

## **SHELL EGG LICENSING INFORMATION**

Thank you for your interest in qualifying for an egg grading/candling license. Along with this introductory page, you will find the following materials 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 - Eggs
- Service bulletin for bleach dilutions
- Salmonella/poultry flyer

Please review all this information thoroughly in preparation to be licensed.

**USDA SHELL EGG SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM:** If you have 3,000 or more hens, you qualify for the USDA Shell Egg Program and the eggs will be inspected quarterly. Please contact your local inspector.

- Fredrick Woelkers, RS Western Montana - 406-475-1612
- Alex Dachs, RS Central & North-central Montana – 406-593-1384
- Jordan Machado, Southwestern & Eastern Montana - 406-437-8452

**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). An individual must be proficient at grading and candling eggs and meet criteria to be licensed. Please refer to the USDA Egg Grader Manual.

**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.

### **Required Items:**

- Candling light
- Adjustable scale
- Thermometers (to monitor wash & rinse temperature, to monitor storage temperature, and for each transportation container)
- Detergent-low foam, no fragrance. Highly recommend product designed specifically for shell eggs.
- Sanitizer (50 ppm Chlorine for non-rinsible application)
- Drying rack
- New cartons properly labeled (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 name and address of business (farm)\*, identity (eggs), quantity, grade, 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.

The text box surrounding the Safe Handling Instructions is required.

\* If the business / farm is listed in a phone directory or a business directory then; name, city, state and zip code suffice. If not, a physical address must be on the label.

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!

