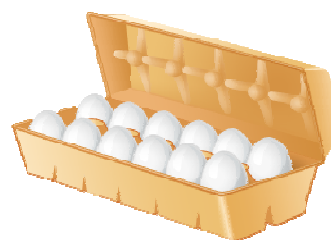# Eggs …….. Do you know what you're buying?

Within the last 12 months Trading Standards have been alerted to incidents of food poisoning by Environmental Health. The incidents were thought to have occurred by the consumption of eggs. This prompted Trading Standards to carry out inspections at restaurants, shops, market stalls and car boots to make sure eggs were labelled correctly and complied with EU food safety laws. A number of issues were found, some of which are still under investigation. So, whilst Trading Standards continues to ensure eggs are traceable from farm to folk, we are encouraging businesses and consumers to arm themselves with the facts!! Read on to increase your food safety knowledge whilst at the same time learning what to look for before you buy!!!!

What labelling should be provided with eggs on retail sale?

All eggs should be labelled with the following, either written on the egg box or on a sign for eggs sold loose.
- The quality class "A"
  (The term "Fresh" may be used as well)
- The weight grading
- Best before date
- Method of production (Barn, Caged, Organic, Free Range)
- Explanation of the code stamped on eggs
  (Please see our cut and keep guide below)

Pre-packed eggs require additional labelling:
- Packing centre code
- Name of product i.e. "eggs"
- The number of eggs
- Name and address of packager
- Advice to the consumer to keep eggs chilled after purchase

NB: This information can often be found on the packaging used to transport the eggs, check for this information before disposing of the box.

> Eggs must be marked on their shells with a producer's code. This is a unique ID relating to the farm where the eggs have been laid. This producer's code is vital to ensure the traceability of the egg.

There are only two exceptions where eggs may be sold <u>without</u> being marked with the producer's code or without complete labelling. These are when;
- The producer's eggs are sold at their own farm, door-to-door or direct to consumers for their own personal consumption
- The producer keeps up to 50 hens and sells at a local market direct to the consumer (provided they display their name and address at the point of sale)

Why is it important to stamp eggs?

All eggs sold within the European Union must be marked with the producer's code to ensure traceability in the event of any problems, such as an outbreak of salmonella, or a simple mix up with the labelling of the eggs.

As a consumer you want to be sure that you are buying the type of egg you are paying for and as a business you do not want to mislead your customers.

Eggs used in catering

We are warning catering businesses to be extra vigilant following problems found with eggs supplied to such businesses. So, if you run a restaurant, cafe, pub, kitchen, sandwich bar, bakery, takeaway, burger van, etc, make sure you check your eggs for the following information:

- The eggs are graded, packed and labelled as CLASS A
- Packing centre code
- Name and address of packager or seller
- Each egg is marked with a producer code
- All the packs bear the best before date (Individual eggs do not)

If you find eggs have been delivered and they do not bear the required labelling, we advise that they are returned to the seller of the eggs and are exchanged for eggs which are fully and correctly labelled.

For more information on food safety and cooking with eggs, please see http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/caterers/eggs/

We hope this has been of some help and if you wish to report any issues relating to the sale or supply of eggs or receive further help and guidance then please contact Trading Standards via: **01273 292523**.

Henrietta Hen Facts

- On average a hen lays 300 eggs a year, that's less than one a day!
- Some breeds of chickens can lay coloured eggs!
- The Romans considered chickens to be sacred to Mars, the God of War!