

## SHELL EGG LICENSING INFORMATION

Thank you for your interest in getting an egg grading/candling license. Along with this introductory page, you will find the following materials to print/review on the webpage:

- The Official Egg Grading Manual: The manual is primarily written for commercial egg producers, but for egg grading/candling information focus on pages 11-33.
- Small-Scale Egg Handling publication from ATTRA
- Montana Code regarding egg grading
- Service bulletin for Clorox dilutions
- Salmonella/poultry flyer

Please review all this information thoroughly in preparation to be tested for your license.

**Egg Candling/Grading licenses** are issued by the Department of Livestock, Milk and Egg Bureau. The fee is \$5.00, to be renewed annually (license is valid April 1 through March 31). USDA Egg Grader Manuals are provided to individuals interested in becoming a licensed Grader/Candler. An individual must be proficient at grading and candling eggs and meet criteria to be licensed.

**Criteria:** Each applicant must demonstrate competence in candling and grading eggs. Birds must have adequate access to food, water, and housing and yard and housing should be clean and well maintained. It is suggested that eggs are harvested twice daily. In addition, there must be adequate washing facilities. The wash water must be at least 20°F greater than the interior temperature of the egg (otherwise water is pulled into the egg). Minimum wash temperature is 90°F and must have adequate air flow around eggs when drying. Never soak eggs in the wash water.

### **Contact:**

- Rosemary Hickey, Sanitarian for west and southwestern Montana – 406-544-4251
- Alex Dachs, Sanitarian, for central, north-central, and eastern Montana – 406-593-1384

### **Required Items:**

- Candling light
- Adjustable scale
- 3 thermometers (to monitor wash & rinse temperature, to monitor storage temperature, for each transportation container)
- Detergent-low foam, no fragrance
- Sanitizer (50 ppm Chlorine)
- Drying rack
- New cartons (stored in a clean and dry area off the floor)
- Dedicated refrigerator at farm  $\leq 45^{\circ}\text{F}$
- Clean container(s) for transporting eggs (cooler or refrigerated vehicle) maintained at  $\leq 45^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

**Egg Cartons and Labeling Requirements:** Submit label to your Sanitarian for review prior to retail sale of eggs. All cartons must have grade and size, grader's license number, and the following statement:

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

**USDA SHELL EGG SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM:** Inspections are quarterly if you have 3,000 or more hens or sell more than 25 cases per month (30 dozen per case).

When you are ready to proceed in acquiring your license, please call your district Sanitarian to answer any additional questions that you may have and to start the licensing process.

Thank you for your interest in attaining an Egg Grader/Candler's license!

