

Appalachian Farm to Family Cooperative

Free – Range Egg Production Standards

- 1) Pasture: Chickens must have ready access to fresh pasture.
 - a. Fresh, meaning green growth that is free from excess droppings and trampling.
 - b. Ready access, meaning that birds are not restricted to venture out.
 - c. Growers must have a plan for pasture rotation to allow proper re-growth for grazing.
- 2) Shelter: Chickens must have shelter to protect them from inclement weather and extreme heat. This shelter must not restrict the birds' access to the outdoors and must be able to be moved frequently to fresh pasture or be located so that areas of pasture can be "rested" to allow for healthy regrowth. (Movable shelter or a pasture rotation is not required Dec.-March. During these months layers can be housed in fixed housing but the bedding must be managed with the proper C:N ratio to ensure the health of the birds.)
- 3) Humane Treatment: Birds must not be over crowded and must have access to shelter from weather extremes at all times. Laying boxes and roosting areas must be kept clean. Food, free choice calcium source (can be added to the feed and thus would not be necessary to offer free choice) and fresh water must be available at all times. Producers must have at least one laying box for every 10 hens. De-beaking and other cruel practices should be avoided.
- 4) Feed: Producers must feed chickens a ration that has been approved for use by the Appalachian Farm to Family Cooperative's producer group.
- 5) Medications: No antibiotics or meds of any kind via any route (feeds, water, etc.) are allowed.
- 6) Egg Collection: Only eggs known to be fresh may be sent through the AFFC. Eggs found in areas other than the laying boxes or of unknown age must be discarded. Eggs should be stored in a cool, humid place (ideal temperature range is 50 – 60 degrees F.).
- 7) Egg Processing: Eggs that are clean when collected are fine as-is; eggs that are dirty or smeared will need to be cleaned. These are the USDA cleaning instructions:
 - Wash eggs with water at least 20 degrees warmer than the eggs and at a minimum of 90 degrees
 - Select a detergent or detergent-sanitizer that is compatible with the wash water and one that will not give off foreign odors that may be imparted to the egg
 - Keep wash water as clean as possible
 - Rinse by spray water slightly warmer than the wash water
 - Use an approved sanitizer in the spray rinse
 - Do not pack wet eggs into cartons

Each carton must be stamped with the expiration date of the oldest eggs in the case (42 days from the day of collection).

- 8) Communication: Please keep Michael Templeton (276-451-3618) informed of any expected changes in production so that he knows what to expect for delivery from week to week.
- 9) Record Keeping: It is important both for the producers and the buyers that good records are kept by each producer. Use a calendar to record daily collections and activity as well as egg cleaning records.