



EXPORT PROCEDURES – Expiration Dating

POLICY

Current Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) domestic policy on expiration code dating of consumer labeled table eggs is limited to a maximum of 30 days or 45 days, depending on the prefix used (i.e. EXP, Sell By, Use By, etc.), which is calculated from the date of packaging. These time periods are associated with the expected duration of quality, and not related to food safety.

Recognizing the logistical challenges associated with exporting table eggs, AMS has traditionally allowed for much longer time periods in order to accommodate the need for remaining shelf life once the product arrives. The longer quality duration claims assume that eggs are packed within 21 days of lay (AMS policy), and that refrigeration is maintained throughout the entire cold chain from farm to table. Since consignments are outside of USDA/FDA controls, a disclaimer is included on the AMS *Shell Egg Grading Certificate* (LPS-210S) stating that the shelf life claims are the responsibility of the exporter.

Current data has recently been published by the USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) showing that freshly laid eggs stored under optimum conditions maintain egg quality through longer periods, roughly through a 90 day or slightly longer period. The research study conducted by ARS and the results are accessible through the link below.

<https://academic.oup.com/ps/article/97/2/716/4739536?guestAccessKey=00ffabc8-51e4-47e1-801f-28fbf04676b5>

Therefore, for exported table eggs AMS will limit the maximum time period for expiration dating to 90 days, **unless** specific labeling requirements are met (see below). The EXP date period will be calculated from the date of packaging.

If exporters wish to use longer periods, up to 180 days, each shipping case label must contain a statement which indicates that the expiration claim is the responsibility of the exporter. Traditionally, the disclaimer statement is made on the AMS *Shell Egg Grading Certificate* and not on the product label itself. However, if EXP dates exceed 90 days, the following verbiage must appear on each case label and must be in close proximity to the EXP date: “As Declared by Exporter.”

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