

Egg Food Safety Scheme (Small Commercial and Home Egg Producers)

Primary Produce Safety (Egg) Regulations 2014

ISSUE DATE: 21 JANUARY 2015

EGG FOOD SAFETY SCHEME

The *Primary Produce Safety Act 2011* (the Act) applies the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (Food Standards Code) in Tasmania through **food safety schemes**.

The Egg Food Safety Scheme (Egg Scheme) is made by the *Primary Produce Safety (Egg) Regulations 2014* and applies *Standard 4.2.5: Primary Production and Processing Standard for Eggs and Egg Products* in the Food Standards Code (Standard 4.2.5).

COMMERCIAL EGG PRODUCTION

You are considered a *commercial egg producer* (or “egg business”) under the Tasmanian Egg Scheme if you or your business keeps birds to produce eggs for human consumption, and involves any one or more of the following activities:

- The sale or supply of eggs to a food business (e.g. corner shops, cafes, restaurants and canteens) or another egg business
- The sale or supply of eggs at a market
- The sale or supply of eggs by wholesale

The Scheme requires most established commercial egg producers to hold an accreditation and to have an approved food safety program that is independently audited at least once annually. Accredited commercial egg producers also pay annual accreditation fees.

However, accreditation and annual auditing is not mandatory for small commercial egg business producing **less than 20 dozen (240) eggs in any week**. Such businesses may operate as an unaccredited commercial egg producer.

Unaccredited commercial egg producers must, before supplying eggs commercially, notify and register their activity with Biosecurity Tasmania in the approved form. They must also ensure that their registered details are up to date. There are no fees associated with this process, however failure to comply with the notification requirements is an offence and may attract a fine or other enforcement action.

Note In some local government areas, there are planning and by-law restrictions on the keeping of chickens and operating a primary produce business. Notification of your operation to Biosecurity Tasmania does not exempt you from these legal requirements. You should therefore seek advice from your local Council on what planning, environmental and other local government restrictions (if any) apply to your egg production activity.

EXEMPTION FOR NON-COMMERCIAL (HOME) EGG PRODUCTION

Small backyard egg producers with less than 20 egg producing birds, who produce eggs on their property primarily for home consumption (but may only occasionally sell or barter excess eggs directly to friends, family or neighbours) are exempt from the requirements of Standard 4.2.5 and the Egg Scheme.



INFORMATION SHEET- PRIMARY PRODUCE SAFETY (EGG) REGULATIONS 2014

FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Standard 4.2.5 requires all commercial egg producers to operate in accordance with a **food safety management statement** that has been approved or recognised by the relevant authority (Biosecurity Tasmania). Unaccredited (small) commercial egg producers are not exempt from this requirement.

The completed food safety management statement will record details of how the individual producer will manage the food safety risks associated with their operation and comply with the requirements of Standard 4.2.5. Small producers can complete their food safety management statement by using a basic template* provided by Biosecurity Tasmania.

An unaccredited commercial egg producer must provide a completed food safety management statement* to Biosecurity Tasmania before receiving their egg identification code and free hand held stamping kit.

EGG STAMPING

Egg stamping is a requirement of Standard 4.2.5, and was introduced to improve traceability in the event of food borne illness outbreaks. Salmonella is the second most reported foodborne illness in Australia and eggs are one of the leading sources. In the event of an outbreak, stamped eggs that are implicated in an outbreak are easier to trace back to the farm or processor. The improved traceability enables the contaminated eggs to be recalled if necessary, and can prevent the further release of contaminated eggs into the market place.

From 1 February 2015, **all eggs that are sold by commercial egg producers** to an egg business, food business, at a market, or by way of wholesale **must be stamped** with a unique identifier that is approved by the Biosecurity Tasmania. Small egg producers will be supplied with a free hand held stamp kit upon receipt of the completed notification form and approved food safety management statement*.

Note only fully accredited egg producers will be approved to develop or use their own distinct branding or mark to stamp eggs.

Unaccredited egg producers may only stamp their eggs with the registered six digit code assigned to them by Biosecurity Tasmania. This is to avoid the risk of duplication or confusion of producer identification, and to ensure consumers are able to identify eggs that have been produced by fully accredited (and audited) producers.

COMMENCEMENT

The *Primary Produce Safety (Egg) Regulations 2014* will commence on 1 February 2015.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?

Small commercial egg producers are required to complete the attached **Unaccredited Egg Producer Notification Form** and return the form with a copy of your basic food safety management statement*. Following receipt of the notification and food safety management statement for approval, a free hand held stamp kit will be issued.

* Should you have already developed your own food safety management statement or wish to utilise an alternative to the template offered by Biosecurity Tasmania, please contact us (details below) to confirm whether your statement is acceptable for approval.

Your egg stamp number and other relevant details will be made available on a public register.



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The public register will enable customers, regulatory authorities and members of the public to verify if the eggs are being produced legally by you. Unaccredited commercial egg producers may also be subject to inspections by Biosecurity Tasmania officers to verify compliance with the Standard and the requirements of the Egg Scheme.

For further information, please contact:

Food Safety Management Officer
Product Integrity Branch
Phone: (03) 6165 3091
Email: Owen.Hunt@dpiwwe.tas.gov.au
Fax: 62336386

