

SECTION 9: SPECIAL GRADINGS

I. Partial Gradings

Partial gradings may be made in specific situations when:

- The grader is unable to select a representative sample due to the way the cases are stacked.
- The applicant requests a smaller sample than that required by the regulations.
- The applicant selects the samples rather than the grader.
- The applicant requests the grader to stop a grading before completion of the samples because the quality is lower than required.
- When a firm requests that the grader examine sample cases of eggs selected by the firm from a lot of shell eggs received from another plant, the Form PY-210S is to include a statement as follows:

"The results shown on this certificate represent the quality of (number) cases of eggs identified as (grade and size) presented by plant management on (date). According to the applicant, these cases were selected from a lot of (total number) cases of (grade and size) shell eggs received from (firm name) on (date)."

Note: When a partial grading is performed, only the samples examined are to be stamped. The certificate will show "Total Cases" and the number of "Cases Examined" as being identical.

II. Institutional Gradings - Contract Acceptance

When performing institutional gradings, the grader must have a copy of the purchase order or instructions from the procuring agency prior to performing the grading. Certification will be for all requirements stated in the purchase order.

III. Specification Gradings

An applicant for shell egg specification certification service must submit two copies of Form PY-33, "Application for Specification Approval" (Exhibit I) and two copies of the specification to the Shell Egg Section. The information may be sent to the National Office directly or through the Federal- State supervisor in the State where the applicant is headquartered. The following procedures apply only to shell eggs graded according to specifications listed in section S-02 of the Supervisors/Resident Graders Shell Egg Index.

A. Specification Review and Approval Process

Upon receipt of Form PY-33 and the submitted commercial specification into the National Office, the approving official will review the information for approval or advise the applicant of the reason(s) for disapproval. If the specification is approved, a letter enclosing a copy of the approved application and specification will be returned to the applicant with a request to provide copies of the specification to each supplier and applicable USDA grader. Each page of the approved specification will have an approval stamp bearing the date of approval and the signature of the approving official. Additionally, each page will be sequentially numbered such as page 1 of 5, page 2 of 5, etc.

The original copy of the application and specification will be retained in the National Office. A copy of the letter, application, and specification will be sent to the responsible Federal-State supervisor associated with the applicant's location and the applicable regional office. Copies of the specification will also be sent to other Regional Offices and Federal-State supervisors for information purposes. The National Office will periodically update the list of approved specifications or list any changes on transmittal notices. All approved specifications must be treated as confidential at all times. Only authorized USDA representatives are to review and have access to the specifications.

B. Certification of Specification Requirements

Plant management is responsible for advising graders when they are preparing to pack shell eggs in accordance with an approved specification. However, each grader must be familiar with the approved specification list and, to the extent practically possible, be aware when products with approved specifications are being packed at the duty location. When a plant packs product requiring compliance with an approved specification, the grader shall obtain a copy of the specification from plant management and assure that all provisions of the specification are met. If plant management is unable or refuses to provide a copy of the required specification, or states that the approved specification does not apply to product packed in the plant, the grader shall contact the applicable Federal-State supervisor, request a copy of the specification, and review the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the specification. If necessary the supervisor shall contact plant management to clarify certification requirements and resolve the issue.

If the facility elects to continue production without resolving the issue(s), the USDA grader shall not interfere with the production. The supervisor will contact the authorized person whose name appears on Form PY-33 for clarification. During the interim period, there will be no certification of specification requirements. Should the product bear a U.S. grademark, applicable grade requirements must be met or retention is required on that basis.

If a plant is attempting to legitimately pack product in compliance with an approved specification and fails, product not meeting the provisions of the specification is to be placed under USDA retention as outlined in Sections 7 and 8 of this handbook. If the product otherwise meets applicable USDA grade requirements and the plant desires to ship the product, the plant management is to call the person authorized to waive specification requirements as stated on the approved specification. If a waiver is granted, the waiver must be provided to the grader directly, either verbally or in writing. The grader is to document the appropriate information on the applicable worksheet and certificate (if issued) and release the product. If provisions of the specification are waived frequently, or over an extended period of time, the grader is to notify the Federal-State supervisor who, through the Regional Director,

will notify the National Office. The National Office will review the matter with the specification applicant and urge that they consider modifying the specification or terminating its approval.

As applicable, product meeting specification requirements will be identified in accordance with procedures outlined in the approved specification. When the specification requires the issuance of a grading certificate, the following statement is to be placed in the remarks section of the certificate:

"Product covered by this certificate meets specification requirements for _____."

Additionally, list any special certification statements as outlined in the approved specification. When appropriate, the following additional statement would be shown:

"...except for (requirement(s) waived by (name of authorized representative) on (date)."

Within three months of all new specification approvals, the Federal-State supervisor responsible for supervising the State where the applicant is located shall contact the applicant to review responsibilities, answer questions, and resolve any issues that may have developed. Subsequent follow-up visits shall be conducted on an annual or more frequent basis as determined by the Regional Director.

IV. Military or Other Special Gradings

Supplementary instructions for grading shell eggs for delivery to the military, state are covered under specific instructions in the Supervisors/Resident Graders Shell Egg Index.

V. Condition Inspection of Shell Eggs (sensory evaluation)

Graders are not to conduct these types of inspections unless they receive guidance from a Federal-State supervisor. For all types of condition inspections, the top portion of the certificate is filled out in the usual manner.

A. Certification Covering Truck Damage

The following information is required on a "condition" certificate issued to cover accidental truck damage:

1. The number of cases from which egg contents are leaking, or which show visible damage. Give full case and material description.
2. In cases showing visible damage, follow the proper layer rotation and report the percentage of leakers and dented checks for each sample case.
3. When observed by the grader, a properly qualified statement reporting any shifting of the load, and the type bracing used.

B. Certification Covering Frozen Egg Damage

The following information is required on a certificate issued to cover frozen egg damage:

1. The opening temperature of the truck, both at floor and top level.
2. The case temperature of eggs.
3. The number of frozen eggs, and if freezing has caused breakage.

C. Certification Covering Off-Odor or Otherwise Contaminated Eggs

Normally, shell eggs that are allegedly contaminated with odors caused by chemicals, smoke, or other potentially harmful substances come under the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). If FDA elects not to investigate the matter, the Poultry Grading Division may be requested to examine the product and determine appropriate disposition of the shell eggs. In these instances the following action is to be taken unless otherwise directed by the supervisor:

1. Select a partial sample of shell eggs from various places in the lot and take to an odor-free area where an organoleptic examination can be made. Remove the eggs from the packaging materials and attempt to determine if only the packaging materials are affected by the odor. Smell the egg shells, candle the eggs, and break out a few eggs to determine if the odor has permeated the egg shells and into the egg meat.
2. If the eggs have been subjected to fire and smoke damage, determine if any of the packaging materials are wet and if the eggs are contaminated with smoke or soot. Additionally, graders are to assure requirements outlined in Section 3 are followed.

In all cases when completing a "Condition" Certificate, the "Remarks" section should be utilized to record any additional comments which will aid in describing the condition of the eggs and packaging material. No official grading is required unless specifically requested. A copy of all condition certificates are to be sent to the National Office.

VI. U.S. Grade A or AA Interior Quality for Egg Products

Since there are no grade standards for egg products, no designation of grade or quality is permitted. However, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), will allow egg product labels to bear statements of fact such as "Produced from Shell Eggs of U.S. Grade A (or AA) Interior Quality." Therefore, an interested party may request that a lot of shell eggs, used to produce egg products, be officially certified for interior quality when certain conditions are met. Each lot of shell eggs must be officially graded by a USDA grader and meet the following requirements:

- A. The lot shall meet applicable origin or destination requirements for interior quality and checks for U.S. Grade A or AA, as applicable.
- B. Exterior grade factors, except for checks, do not apply.

- C. Up to 2 percent bloody whites, large blood or meat spots, or leakers, in any combination, are permitted. No other loss or inedible eggs are permitted.
- D. Dirts are permitted.

USDA graders may certify the quality of these shell eggs based on either online or stationary lot grading. The grade results are to place on the Form PY-75 or Form PY-211, as applicable. Additionally, the grader is to prepare the Form PY-210S grading certificate showing no U.S. grade assigned under “Official Grade and Size” and the following statement under “Remarks:”

“Product covered by this certificate does (or does not) meet the criteria for U.S. Grade A (AA) interior quality shell eggs for the production of egg products identified with the quality statement.”

VII. Kosher Certification of Shell Eggs

Shell eggs intended for kosher certification must meet an established blood spot tolerance before certification can be made. Shell eggs identified and/or certified as meeting kosher requirements are required to contain no more than one blood spot, of any size, for each lot. No other types of blood loss are allowed. Graders may certify that shell eggs meet kosher certification requirements based on the results of either online sampling or stationary lot grading.

For online sampling, when the first blood spot is found, the portion of the online production represented by that sample must be held for stationary lot grading. This product may be used for other non-kosher accounts or, if the plant wants that portion of the lot to be eligible for kosher certification, the USDA grader will take a full sample of the lot using stationary lot sampling procedures. If no additional blood spots are found during this stationary lot grading, the lot is eligible for kosher certification. However, if another blood spot is found, the product must then be retained, reworked, regraded, and re-examined.

Since any retained product that has been reworked is considered a new lot, the lot can be certified as meeting kosher requirements provided no more than one blood spot is found during the re-examination. Alternatively, retained product may be released for non-kosher accounts provided it does not exceed the normal tolerance for blood spots. In this instance, the eggs are to be removed from packaging material bearing the kosher symbol (see kosher symbols listed below).



When the grader determines that a lot is eligible for kosher certification based on online sampling, the following statement may be included on the Form PY-210S grading certificate:

“Product represented on this certificate meets the requirements for the stated grade, size, and kosher certification for blood spots as determined by online sampling on (date the product was packed).”

Product may also be eligible for kosher certification based on stationary lot grading. In this case, sampling results must indicate that no more than one blood spot was found in the official samples examined. Product failing to meet this tolerance must be reworked and regraded. However, if the plant wants to use the product for other non-kosher accounts, retained product may be released provided the product does not exceed the normal tolerance for blood spots. In this instance, the eggs are to be removed from packaging material bearing the kosher symbol.

When the grader determines the lot is eligible for kosher certification based on stationary lot grading, the following statement may be included on a Form PY-210S:

"Product represented on this certificate meets kosher certification requirements for blood spots as determined by candling a representative sample of shell eggs selected from a stationary lot."

VIII. Certification of Shell Eggs as Fit for Human Consumption

Any interested party may request that a lot of shell eggs be described as "Fit for Human Consumption," on the certificate. When requested, the product must be officially graded by examining a representative sample, either online sampling or stationary lot, and found to contain no more restricted eggs than permitted in the standards for U.S. Consumer Grade B shell eggs.

IX. Certification of Organic Shell Eggs

Any interested party may request certification and official identification of organic eggs for domestic and export sales at resident, temporary, and fee grading locations. This instruction provides specific guidance to the USDA grader on the processing, certification, and identification of organic shell eggs packed in containers bearing the USDA grademark. Guidance is also provided for certification of eggs when containers do not bear the grademark.

The term "Organic" may only be used on containers of shell eggs, for domestic sales, that have been produced and handled in accordance with the requirements of the USDA, National Organic Program (NOP), 7 CFR Part 205.

When processed shell eggs are to be identified with applicable USDA organic standards, a final rinse of potable water is required when chlorinated substances are used as a processing agent (cleaning and sanitizing compounds). The active chlorine content of the potable water rinse, subsequent to the sanitizing cycle cannot exceed 4 p/m. Plant management is responsible for monitoring the active chlorine content of the potable water rinse and maintaining records to demonstrate conformance. Eggs not processed in accordance with the NOP Standards are not eligible for identification with NOP emblem.

Shell eggs for export sales must be labeled "For Export Only" when the foreign country of destination does not recognize the NOP Standard as equivalent to that country's regulatory requirements or the eggs are identified as organic to a standard other than the USDA National Organic Standard.

A. Examination of Accreditation and Certification Documents

Under the USDA, National Organic Program (NOP), a state, private or foreign organization, or private person may be accredited as a "certifying agent." Before shell eggs can be labeled "organic," an accredited certifying agent must approve the production and processing operations according to the national standards. Verification of a certifier's accreditation can be retrieved from the web site at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/CertifyingAgents/Accredited.html>. Alternatively, verification can be confirmed by reviewing the formal letter of accreditation or the Decision of Accreditation, as provided by plant management. These documents shall include the following information:

1. The area(s) for which accreditation is given (production and processing operations)
2. Current letter of accreditation
3. Terms and conditions of the accreditation

Accreditation is authorized for a period of 5 years. Certification of producers and packers by an accredited certifying agent is valid for 1 year.

B. Responsibility

In official plants, before shell eggs can be labeled "organic," plant management must provide the USDA grader a current copy of the producer's and/or packer's organic certificate, issued by the accredited certifying agent. Documents provided by the certifying agent must list the approved layer flock(s) for the production of eggs eligible for organic labeling and list the shell egg grading operation approved as meeting the organic handling requirements.

At fee locations, before shell eggs can be labeled "organic," the applicant must provide the USDA grader with the appropriate documents identifying the certifying agent for each producer and packer of shell eggs presented for grading. Additionally, the applicant must also demonstrate the origin of such eggs (invoices, bill of lading, etc.). The USDA grader is to attach supporting documents to their copy of the Form PY-210S certificate issued.

C. Product Labeling Requirements

In addition to the labeling requirements outlined in Section L-1, LABELING in the Supervisors/Resident Graders Shell Egg Index, the following information applies to labeling product as "organic:"

1. Labeling materials bearing the official grademark must be submitted to the National Office for approval prior to use. The term "organic" may appear on any panel of consumer packaging material and shipping containers in the format and color as specified in 7 CFR, Part 205.
2. The full name or registered trade name of the certifying agent (name which may be expressed as an acronym if registered as a trade name or mark) must be placed on the label or packaging material near the name and address of the packer or

distributor. No other printed material or information may be placed between the certifying agent's name and the name of the packer or distributor. As an option, the certifying agent's name, trade name, or registered acronym, the statement "Certified organic by (insert certifying agent's name)," or similar phrase, may be used.

3. It is optional for certified operations to display the USDA organic emblem, as shown below, on their packing and packaging material. Shell egg exports identified as organic to a standard other than the National Organic Standard are not eligible for identification with the USDA organic emblem.



D. Verification and Control

Shell eggs from each approved organic production location must be labeled and otherwise handled to maintain their identity through processing and packaging. Firms must develop and implement a monitoring program to assure that only "organic" eggs are officially certified and appropriately identified with an approved USDA label. Graders must verify through a document review that the shell eggs identified as "organic" originate from a flock(s) listed on the producer's organic certificate issued by the accrediting agent. Management must present documentation and processing records that correlate the identity of the product with the certified flock. This would include product markings such as a flock number(s), producer name and address, or specific production code number(s) that can be directly associated with shipping invoices to indicate compliance.

E. Official Certification

Upon verification of documentation, the USDA grader may officially certify the quality, quantity, and condition of organically produced shell eggs, for domestic and export sales, based on the results of either online sampling or stationary lot grading. Additionally, organically produced eggs can be officially certified on a sample graded basis. When requested, the grader may issue a Form PY-210S certificate reflecting these results. For each certificate issued covering shell eggs produced in accordance with the USDA National Organic Standards, place the following statement in the "Remarks" section:

"Product meets the requirements for identifying shell eggs as organic in accordance with the USDA, National Organic Standards."

X. United Egg Producers (UEP) Certified

To improve the welfare of egg-laying flocks, the United Egg Producers (UEP) has developed animal husbandry guidelines for egg laying flocks. Official plants recognized by the UEP as certified under this program will be eligible to use the following "United Egg Producers Certified" emblem. The

emblem represents certification that a company's production facility is participating in the UEP Animal Husbandry Program for Egg-Laying Flocks.



Labeling materials bearing the official grademark and the “United Egg Producers Certified” emblem must be submitted to the National Office for approval prior to use. The emblem may appear on any panel of the consumer packaging material and shipping containers. For previously approved labels, the original approval number will be reassigned to the new label format.

Once approved, use of container labels is contingent on the registration of a company's production facility in UEP's Animal Husbandry Program for Egg-Laying Flocks. Verification can be confirmed through the certificate issued by UEP to each company for registration of the identified production facility(s). This document must be provided to the USDA grader prior to packing eggs in containers identified with the emblem. Continued use of the approved labeling material will be determined based on the company's compliance with the provisions of the program.

XI. Recognized Organizations Certifying Animal Husbandry Practices for Egg-Laying Flocks

When a company elects to use a recognized organization's animal care certification based upon verification of compliance as meeting or exceeding industry standards by an independent certifying agent, the certificate or letter issued must be issued within the past 12 months. Plant management must provide a current letter of certification from the certifying agent identifying the certified layer flocks. Plant management must provide, upon request from a USDA representative, a copy of the organization's standards for egg-laying flocks and the emblem representing the organization (Exhibit IV). A written copy of plant managements plan for maintaining the identity of the eggs from the certified source flock(s) from the time of production through storage, transport, processing and packaging must be presented to the USDA grader.

XII. Cage-Free or Free-Range Egg Production Verification Procedures

To assure that a source flock(s) identity is consistent with the animal care marketing claim on the label bearing a USDA grademark, the Federal-State supervisor or designee will visit each egg production site to verify the animal husbandry practices for the identified layer flock and/or other related marketing claims. The verification shall be conducted as outlined below:

- A. Upon request from a producer, verification service for cage free or free range animal husbandry practices shall be provided on a fee basis including associated expenses.

- B. The Federal-State supervisor or designee will conduct an onsite visit to visually examine the animal husbandry practices employed for each identified flock at the egg production site. A minimum of two verification visits per year is required which is consistent with AMS verification procedures. All company established biosecurity procedures shall be followed when visiting an egg production site.

When an egg producer has a layer flock(s) certified by an independent third-party certifying agent as meeting recognized industry standards for cage free or free range animal husbandry practices, the annual letter of certification for an identified layer flock(s) can be substituted for one of the two verification visits required per year by the Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program (LPS). **Note:** Flocks in layer houses designed to provide continuous access to acceptable outdoor areas to roam may be identified with the marketing claim “free range layers.”

- C. The Federal-State supervisor is responsible for reviewing the applicable observations and information documented for the identified layer flock(s) during the verification visit. Exhibits II and III are provided to assist with the recording of observations and information relative to each layer flock or egg production site identified by the producer. The Cage Free Layer House Verification Report can be used to document that verification is acceptable, record the general size and identity of the layer flock(s), continuous access to an acceptable outdoor area to roam, and whether the layer house design provides perches, scratch or dust bathing areas, etc. that may be requested as additional marketing claims.
- D. If the egg producer/packer provides a copy of an approved label used to distribute the eggs from the identified cage free layer flock(s) that includes additional marketing claims, such as vegetarian diet, no animal by-products, etc., these statements may also be verified during the visit.
- E. The verification procedure will also require determination of an acceptable written plan to maintain the segregation and identity of the eggs for a certified source flock(s) from the time of production through storage, transport, processing and packaging. If acceptable, this written plan must be provided to the resident USDA grader assigned to the identified egg packing plant. The resident grader will file a copy of the written plan in File Folder 2 for reference information accessible by an assigned relief grader.
- F. Upon determining that the identified flock(s) meets the policy definition for a cage free layer flock, the fee certificate can be completed. The quality section of the Shell Egg Grading Certificate, Form PY-210S, shall be crossed out. The remarks section will include the statement “The flock(s) identified as (name, address, and any applicable flock identity) meet USDA, LPS policy requirements for recognition as a cage free egg-laying operation.” Follow established procedures for distribution of an issued fee certificate.
- G. When the egg-laying facility does not meet USDA, LPS policy describing a cage-free and/or free-range, egg-laying operation, the remarks section of the certificate will include the following statement:

“Based upon the onsite visit conducted, the layer flocks identified as (name, address, and any applicable flock identity) do not meet the USDA, Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program’s policy for (cage free / free range) egg-laying flocks.”

XIII. Appeal Gradings

An appeal grading may be requested by any interested party who is not satisfied with the determination of the class, quality, quantity, or condition of any product as evidenced by the USDA grademark and accompanying label, or as stated on a grading certificate (7 CFR 56.60). To qualify for an appeal grading, shell eggs shall not have been moved from the point of the original grading that is being appealed [7 CFR 56.65(c)].

A. Who Shall Perform the Appeal Grading:

1. The appeal is to be filed with the grader's immediate supervisor.
2. The appeal grading shall be made by the grader's immediate Federal-State supervisor or by a licensed grader assigned by the immediate Federal-State supervisor.
3. The grader who performed the original grading shall not be assigned to perform the appeal grading.

B. Procedures for Appeal Gradings: (7 CFR 56.65)

1. When the original samples are available, the sample shall consist of the original samples plus an equal number of additional samples.
2. When the grade is sustained, the appeal certificate is not to show the percentage breakdown of qualities. The certificate will show "Original U.S. Grade Sustained." When the grade is not sustained, the appeal certificate should show the percentage of qualities. The U.S. grade is not to be shown. The certificate will show, "Original U.S. Grade Not Sustained" (7 CFR 56.66).
3. The appeal certificate always supersedes the original certificate.
4. When a grading is appealed and a new certificate is issued, show under remarks:

“This is an appeal grading and this certificate supersedes Certificate Number _____, dated _____.”

A copy of all appeal certificates is to be sent to the National Office. Whenever the detailed grade results of the appeal and the original grade findings are not shown on the front of the appeal certificate include this data on the back of the National Office copy.

The original and all copies of the superseded resident certificate shall be recalled and filed in the same manner as "Void" certificates.

The original and all copies of the superseded certificate shall be recalled. All returned superseded certificates shall be marked "Void" and filed by the grader in the same manner as "Void" certificates.

XIV. Export Certification

Foreign governments, not unlike this country, will develop regulations stating public and animal health certification requirements. Additionally, some foreign governments will specify labeling requirements for prepackaged food for direct sale to the consumer. Recognizing that the requirement may differ for each country, the USDA grader must refer to Section-E, Exports, in the Supervisors/Resident Graders Shell Egg Index. When export certification requirements are not provided, plant management may request a quality certification as "Fit for Human Consumption", and the "Disease Free Statements – Other Countries." Although these certificates represent government documents, USDA cannot guarantee the import of the shell eggs to the foreign country.

The Disease Free Statements (animal health statements for egg-laying flocks) are authorized by the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA. The grader has no authority to modify these animal health statements.

Occasionally, plant management may request the use of a date or statement relative to the duration or quality of eggs certified for export. Since the USDA cannot control conditions of handling, storage, or transport of exported eggs, declaration of an "expiration or use by date" beyond the period for domestic product may only be authorized when the certificate includes a qualifying statement. For example: When plant management requests a 90-day "Use by" date on the lot of eggs certified for export and the foreign country has no labeling restrictions prohibiting such a declaration, the certificate issued (Form PY-210S) will include the following statement in the remarks section:

"The expiration date (or use by date) declared on the label is the responsibility of the applicant."

Container labels identified with an "Expiration (EXP)" date (or "Use by" date) exceeding the maximum period authorized for the U.S. market are not eligible for distribution and retail sale in domestic commerce without removing the declaration or repackaging the product.

Plant management is responsible for providing shipping records to the USDA grader demonstrating product not labeled in accordance with applicable FDA and USDA labeling regulations and policy (i.e. expiration dates beyond 30 days, labeled in accordance with foreign government requirements – Canada retail product, certified for export) is exported to assure it does not enter domestic commerce.

REPRODUCE LOCALLY. Include form number and edition date on all reproductions.

OMB APPROVED - NO. 0581-0127

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
 POULTRY PROGRAMS

Response is required in order to obtain specification approval applicable to grading service specification (CFR 56.4 and 70.10).
 According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0127. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 2 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building., 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

APPLICATION FOR SPECIFICATION APPROVAL

I hereby apply for Acceptance Service certification of the product(s) checked below. It is understood that:

- The applicant will provide an approved copy of the specifications to plant management and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) representative at each plant packing to these specifications.
- Any graded or inspected product subject to these specifications which does not meet the terms of the specifications will be placed under USDA retention. Retained product will be released only when reworked to meet specification requirements, or when verbal or written authority is granted by the applicant to waive specific requirements.
- The applicant will provide waivers to specific requirements directly to plant management and the USDA representative at the packing location.
- When applicable, the applicant is to verify that all products procured under the Acceptance Service certification program are properly identified and accompanied by the required certification documents when received at destination.
- Any product bearing any USDA identification shall at all times comply with USDA requirements and regulations.

PRODUCT	APPLICABLE REGULATIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> SHELL EGG	Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Shell Eggs (7 CFR 56) United States Standards, Grades, and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs (AMS 56)
<input type="checkbox"/> POULTRY	Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit (7 CFR 70) United States Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry (AMS 70.200 et. seq.)

TITLES OF PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO GRANT SPECIFICATION WAIVERS	TELEPHONE NUMBERS (Include Area Code)
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NAME OF APPLICANT*	ADDRESS OF APPLICANT (Street and No., city, State, and ZIP Code)
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	
DATE OF APPLICATION	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

FOR USE BY AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

DATE APPLICATION APPROVED	DATE SPECIFICATIONS APPROVED
TITLE	SIGNATURE OF USDA OFFICIAL

*No member of or delegate to Congress, or Resident Commissioner, shall be admitted to any benefit that may arise from this service unless derived through service rendered a corporation for its general benefit.

Semi-Annual Cage-Free Layer Flock Verification

Calendar Year: 2013

Name of Producer: <u>THE EGG FARM</u>	Name of Facility: <u>THE EGG FARM - Complex A</u>
Address of Producer: <u>123 EGG STREET</u> <u>EGG, SHELL 00123</u>	Address of Facility: <u>678 EGG STREET</u> <u>EGG, SHELL 00123</u>

Please check the independent third party certifying agent(s) that have industry recognized animal care standards for cage-free / free-range egg laying flocks for the listed producer/facility.

<input type="checkbox"/>	National Organic Program (NOP), USDA	<input type="checkbox"/>	United Egg Producers Certified (UEP)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Certified Humane – Raised & Handled	<input type="checkbox"/>	American Humane Certified

Please complete the applicable independent third party certifying agent(s) information:

House Number	Cage-Free			Free-Range			Layers Per House (Approximately)
	YES	NO		YES	NO		
1	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	10,000 ↓
2	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
3	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
4	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
5	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
6	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
7	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
8	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
9	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
10	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
11	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
12	YES	✓	NO	YES		NO	
	YES		NO	YES		NO	
	YES		NO	YES		NO	
	YES		NO	YES		NO	

Does the facility have a written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the segregation and identification of the Cage-Free / Free-Range eggs? YES NO

Remarks:
 - ELIGIBLE FOR CAGE-FREE MARKETING CLAIMS.
 - CERTIFICATE # 1234567 ISSUED ON 10/04/2012.

Semi-Annual Cage-Free Layer Flock Verification

Calendar Year: 2013

Name of Producer: <u>THE EGG FARM</u>	Name of Facility: <u>THE EGG FARM - Complex B</u>
Address of Producer: <u>123 EGG STREET</u> <u>EGG, SHELL 00123</u>	Address of Facility: <u>1025 EGG STREET</u> <u>EGG, SHELL 00123</u>

Please check the independent third party certifying agent(s) that have industry recognized animal care standards for cage-free / free-range egg laying flocks for the listed producer/facility.

<input type="checkbox"/> National Organic Program (NOP), USDA	<input type="checkbox"/> United Egg Producers Certified (UEP)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certified Humane – Raised & Handled	<input type="checkbox"/> American Humane Certified

Please complete the applicable independent third party certifying agent(s) information:

House Number	Cage-Free			Free-Range			Layers Per House (Approximately)
1	YES	NO	YES	✓	NO	8,000	
2	YES	NO	YES	✓	NO	10,000	
3	YES	NO	YES	✓	NO	6,500	
4	YES	NO	YES	✓	NO	8,000	
5	YES	NO	YES	✓	NO	8,000	
6	YES	NO	YES	✓	NO	10,000	
	YES	NO	YES		NO		
	YES	NO	YES		NO		
	YES	NO	YES		NO		
	YES	NO	YES		NO		
	YES	NO	YES		NO		
	YES	NO	YES		NO		
	YES	NO	YES		NO		
	YES	NO	YES		NO		

Does the facility have a written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the segregation and identification of the Cage-Free / Free-Range eggs?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	
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Remarks:

- CONTINUOUS ACCESS TO THE OUTDOORS IS PROVIDED AND ACCEPTABLE.
- ELIGIBLE FOR FREE-RANGE AND CAGE-FREE MARKETING CLAIMS.
- CERTIFICATE # 7654321 ISSUED ON 10/05/2012.

Cage-Free Layer Flock Verification

Name of Certifying Agent: _____

Date: _____

Name of Producer:	Name of Facility:
Address of Producer:	Address of Facility:

Please check the independent third party certifying agent(s) that have industry recognized animal care standards for cage-free / free-range egg laying flocks for the listed producer/facility.

	National Organic Program (NOP), USDA		United Egg Producers Certified (UEP)
	Certified Humane – Raised & Handled		American Humane Certified

Please complete the applicable independent third party certifying agent(s) information:

House Number	Cage-Free				Free-Range				Layers Per House (Approximately)
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		
	YES		NO		YES		NO		

Does the facility have a written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the segregation and identification of the Cage-Free / Free-Range eggs?	YES		NO	
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Remarks:

Recognized Certification Standards for Cage-Free Layer Flocks



National Organic Program (NOP), USDA



Certified Humane – Raised & Handled

Humane Farm Animal Care Standards



American Humane Certified

American Humane Association



United Egg Producers Certified

United Egg Producers Guidelines for U.S. Cage Free Egg-Laying Flocks

Although the above information references cage free layer flock animal husbandry practices, the terminology “free range” may be used when continuous access to acceptable outdoor areas is provided.