

USDA Provides Flexibility to Shell Egg Industry to Shift Supply from Foodservice to Retail Outlets

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United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service

Creating Opportunities for Farmers and Businesses

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is taking immediate action to assist the American egg industry in redistributing the current inventory of safe, high quality table eggs from foodservice warehouses to retail distribution to support the surge in consumer demand for this staple food.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a rapid and dramatic shift in demand away from eggs produced and packaged for foodservice use towards those suitable for sale at supermarkets. This shift has created a temporary misalignment in the supply chain.

To support a robust supply of high quality table eggs, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is immediately waiving the provision which prohibits official grading for eggs over 21 days in age or which have previously shipped for sale (7 CFR 70.3). This temporary deviation from the voluntary grading regulations will help meet consumer demand by allowing eggs recently shipped to foodservice to be returned to the origin farms for reprocessing, repackaging and grading for retail distribution.

In addition, AMS will allow a temporary extension of the age restriction for eggs bearing the USDA grade shield from no more than 21 days to 30 days including the date of lay.

Roughly 55 percent of table eggs in the United States are voluntarily graded for quality by AMS, a service that supports the efficient marketing of safe, high quality eggs across the country and around the world. Many egg retailers rely on the USDA grade shield as added assurance to their customers of a consistent, high quality product.

For more information on USDA grade shields visit the AMS website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/>.