

To assist all packers and producers, the following list and supporting details for each area is provided to help all businesses improve inspection outcomes and promote best practice.

10 Most common reasons for failures at Inspections

	EGG PACKING CENTRE	EGG PRODUCTION SITE
1.	Failing an egg quality test	Free Range pop holes not open
2.	Incorrect egg pack labelling	Free Range pop holes do not open sufficiently wide
3.	Poor or no stamping on eggs	Litter issues
4.	Missing transportation labels/tickets	Inadequate range access and area
5.	Egg washing detected	Egg Washing
6.	Records not being kept	Overstocking
7.	Incorrect Best Before dates being applied	Broken or faulty equipment
8.	Grading equipment not suitable or in working order	Records not being kept/ poor record keeping
9.	Insufficient QC checks taking place	Unhygienic nest mats
10.	Incorrect egg type in the egg pack	Restricted access within the hen house



EGG PACKING CENTRE

1. Quality test results for faults are more than the legal maximum of 5%. This can be a mix of faults and issues but there is generally one single factor overriding the picture e.g., eggs covered in faecal contamination, hairline cracks, wet/smear eggs. Doing sufficient sample testing on finished products and having well trained candling staff (or staff trained to operate and amend automated candling should pick up these issues).
2. Labelling. For example, putting the abbreviation VL instead of XL or incorrect packing centre ID printed. SGPU are happy to proof check any artwork for pre-packs or egg box labels prior to them being printed.
3. Illegible stamping or no stamping at all on the eggshell. Without prior notification to the SGPU of failure of stamping equipment
4. Eggs arriving at the packing centre from production sites missing the mandatory information required with transport labelling. E.g. date of dispatch is often missing.
5. Presentation of washed eggs as potential Class A eggs or washed eggs found in Class A eggs. All washed eggs should go down the route of class B. Washing eggs increases the risk of food spoilage organisms building up in eggs and potentially of food safety. Egg marketing regulations are clear that egg washing is not permitted in class A eggs.
6. Packing Centre records as required by the regulations not being kept or partially being kept. For example, eggs delivered to final customer by quality and weight grade with date of minimum durability for Class A eggs.
7. Best before date maximum is 28 days from date of lay not date of packing and it's not a calendar month. You can make it less than 28 days if you wish but not more.
8. Egg Packing Centres must have the technical equipment for grading eggs by weight and suitable candling equipment. Candling booth bulbs must be operational to allow the internal egg quality to be determined. Egg packing centre must have approved balances for weighing eggs. Stamping equipment should be appropriate for the size of the operation and be able to print consistently and clearly. Equipment must be suitably maintained.
9. Egg packing centres with fully automated candling equipment must demonstrate the ability of the grader to grade Class A eggs by undertaking continuous egg quality checks of graded final product. Failure of the egg packing centre to undertake continuous quality testing for Class A eggs may result in equipment being considered unsuitable.
10. Incorrect egg type E.g. caged eggs packed into barn pre-packs or barn eggs packed into free range. Another example is cascading eggs from free range into barn packs and not having cascade information applied to the pack.



EGG PRODUCTION SITES

1. Part of the requirement for free range egg production is that birds must have access to the range area daily. Pop holes not being opened (unless there is a veterinary medicine script) means eggs should not be marketed as free range. In the event of adverse weather conditions producers should in the first instance contact their local Poultry Officer to discuss. Not opening pop holes on free range poultry houses will be considered food fraud as free-range eggs attract a higher price than barn/cage eggs.
2. Pop holes must be open sufficiently to allow birds the visibility to see out onto the range. Birds should not be challenged by limited visibility onto the range. Pop holes at the extremity of the opening must be a minimum of 35cm.
3. Litter issues can include capped or wet litter as well as insufficient or no litter within the scratch area. Litter should be dry and friable for the birds at all times.
4. Range access includes the use, number of shelters, the type of vegetation and consideration of obstructions to the whole of the range area which must be made available to free range and organic laying hens. E.g. shelters must be distributed evenly throughout the range when the range area extends beyond 150 metres from the pop holes. If any range area is more than 350m from the pop hole it cannot be counted as useable. Areas of lying water on the range area, or waterways must be fenced off to prevent bird's access. Arable crops are not considered as suitable vegetation and if being claimed as an arable crop it means that it cannot be considered as vegetation. Stock fencing/stone-dykes/gates should not be an obstacle from one area of a range into another.
5. Egg washing on production sites is allowed for Class B eggs only. These eggs MUST NOT be presented as potential Class A eggs at the packing centre. Submitting washed eggs into the Class A egg market is a potential for food poisoning and will result in the batch of eggs being downgraded.
6. Do not risk placing additional birds into a hen house to overstock it after official notification of the maximum stocking density after official measuring by the SGPU. This can lead to welfare problems such as creating competition for all facilities within the hen house. In addition, all eggs produced would be from a non-recognised production system due to overstocking and eggs would only be considered as Cat 3 waste. Also, the use of gates under systems, electric wires, and other obstacles to keep birds in restricted space can result in overstocking, due to the birds not getting access to the full area required under the egg marketing regulations as measured by the SGPU.
7. Broken feed tracks or other equipment which then creates competition within the hen house should be avoided. Daily checks should be carried out and any repairs required undertaken at once. It is not uncommon to find centre feed tracks in cage units not working, missing light bulbs, missing nest curtains and replacing of worn out enrichments is essential to the welfare of birds.
8. Egg producers must keep records, date and age of placing, date of culling and numbers culled. Daily egg production and mortality figures, the number of eggs sold



per day and the name and address of purchasers. Where different farming methods on a single production site are undertaken the information listed **MUST** be broken down by hen house. For example, a site that has a mix of barn and cage production under a single production code number must maintain daily production records per house.

9. Nest mats are a common area within the hen house which can become heavily soiled by faecal matter. Nest box mats should be checked often, and action taken to ensure this egg contact area is maintained free of faecal contamination. This is considered a risk under the primary production food and feed hygiene regulations. Replacing worn or missing nest curtains helps to maintain a secluded and desirable place to lay eggs.

10. Restricted Access within the hen House. Gates/nets/internal pop holes between raised and litter area. It can be common practice to restrict pullets on housing to the slatted area of the hen house to ensure they access the feed and water within their new settings. Restricted access should be lifted after a few days of housing and **MUST** be lifted when the first egg is laid within the hen house. Failure to give birds access to the entire hen house means that it is overstocked which in turn means that eggs are being produced in a system not recognised by the egg marketing regulations. If no access is being given to the litter areas means the house is overstocked as measurements taken by SGPU are based on the whole hen house being made available to the laying hens.

ADDITIONAL COMMON CONTRAVENTIONS

Salmonella testing - Eggs of Unknown Health Status, this occurs when salmonella samples have not been completed on time. This can easily be avoided by setting up a reminder on a calendar or mobile phone when samples are due to be taken on each house or premise. All records of salmonella samples should be retained for review by SGPU staff and APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) staff.