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Republic of Latvia

Cabinet

Regulation No. 170

Adopted 14 May 1999

## **Regulations Regarding the Handling of Hens' Eggs**

Issued pursuant to  
Section 4, Paragraph two; Section 8, Paragraph two,  
and Section 13, Paragraph three  
of Supervision of the Handling of Food Law

### **I. General Provisions**

1. These Regulations prescribe the requirements regarding the labelling, stamping and hygiene of hens' eggs intended for human consumption (hereinafter – eggs) during the stages of grading, storage, transportation and distribution, and these apply to the undertakings (companies) and natural persons involved in the handling of eggs.
2. These Regulations do not apply to eggs which a producer of eggs sells from his or her farm directly to a consumer for private consumption.

### **II. Hygiene Requirements Regarding the Distribution of Eggs**

3. An egg producer undertaking (company) may supply eggs to an egg packing centre (the undertakings (companies) referred to shall be subject to the supervision and control of the State Veterinary Service), sell such for incubation, for marketing to the non-food industry, as well as sell in the food products market where regular veterinary supervision is ensured, or sell such at an undertaking (company) directly to a consumer for private consumption.
4. A natural person may sell eggs in the food products market where regular veterinary supervision is ensured. Eggs supplied by natural persons shall be inspected and stamped by a State veterinary inspector.
5. In marketing, it is permitted to offer eggs for sale in large outer packs on trays, eggs in packaging, or non-packaged eggs on trays.
6. Packaging of eggs containing not more than 36 eggs shall be sold through retail trade unopened.

7. At retail trade premises, where non-packaged eggs are sold, information shall be provided regarding the quality, weight and storage regimen for the eggs.
8. Grade 'A' and 'B' eggs may be offered for sale for human consumption and to food undertakings (companies).
9. If the expiry date specified for Grade 'A' "extra" eggs has been surpassed, the eggs may be supplied to the consumer as Grade 'A' eggs until the last day of the expiry date specified for the relevant grade.
10. It is prohibited to distribute for retail trade Grade 'A' and 'B' eggs which have ceased to conform to the characteristics specified for the relevant categories, or for which the expiry date has been surpassed, but it is permitted to supply such to food undertakings (companies), if the outer surface of the pack bears a red label (letters 2 cm high) with the indication "Olas rūpnieciskai pārstrādei" [industrial eggs for processing].
11. Grade 'C' eggs may be supplied only to food or non-food undertakings (companies) for processing.
12. Cracked eggs shall be supplied to food undertakings (companies) (with the exception of culinary use) for processing not later than on the next day after the grading of the eggs.
13. Broken eggs shall be supplied to food undertakings (companies) for processing not later than on the next day after the grading of the eggs.
14. In marketing, it is permitted to offer eggs which comply with the mandatory harmless requirements specified in these Regulations and in other regulatory enactments.

### **III. Egg Packing Centre**

15. At an egg packing centre (hereinafter – packing centre) eggs shall be graded according to the quality and weight; packed, as well as eggs and packs thereof, shall be labelled.
16. Eggs shall be supplied by an egg producer undertaking (company) to a packing centre for grading not less frequently than every other work day.
17. Eggs which are intended for sale as Grade 'A' "extra" eggs shall be supplied to a packing centre each work day.
18. A packing centre shall grade and pack the eggs not later than on the work day following receipt of such. An egg pack sent by the producer shall be opened immediately before the beginning of the grading. All eggs of the same pack shall be graded, stamped and packed without an interval.

19. A packing centre may be a division of an egg producer undertaking (company) or an independent undertaking (company), and it may be located at an egg producer undertaking (company), as well as outside of it.

20. If a packing centre is located outside the egg producer undertaking (company), the accompanying documents for each batch of eggs sent to the packing centre, and the label of the pack, shall bear the name and the address of the egg producer (company), the laying date for the eggs, the date of dispatch and the number of eggs.

21. If a packing centre is located inside an egg producer undertaking (company), upon delivery of the eggs to the packing centre the accompanying documents shall indicate the number of eggs, the laying date for the eggs and the number (name) of the hen house.

22. A packing centre shall keep the accompanying documents or the relevant information for six months.

23. The premises of a packing centre shall comply with the hygiene requirements prescribed in the regulatory enactments, and shall, in compliance with the requirements of these Regulations, be ensured with the following technical equipment for the grading of eggs;

23.1. a candling device (ovoscope) with which to inspect each egg;

23.2. a device for measuring the height of the air space in the eggs;

23.3. scales for weighing the eggs; and

23.4. equipment for stamping the eggs.

#### **IV. Stamping of Eggs**

24. Eggs shall be graded according to quality:

24.1. Grade 'A' eggs or fresh eggs must not be washed or cleaned, and shall comply with the following requirements:

24.1.1. the egg shells shall be clean and undamaged;

24.1.2. the height of the air space in the eggs shall not exceed six millimetres, and it shall be motionless;

24.1.3. the egg-white shall be clean, clear, free of extraneous matter, and it shall be of a gellatinous consistancy;

24.1.4. the yolk on candling (by ovoscopy) shall be visible only as a shadow, without a clearly discernible outer form; upon moving the egg, it shall not deviate considerably from the centre of the egg, and it shall be free of extraneous matter;

24.1.5. the germ shell has not yet started to develop;

24.1.6. the eggs do not possess an uncharacteristic odour;

24.2. Grade 'A' "extra" eggs shall comply with:

24.2.1. all the quality requirements specified for Grade 'A' eggs in Sub-paragraphs 24.1.1, 24.1.3, 24.1.4, 24.1.5 and 24.1.6 of these Regulations;

- 24.2.2. the height of the air space in the eggs may not exceed four millimetres, and it shall be motionless;
- 24.3. Grade 'B' eggs, or eggs preserved in cold stores, shall comply with:
- 24.3.1. all the quality requirements specified for Grade 'A' eggs in Sub-paragraphs 24.1.1, 24.1.3, 24.1.4, 24.1.5 and 24.1.6 of these Regulations;
- 24.3.2. the height of the air space in the eggs may not exceed nine millimetres, and it shall be motionless;
- 24.4. Grade 'C' eggs, or "sorted-out eggs" are eggs that do not comply with the quality requirements specified for eggs of Grades 'A' and 'B';
- 24.5. cracked eggs which have cracks in the shell, but the membrane is intact; and
- 24.6. broken eggs which have a broken shell and a damaged membrane.
25. Grade 'A' eggs, including "extra" eggs, shall be graded by weight, and the label on the pack or packaging shall bear the relevant symbol:
- 25.1. XL – very large eggs weighing 73 g and more;
- 25.2. L – large eggs weighing from 63 g to 72 g;
- 25.3. M – medium eggs weighing from 53 g to 72 g; and
- 25.4. S – small eggs weighing under 53 g.
26. Eggs of all grades intended for retail trade shall be stamped.
27. The stamps on eggs shall be clear and legible. The colour used in the stamp shall comply with the requirements of regulatory enactments, which specify the colouring agents which may be used for the labelling of food products.
28. The stamp on the eggs shall indicate, on compulsory basis, the expiry date and the producer of the eggs; the producer, if he wishes, may, in addition, also provide other information.
29. The stamp of the expiry date (marked in figures 5 mm high) shall be placed on the egg during the grading and shall be indicated in the following order:
- 29.1. the date from 01 to 31; and
- 29.2. the month from 01 to 12.
30. The egg stamping requirements shall not apply to eggs for incubation and eggs that are supplied directly to food and non-food undertakings (companies).

## **V. Requirements Regarding Packs and Packaging of Eggs**

31. The material of egg packs and packaging shall comply with the compulsory harmless requirements specified for the materials and objects which come in contact with food. It shall be shock-resistant, dry and clean, in order not to allow deterioration of egg quality, as well as to protect the eggs from the effects of odours in the environment and from temperature variations.

32. Large outer packs of eggs may be used on a repeated basis, if they are not torn, dirty and do not bear remnants of previous labelling that may mislead the buyer.

33. Egg packaging may not be used on a repeated basis.

## **VI. Labelling of Packs and Packaging of Graded Eggs**

34. If eggs are offered for retail trade, the outer surface of each pack and packaging of the eggs (also in such cases where they are located in large packs) shall bear, in a visible place, a clearly legible label indicating the information referred to in the Annex to these Regulations.

35. If it is prohibited to sell the eggs through retail trade, the outer surface of the egg packs shall bear a red label in accordance with Paragraph 10 of these Regulations.

36. Labels shall be placed on the packs and packaging at the packing centre on the day of the grading and packing of the eggs.

37. Large outer packs of eggs shall be sealed with adhesive tape.

38. On Grade 'A' "extra" eggs adhesive tape with an indication "extra" shall seal the packaging and packs of the eggs.

39. Adhesive tape may not be used on a repeated basis.

## **VII. Hygiene Requirements Regarding Storage and Transportation of Eggs**

40. Eggs shall be stored in clean, dry premises with sufficient ventilation and under an appropriate temperature regimen for storage.

41. In transporting eggs, the eggs shall be clean, dry and protected from shocks, meteorological weather conditions and effect of light.

42. In storing and transporting eggs, eggs shall be protected from excessive temperature variations.

43. It is permitted to store Grade 'A' eggs and Grade 'A' "extra" eggs at temperatures from 5 C to 18 C during all stages of handling. In transporting, as well as during short storage periods (not exceeding 24 hours) of eggs in the trade storage premises or warehouses, it shall be permitted to store eggs at temperatures from 1 C to 5 C.

44. It is permitted to store Grade 'B' eggs in cold storage or refrigerators not longer than 120 days at temperatures from 1 C to 5 C.

45. It is permitted to store Grade 'C' eggs in premises where the temperature is from 1 C to 18 C.

46. The expiry date of eggs, starting from the day of laying of eggs, if the specified storage regimen is complied with, shall be the following:

46.1. for Grade 'A' "extra" eggs – 9 days;

46.2. for Grade 'A' eggs – 28 days;

46.3. for Grade 'B' eggs – 120 days; and

46.4. for Grade 'C' eggs – 28 days.

### **VIII. Procedures for Supervision of a Packing Centre**

47. In order to start up operations in egg grading and packing, an undertaking (company) shall submit an application to the State Veterinary Service regarding admission of the undertaking (company) to the list of facilities under supervision.

48. The State Veterinary Service shall examine the application within 30 days after receipt of it, evaluate the relevant undertaking (company) and, if the undertaking (company):

48.1. complies with the requirements of Paragraph 23 of these Regulations and other regulatory enactments, shall admit the relevant undertaking (company) to the list of facilities under supervision and assign a number to it for three years;

48.2. does not comply with the requirements of Paragraph 23 of these Regulations and other regulatory enactments, the relevant undertaking (company) shall have to eliminate the deficiencies indicated in the inspection document within ten days. The State Veterinary Service shall carry out a repeated inspection and take a relevant decision - whether or not to permit taking up the activities of egg grading and packing.

49. If the undertaking (company) is not satisfied with the decision that has been taken, it has the right to appeal against the decision within ten days after the receipt of the decision in writing, in accordance with procedures set out in regulatory enactments.

50. The State Veterinary Service has the right to delete a packing centre from the list of facilities under supervision and annul the number assigned to it, if the requirements specified in Paragraph 23 of these Regulations and in other regulatory enactments are not complied with.

### **IX. Closing Provision**

51. These Regulations shall come into force on 1 January 2000.

Prime Minister

V.Krištopans

Minister for Agriculture

P.Salkazanovs

### **Information to be Indicated on the Labelling of Packs and Packaging of Eggs**

The outer surface of the packs or packaging shall bear a clearly legible white label with the following information:

1. for Grade 'A' eggs – the Grade symbol character "A" with a 12 mm diameter circle to the right, inside of which there is a weight distinguishing mark of the eggs placed in the pack.
2. for Grade 'B' eggs - the Grade symbol character "B" inside an equilateral triangle, each side of which is 10 mm long.
3. for Grade 'C' eggs - the Grade symbol character "C", placed inside a 12 mm diameter circle.
4. For Grade 'A', 'B' and 'C' eggs the following shall also be indicated:
  - 4.1. the number of the eggs;
  - 4.2. the name and number of the packing centre in accordance with Sub-paragraph 48.1 of these Regulations;
  - 4.3. the name of the egg producer undertaking (company);
  - 4.4. the laying date and the expiry date of the eggs; and
  - 4.5. the storage regimen for the eggs.
5. For Grade 'A' eggs the following information shall be indicated, taking into account the keeping conditions of the laying hens:
  - 5.1. "Brīvās turēšanas apstākļi" [Free range conditions], if the following conditions are met:
    - 5.1.1. the hens have continuous freedom to roam in the open range during the day;
    - 5.1.2. the ground accessible to the hens is mainly covered with vegetation;
    - 5.1.3. the maximum stocking density does not exceed 1000 hens per hectare of the ground area, or one hen per 10 m<sup>2</sup>;
  - 5.2. "" [Pusintensīvās turēšanas apstākļi] [Semi-intensive conditions], if the following conditions are met:
    - 5.2.1. the hens have continuous freedom to roam in the open range during the day;
    - 5.2.2. the ground accessible to the hens is mainly covered with vegetation;
    - 5.2.3. the maximum stocking density does not exceed 4000 hens per hectare of the ground area, or one hen per 2.5 m<sup>2</sup>;
  - 5.3. "Dziļie pakaiši" [Deep litter], if the following conditions are met:

- 5.3.1. the maximum stocking density does not exceed seven hens per square metre of floor space;
  - 5.3.2. at least one third of the floor area is covered with litter (straw, wood shavings, sand or peat);
  - 5.3.3. the relevant floor area is used for the collection of bird droppings;
  - 5.4. “Laktas” [Perchery], if the keeping conditions of the laying hens meet the following conditions:
    - 5.4.1. the maximum stocking density does not exceed 25 hens per square metre of floor space;
    - 5.4.2. the interior of the building is fitted with perches of a length that is sufficient to ensure at least 15 cm perch space for each hen;
  - 5.5. “Būru baterijas” [Cage battery], if the hens have been kept in cage batteries.
6. For cracked and broken eggs the following information shall be indicated:
- 6.1. the name and address of the undertaking (company), to which the eggs are to be delivered;
  - 6.2. the name and address of the undertaking (company) which has dispatched the eggs; and
  - 6.3. the laying date of the eggs.
7. The label on broken eggs shall bear an additional mark “Patēriņam cilvēku uzturā nederīgs” [Unfit for human consumption] in black letters at least 0.8 cm high.

Minister for Agriculture

P.Salkazanovs