

Small Egg Processor

What is a small egg operator?

A farmer that is engaged in the operation of egg production who maintains annually less than five hundred birds and wishes to sell the resulting eggs from a location other than from the premises where the eggs are produced (i.e. a registered farmer's market, or through a retail store or restaurant). Keep in mind, if the processor maintains less than five hundred birds but only sells eggs from their farm, they are not required to register. Additionally, if the processor maintains over five hundred birds, they must register as a large egg processor.

What are the requirements for labeling egg products?

A small egg processor is held to the same labeling requirements as a large egg processor. The requirements for carton labeling are as follows:

1. The name and address of the farmer
2. An accurate statement of the quantity of the contents in terms of numerical count (12, one dozen, etc)
3. The date the shell eggs were packed into the egg carton
4. Labeled "ungraded" or "unclassified"
5. Labeled "mixed size"
6. The safe handling statement (see below). This can be placed on the outside of the carton or on the inside of the carton lid.

SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: To prevent illness from bacteria: keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.

Cartons may be reused however all non-pertinent information must be defaced from the carton (i.e. original processor's name/address, any graded information, dates, etc). The safe handling statement can remain intact. Reused cartons should be in sound condition and free from any visible dirt.

Where may small egg processors sell their eggs?

Properly labeled eggs may be sold from your farm or a registered farm market that you own/operate without any inspection. To sell eggs (from a flock of under 500 laying hens) to a retailer, restaurant or at a registered farmer's market, the processor must register with the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), Division of Food Safety (614-728-6250). NOTE: A small egg processor that is registered with the ODA must also license with their local health department to sell eggs at a registered farmer's market.

What does a registration involve?

The ODA will come out to the farm and do an inspection to ensure that: the labeling requirements are being met, the eggs are maintained in refrigeration at an ambient temperature that does not exceed forty-five degrees Fahrenheit and that any private well system used is tested and shown to be free of coliforms at least once annually.

Is there a license fee?

No, a small egg processor is not assessed a fee from the ODA for the registration, but you will be issued a certificate of registration which may be presented to any interested party to support the approved source requirement. There will be a fee assessed from the local health department if you wish to pursue sales at a registered farmer's market.

To set up an inspection, contact: Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Food Safety; 1-614-728-6250 or 1-800-282-1955, Ext 4366.