks.

PRODUCING SAFE EGGS

Egg farmers know that their obligation to responsible care of their hens is equally matched by the responsibility to produce safe, wholesome quality eggs. Regardless of the housing system in which the hens are raised, egg safety is a priority. United Egg Producers provides updated information on egg safety, as well as proper cooking and handling, at EggSafety.org.

■ Egg Safety Regulations

No matter the type of housing used when raising hens, virtually all egg farmers are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other authorities to ensure eggs are safe for consumers.

In addition to federal egg safety programs, some states also have specific egg safety regulations and rules that govern production practices on those egg farms in the state. Many egg farmers also participate in independent, third-party auditing programs that monitor and assure both egg safety and hen well-being.

■ Egg Safety on the Farm

Egg safety begins with egg production programs that require food safety practices on the farm, including:

- Procurement of *Salmonella*-free chicks
- Biosecurity
- Pest control
- Cleaning and disinfection of poultry houses
- Vaccination of chicks

■ Egg Safety at Home

The most effective way to prevent egg-related illness is by knowing how to buy, store, handle and cook eggs - or foods that contain them - safely. FDA recommends consumers buy only eggs from refrigerators or refrigerated cases, keep everything that comes into contact with the eggs clean, cook eggs thoroughly, and serve and store eggs safely.



About United Egg Producers

United Egg Producers (UEP) is a cooperative of U.S. egg farmers working collaboratively to address legislative, regulatory and advocacy issues impacting the industry through active farmer-member leadership, a unified voice and partnership across the agriculture community. UEP's farmer-members work to provide for the health and well-being of their birds; to produce safe, nutritious, high-quality eggs; and to manage their farms responsibly with best on-farm management practices. Leadership of and participation in the UEP Certified program by the vast majority of egg producers further demonstrates a broad commitment to the care of egg-laying hens. UEP also manages the national Egg Safety Center, a leading resource for consumer and industry information on the safe production of eggs and prevention of disease.

Formed in 1968, UEP members represent about 95 percent of US egg production.

This fact sheet provides a brief overview of information about UEP Certified and egg safety programs. Please visit UEPCERTIFIED.COM or EGGSAFETY.ORG for full details.