Egg Quality Assurance Scheme Standard Packing Centre Requirements

Growing the success of Irish food & horticulture

Bord Bia
Irish Food Board

Contents

1 Introduction

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Egg Quality Assurance Scheme (EQAS) was developed by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) representing Bord Bia, Teagasc, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), pullet rearing farms, egg producers, Packing Centres, industry advisors and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF).

Consumer

Wholesale/Retail/Catering

❖ Packing Centre

❖ Producer

❖ Pullet Rearing Farm

Pullet Hatchery

Parent Breeder Farm

Grandparent Hatchery

Grandparent Breeder Farm

Foundation Stock Genetic Pool

This Standard replaces the previous Egg Quality Assurance Standard (Packing Centre), Revision 02 of April 2001.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the EQAS (Packing Centre) are:

- To produce a safe product for consumers.
- To ensure full traceability of eggs and
- To convey, through use of the Logo, to both retailer and consumer that eggs are produced and packed to the highest standards.

1.2 PARTICIPATION

The Egg Quality Assurance Scheme is voluntary and application for certification is open to all Packing Centres with a valid DAFF registration code (or equivalent) who wish to participate.

Certification to the standard, however, will only be granted to Packing Centres who meet the relevant requirements (see Section 2.2, Control and Monitoring).

1.3 LEGISLATIVE AND NORMATIVE REFERENCES

This Standard incorporates the key legislative requirements relevant to egg packing and has been based on the following best practices standards:

- Recognised international quality management standards (such as ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System – Requirements).
- I.S. EN ISO 22000:2005, Food Safety Management Systems – requirements for organisations in the food chain.
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as outlined by Codex Alimentarius (1997 3rd edition).
- Relevant National and EU legislation
- Codes of Practice such as the Salmonella code of Practice.
- EN 45011 (1998) General Requirements for Bodies Operating Product Certification Systems.

1.4 DATABASE INFORMATION:

The name of each certified Packing Centre will be listed on a published Bord Bia register/database.

1.5 GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

Bord Bia: the Irish Food Board.

Certification Body: the Committee to which the Quality Assurance Board has devolved responsibility and authority for all certification decisions with regard to membership of the Scheme.

Certification Period: this will be 18 months from the date of certification under the Scheme or until the next audit.

DAFF: the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

DARD: the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Egg: Class A Table egg, as defined in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1028/2006.

EQAS: the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme.

EQAS Register/Database: the register/database of the current certified members indicating their status.

FSAI: the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

Auditor: the independent auditor carrying out the audits.

Formal Training: the term "formal training" is used to indicate the requirement that the training was received from a national or public body or from a Bord Bia approved organisation/individual and that a certificate is available.

HACCP: Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point, a system for identifying how food can become unsafe for human consumption and then deciding how it can be prevented.

Packing Centre: Only those satisfying the conditions laid down in Art. 5 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 557/2007 shall be authorised as Packing Centres withing the meaning of Art. 5 of Reg (EC) No. 1028/2006.

Producer: an egg producer (egg laying farm) approved to supply eggs to an approved Packer under the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme.

Packing Centre Standard: this consists of the provisions as set out in the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Standard (Packing Centre) and the associated Appendices.

Quality Assurance Board: an independent subsidiary board within Bord Bia that has overall responsibility for policy, certification and appeals for the Quality Assurance Schemes.

Rearer: A person who rears day old chicks up to point of lay.

Scheme: the Egg Quality Assurance Scheme consists of three elements:

- The Producer/Rearer Standard,
- The Packing Centre Standard,
- The process for ensuring that the requirements as set out in the Standards are met (through auditing, certification, etc.) and that the relevant details are published.

Teagasc: Agriculture and Food Development Authority.

1.6 CAUTIONARY NOTES

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this Standard, Bord Bia cannot accept any responsibility for errors or omissions.

Compliance with this standard does not guarantee compliance with all relevant legislation.

Bord Bia is not liable for any costs or potential or estimated loss of earnings resulting from having to comply with any requirement of this scheme or in regard to the consequences of being found to be in breach of any requirement.

All references to legislation in the text of this standard are given on an "as amended basis".

2 Scheme Rules

2.1 CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

2.1.1
Application Process

Packing Centres seeking certification must apply directly to Bord Bia.

The application will be evaluated and, if appropriate, a full independent audit of the Packing Centre will be carried out to evaluate the capability of the applicant to meet all the requirements of the standard.

When the Packing Centre is deemed to have complied with the requirements of the standard as determined by independent audit, the Packing Centre will be considered for certification under the Scheme.

When certified, the Packing Centre will be issued with a certificate of compliance.

2.1.2
Eligible Product/
Packing Centre Eligibility

Only eggs complying with the requirements detailed in the Egg Specification in Appendix 4.2 are eligible for inclusion in the Egg Quality Assurance Scheme and this specification must be available for inspection at audit.

Only Packing Centres registered with DAFF (or equivalent) can apply.

Packing Centres can only handle and pack eggs produced in accordance with the requirements of the EQAS.

2.2 CONTROL AND MONITORING

2.2.1
Control

Overall control of the Scheme will be exercised by the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Board. This Board has representation from a range of relevant sectors of the food industry and collaborates with the Technical Advisory Committee, which is responsible for drafting the standard and formulating required amendments.

The decision of the Quality Assurance Board on any matter relating to the control or operation of the Scheme is final.

2.2.2
Monitoring

Monitoring of Packing Centre compliance with the requirements of the standard will be carried out by Bord Bia or its nominated agents through audit.

Each Packing Centre will be independently audited at determined intervals. The maximum interval between successive audits will be 18 months. Independent Auditors with relevant sectoral experience will carry out these audits and a full report will be issued directly to the Packing Centre.

Bord Bia reserves the right to carry out audits or spot checks on an unannounced basis for the purpose of verifying compliance with the requirements of the standard or to determine that corrective/preventive actions specified during the audit are in place.

Bord Bia (or its appointed agents) reserves the right to remove samples for independent analysis to establish compliance with the Standard.

Auditors are entitled to seek access to relevant regulatory reports (reports required to be maintained by the Packing Centres).

The full onus of responsibility for compliance with the requirements of this Packing Centre Standard is on Packing Centres participating in the Scheme and not on Bord Bia or its agents or any other third party.

2.3 REQUIREMENT CATEGORIES AND APPLICATION OF NON-COMPLIANCES

2.3.1
Categories

For audit purposes, non-compliances against the requirements of this standard (see Section 3, Packing Centre Requirements) are classified as Critical, Category 1 or Category 2.

Critical: A critical non-compliance is raised when, because of a breach of a requirement, a serious and immediate food safety hazard exists or is likely to occur. These requirements are printed in **bold, underlined** typeface and are identified in the text as **(Critical)**.

Category 1: A category 1 non-compliance is raised when there is evidence that core best practice is not being observed. These requirements are printed in **bold** typeface and are identified in the text as **(Category 1)**.

Category 2: A category 2 non-compliance is raised where best practice has not been fully complied with, but where departure from best practice will not immediately compromise the operation of the Egg Quality Assurance Scheme. These requirements are printed in normal typeface.

2.3.2
Application of Non-Compliances

Critical:
Where a Critical non-compliance is identified, applicant Packing Centres cannot be certified to this standard and existing certified Packing Centres cannot continue to pack and/or supply eggs under the Quality Assurance Scheme. The auditor will immediately advise the Certification body (or Bord Bia) of the situation and the Packing Centre's certification will be suspended pending a review of the situation.

Note: the Packing Centre can re-apply to enter the scheme when evidence is available that the problem has been rectified.

Category 1:
Where a Category 1 non-compliance has been identified the Packing Centre must give an immediate commitment in writing to the Bord Bia auditor to implementing corrective action within a 1 month period and must subsequently be able to demonstrate that each such non-compliance has been addressed.

All Category 1 non-compliances must be closed out to be eligible for certification.

Bord Bia reserves the right to carry out independent verification of the implementation of such corrective action.

Category 2:
Where a Category 2 non-compliance has been identified the Packing Centre must give an immediate undertaking in writing to the Bord Bia auditor to implementing corrective action within a 3 month period for all the non-compliances and must submit evidence within this period that demonstrates that each such non-compliance has been addressed.

Where there are more than 10 category 2 non-compliances, the situation will be treated as a Category 1 non-compliance and the period for close-out will be foreshortened as for Category 1.

All Category 2 non-compliances must be closed out to be eligible for certification.

Bord Bia reserves the right to carry out independent verification of the implementation of such corrective action.

2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICE

There are a number of recommendations for best practice included in this standard (see Section 3, Packing Centre Requirements). These are printed in italics. Compliance with these requirements is not mandatory for certification. These recommendations may be revised at a future date in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee.

2.5 CERTIFICATION DECISIONS

The decisions to grant, extend, or withdraw certification to/from a Packing Centre in the Egg Quality Assurance Scheme is made by the Bord Bia Certification Committee. The decision is made primarily on the basis of the audit findings, but other factors (such as failure to meet regulatory compliance or other food safety requirements) may be taken into consideration in arriving at the certification decision.

In the event that certification is withdrawn, the certificate must be returned to Bord Bia and the Packing Centre will be removed from the register of certified packing centres.

2.6 APPEALS

The Packing Centre may appeal this decision directly to Bord Bia. The Bord Bia Quality Assurance Manager must receive in writing a request to appeal from the Packing Centre within two weeks of receipt of communication of the certification decision. All such appeals will be discussed and decided by the Appeals Committee. The appealing Packing Centre will be informed in writing of the Appeals Procedure at the time of appeal. The decision of the Quality Assurance Board in relation to appeals will be final.

2.7 COMPLAINTS

The Packing Centre may complain with regard to the audit/s or any other aspect of the operation of the Scheme. All complaints must be in writing and must be addressed to the Quality Assurance Manager. All such complaints will be acknowledged and followed up.

2.8 REVISION UPDATES

Users should note that only this latest edition (Revision 03) now applies. When future changes occur, updates will be issued in whole or in part and the obsolete sections must be destroyed.

2.9 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE

In the event of change of ownership of the Packing Centre or the scale of the operation, Bord Bia must be immediately informed.

2.10 USE OF THE QUALITY LOGO

The Quality Assured Logo is a registered Trade Mark. It is the property of Bord Bia and must only be used with Bord Bia's full knowledge and written approval. Bord Bia reserves the right to take appropriate action against companies that use the Logo without proper authorisation or without observing all the requirements of the Standard. Bord Bia reserves the right to withdraw permission to use the Logo where evidence indicates that the requirements of the Standard are not being met.

The Egg Quality Assured Logo must conform to the logo specification that are available in printed and electronic form from Bord Bia. All costs in applying the Logo must be fully borne by the Packing Centre.

The full conditions regarding the use of the Logo will be supplied to Packing Centres on application.

3 Packing Centre Requirements

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme (EQAS) is based on collaboration between the Rearer and Producer, and between the Producer and Packing Centre. These participants work in partnership to meet the requirements as defined in both standards.

The Bord Bia EQAS defines current best practice in the production and packing of eggs as determined by technical, industry and other experts.

Egg packers will seek advice from recognised sources and consult the relevant and current guidelines/publications produced by DAFF and other relevant bodies.

This section of the Packing Centre Standard contains all the requirements with which the Packing Centre must comply. However, the packing Centre also needs to understand fully the Producer/Rearer requirements.

The key aspects of the packing of eggs are covered by the Packing Centre Requirements and must be used in conjunction with the requirements of the Introduction, Scheme Rules and the Packing Centre Appendices. The Packing Centre Appendices offer further information and clarification on various aspects of the Packing Centre Requirements.

Management Responsibility, Commitment and Continuous Improvement

3.1 REGULATORY APPROVAL

a) The Packing Centre management must have documentation showing that it is registered by DAFF or the equivalent body in other jurisdictions (Category 1).

3.2 FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY POLICY STATEMENTS

a) Packing Centres must have Food Safety and Quality Policies, that include a commitment to the objectives of the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme and to complying with all current food safety, regulatory and customer requirements.

b) The Food Safety and Quality Policies must be approved by senior management and prominently displayed on the premises.

c) All staff must be aware of the location of display or storage of the Food Safety and Quality Policies.

d) The Food Safety and Quality Policies must include a commitment to Continuous Improvement, Safety in the Workplace, and to provision of appropriate information, training and equipment for all employees.

e) The Food Safety and Quality Policies must be communicated, understood and implemented by all staff and employees.

f) The Food Safety and Quality Policies must be regularly reviewed for suitability and effectiveness.

3.3 ORGANISATION

Management Responsibility

a) An organisation chart must be available showing responsibilities, lines of communication and the reporting structure.

b) The commitment of senior management to the effective implementation of the requirements of this standard must be clearly demonstrated and communicated.

c) The responsibilities of key personnel must be documented including the areas of Food safety, hygiene, GMP, Health and Safety and Contingency planning.

d) Management must be able to demonstrate an adequate level of technical support with appropriate qualifications and other resources for the effective implementation of the Standard.

e) In the event that a critical non-compliance (including regulatory sanctions) is identified during internal audits or routine checks, the Packing Centre must immediately notify the Quality Assurance Manager of Bord Bia and implement the procedures as outlined for critical non-compliances in Scheme Rules 2.3.2: Application of Non-Compliances (Critical).

f) Management must define the person(s) that has/have responsibility for:

   i. Ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements (see Appendix 4.1: Reference Information) and compliance with the requirements of this Standard,

   ii. Management and recording procedure for non-compliances,

   iii. Management and recording procedure for corrective and preventive actions,

   iv. Food safety (ideally a person independent of the production function).

g) Management must define the person(s) that are responsible for ensuring compliance with the hygiene requirements and must establish an acceptable system to demonstrate that the requirements are being met.

h) Management must ensure that there is sufficient cover in place for periods when key staff are absent.

Management Representative

i) The Packing Centre must officially identify in writing the named Management Representative who, irrespective of other responsibilities, has responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the Egg Quality Assurance Standard are met.

j) In the event of the Management Representative being changed, the Certification Body (or Bord Bia) must be immediately notified in writing/email.

3.4 MANAGEMENT REVIEW

a) Management, which must include senior Management, must meet at least once each year with a clearly defined agenda to:

   i) Review the complete Quality System for improvement opportunities,

   ii) Ensure that all aspects of the Quality System as specified in these requirements remain suitable and effective, and that preventive or corrective actions are assigned, documented and implemented,

   iii) Review all Quality System data to establish and assign responsibility for improvements, including audit reports, customer complaints, customer satisfaction data, process and non-conformance data,

   iv) Set out Quality Improvement Objectives for the next year.

b) Minutes of this meeting must be retained.

c) Management must carry out an annual review which, at a minimum, must cover current and future market requirements and include issues of a regulatory nature, audit reports, customer complaints and incidence rates for non-compliance.

Food Safety and Quality Management

Background Information

All Packing Centres must comply with national and EU regulations with regard to the implementation of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) (see also Appendix 4.1, Reference Information). All Packing Centres must also demonstrate compliance with Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP).

3.5 QUALITY DOCUMENTATION

a) Packing Centres must document their own Quality System, which must incorporate the requirements of this Standard and their interaction with other parts of the Quality System.

b) This system must consist of documentation that details the Packing Centre's response to each requirement of this Standard and that includes or references related operational documents, procedures and plans.

c) The Quality System documentation (such as hygiene procedures, work instructions, procedures, specifications, etc.) must be accessible so that all employees clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in the operation of the process.

d) The Quality System must include SOPs relevant to the operations of the individual Packing Centre.

3.6 HACCP AND GMP PLANS

Background Information

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) has published comprehensive guide notes that are directly relevant to the industry (Guidance Note No. 11, revision 1 Assessment of HACCP Compliance). Packing Centres could use these guidelines in the development of their HACCP systems. All Packing Centres will be aware of their requirement to comply with EC 852:2004 which includes the specification that all Food Businesses must implement procedures based on the principles of HACCP (Article 5). Detailed interpretation and implementation guidelines on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as outlined by Codex Alimentarius (1997 3rd edition) are provided by Codex Alimentarius.

a) Documentation must be available that demonstrates that the essential "Pre-requisite" requirements of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Good Hygiene Practice (GHP) have been adequately addressed at all appropriate steps, including procurement (Category 1).

The HACCP system must comply with the following:

b) The Packing Centre must have a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan which shows how product/process safety is ensured through control and prevention (Critical).

c) This plan must be supported by senior Management.

d) *Ensure it is put in place by a multidisciplinary team.*

e) *Ensure that at least one member of this team has received formal training in the application of HACCP principles.*

f) At a minimum, the Hazard Control Plan must include (all Category 1):

   i. A detailed description of the products and process steps (e.g. a flow diagram showing the keys steps of each process),

   ii. A detailed description of the hazards (chemical, including allergens, microbiological, physical/foreign bodies) that could arise at each process step and the risks that these represent,

   iii. Identification of Critical Control Points (CCP) in the plan,

   iv. Definition of the limits that must be met to ensure control of each CCP,

   v. The monitoring required to ensure that control is maintained at each CCP,

   vi. The corrective action to be taken if a non-compliance occurs, for each CCP,

   vii. Identification of the responsibilities, procedures and records applicable for each CCP.

g) The HACCP plan must be reviewed and validated annually at a minimum, or in the event of any change that could affect the process, to ensure that it is effective.

h) The data must be monitored and trends analysed so that appropriate actions or corrective actions can be taken and documented.

i) A schedule must be in place for all internal auditing that might take place in the Packing Centre.

j) The HACCP plan must be supported by the GMP and GHP Plans.

3.7 INTERNAL AUDITING

a) Packing Centres must establish documented procedures for the scheduling, planning and the implementation of internal audits to verify internal compliance with the requirements of the Standard and the effectiveness of the Quality System, records and procedures.

Note: The responsibility for reporting critical non-compliances is detailed in Management Responsibility in Section 3.3 above.

b) All corrective and preventive actions defined in these audits must be assigned and tracked until completed by the target completion dates.

c) The records of such audits must be available for inspection.

d) Internal auditors must have received training in the requirements of the Standard.

e) *Ensure that internal auditors are independent of the activity being audited and have received formal training in auditing skills.*

3.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE CONTROL PLAN

a) Packing Centres must have a Quality Assurance Control Plan that describes in outline format how the process is operated so as to ensure the quality of the product. This can be part of the HACCP plan (see 3.6).

b) All procedures and records that are required to ensure Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) must be defined. (See also Section 3.26 *et seq.* below).

c) Quality tests or additional monitoring must be implemented towards the later stages of the flock cycles. The frequency can be determined by risk analysis or history of previous flocks.

3.9 CUSTOMER CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

a) Only eggs complying with the requirements detailed in the Egg Specification in Appendix 4.2 are eligible for inclusion in the Egg Quality Assurance Scheme and evidence of compliance with the egg specification must be recorded and available for inspection.

b) Packing Centres must maintain a register of all customers to whom they are supplying Quality Assured Eggs.

c) In the event that individual customers have specific additional requirements for product, these requirements must be documented and maintained up to date and be available for inspection and there must be evidence that these specific additional requirements are being complied with.

d) There must be a procedure to ensure that contracts are reviewed prior to acceptance to determine that all requirements including documentation can be met prior to acceptance.

3.10 PURCHASING OF EGGS, PRODUCER APPROVAL AND MONITORING

Background Information

The Producer is a key element of the supply chain. The Packing Centre must be familiar with the Producer/Rearer standard in order to ensure that the egg production process is being operated in accordance with the requirements.

a) The Packing Centre must ensure that procedures exist (at Producer and Packing Centre levels) to ensure that the eggs of infected flocks are not used for human consumption unless they are pasteurised. Eggs from a suspect flock must not be supplied for human consumption until a negative *Salmonella* Enteriditis and *Salmonella* Typhimurium test is confirmed. Records of these events must be maintained. (Critical)

Note: the procedures as outlined for critical non-conformances in Scheme rules, 2.3.2 also apply

b) A documented procedure must be in place to inform DAFF in cases where suspect positives of notifiable diseases are identified, and a record of such must be maintained (Category 1)

c) Only egg Producers who are certified at the time of supply are eligible to supply eggs to Packing Centres participating in the EQAS (Critical).

d) Packing Centres can only handle and pack eggs produced in accordance with the requirements of the EQAS (Critical).

e) After the initial compliance audit, each Producer must be inspected by the Packing Centre using the Bord Bia inspection protocol such that all Critical and Category 1 requirements are inspected at each planned monthly inspection and all areas of the Standard are inspected at least once per year. The person carrying out this inspection must be formally trained in the use of the Bord Bia inspection protocol and must have a written audit procedure where decisions on dealing with non-compliances are based on the same criteria as those described in the Scheme Rules (Section 2.3.2).

Note: independent announced or unannounced Producer inspections will be carried out by Bord Bia or its agents at a frequency to be advised by Bord Bia for the purpose of verifying the Packing Centre inspection procedures and results.

f) All eggs destined to be marketed with the Bord Bia Quality Assured mark must be sourced from a Producer approved by Bord Bia or from another Packing Centre approved under the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme.

g) Eggs coming from another Bord Bia approved Packing Centre must be graded at source and traceability must be ensured (Critical).

h) Producer monitoring must take account of the on-farm tests required in the Producer Requirements (Category 1). (See also Farm Sampling Procedures, Producer Appendix 4.9)

i) A review of the data obtained in the producer monitoring must be carried out and documented.

3.11 PURCHASING (OF MATERIALS OTHER THAN EGGS), APPROVAL AND MONITORING

a) A procedure for supplier approval must be in place.

b) Packing centres must maintain a list of suppliers that have been approved to supply materials or services that could affect egg product quality or safety.

c) The process of approving suppliers prior to purchasing materials which come into contact with the product must include an appropriate risk assessment and must define appropriate controls.

d) All approved supplier lists must be reviewed at defined intervals, based on risk, to maintain accuracy of the information.

e) All materials that could affect product quality or safety must be checked and approved before use. A record of these approvals must be maintained.

f) The storage of all materials that could affect product quality or safety must be managed in a way that ensures continuing fitness for purpose.

g) All materials must be stored on site and used in a manner that prevents chemical, physical or microbiological contamination of the product.

h) The Packing Centre must have on file current certificates of suitability for use in egg packaging for the following, where in contact with product:

   i. Soaps, Detergents, Inks, Oils and Lubricants,

   ii. Packaging Materials,

   iii. Pest Control Materials.

3.12 WATER

a) **A sample of water must be tested[1] at least annually (at a minimum for the parameters described below) and the results retained. Samples must be taken from multiple sites by trained personnel (Category 1).**

b) A water distribution map must be available, showing the sampling points.

1 The sampling must be carried out by trained QC staff, and the testing must be done by a laboratory accredited to ISO 17025 for testing against these specific organisms using the following methods: *E. coli* (ISO method 9308-1) absence in 100ml, Enterococci (ISO method 7899-2) absence in 100ml, or equivalent validated methods.

c) In the event that the source of the water is changed at any time, the new source must be tested for compliance and approved before use (Category 1).

d) Microbiological analysis of the water must comply with the following at a minimum:

i.	*E. coli*	0/100 ml	(ISO method 9308-1)
ii.	Enterococci	0/100 ml	(ISO method 7899-2)

e) If there is a failure, an alternative compliant supply must be used immediately. Corrective measures must be taken. The original supply may be reused when it has been demonstrated to be compliant.

f) Non-potable water is not permitted except where dedicated pipes are used and the non-potable water pipes are clearly distinguished from potable pipes to prevent use.

3.13 PRODUCT AND PACKAGING TRACEABILITY AND IDENTIFICATION

a) Packing Centres must have in place an identification and traceability procedure that permits traceability of eggs to the original production house or supplying packing centre, if applicable, and to the customer(s) (Critical).

b) Packing Centres must have in place an identification and traceability procedure that permits traceability of primary packaging (Category 1).

c) Packing Centres must ensure that all eggs bear the Producer code, Packing Centre Code, best before date and the Quality Assured Scheme Mark if they are to be marketed under the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme (Critical).

d) Best before date must be not more than 28 days from date of lay (Category 1).

3.14 MANAGEMENT OF PRODUCT RECALL AND WITHDRAWAL

a) Packing Centres must withdraw or recall eggs from infected flocks and this must be documented (Critical).

b) Packing centres must document and establish an effective product recall procedure.

c) **The recall procedure must include a provision to initially contact the regulatory authorities (FSAI/DAFF or equivalent) prior to initiating product recall (Category 1).**

d) Documentation must be maintained to demonstrate that the recall procedure was tested annually for effectiveness.

e) In the event that a recall is required, Bord Bia must be notified.

3.15 CUSTOMER COMPLAINT HANDLING

a) Packing centres must establish an effective procedure for handling of customer complaints, including any of regulatory origin.

b) The procedures must clearly outline responsibilities for logging, tracking and closing off complaints in conjunction with the complainant.

c) The complaint log and related correspondence must be maintained and be available for inspection.

d) Analysis of complaints must be carried out on an annual basis by the Packing Centre.

3.16 CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION

a) There must be documented and effective procedures for Corrective and Preventive action management.

b) Corrective and Preventive actions must be tracked and their priorities appropriately identified (e.g. by means of defined time scales for completion).

3.17 IMPORTED EGGS

a) Imported eggs may be used for packing as quality assured product provided that the eggs are sourced under a scheme that has similar requirements and the scheme is approved in advance by Bord Bia (Category 1).

3.18 DOCUMENTATION CONTROL AND STORAGE

Note: It is recommended that the requirements for document and data control as outlined in ISO9001:2008 be adopted.

a) All documents and data (including relevant external documentation such as this Standard, Customer and Regulatory documentation) that relate to the requirements of this Standard must be managed and controlled as part of the Quality Management System.
At a minimum, the Packing Centre must ensure that:

   i. Only current issues of all documents are available for use,

   ii. All documents are authorised,

   iii. A procedure for issue of new documents, or for amending existing documents, or for removal of obsolete documents, is in place and is effective,

   iv. Data is reviewed and signed off by an authorised person,

   v. A master list of documents and procedures exists identifying the current revisions status,

   vi. Applicable documents of external origin must be identified and effectively controlled.

b) This Standard is subject to document control. When revisions are deemed necessary and issued by Bord Bia, it is the responsibility of the packing centre to ensure that their Standard is correctly updated.

c) All records must be effectively controlled (e.g. by signing and dating) and must be maintained at a secure and easily accessible location for a minimum period of three years unless otherwise specified.

d) *Ensure that management and key operational staff have received training in the tools and techniques of Total Quality Management/ Continuous Improvement.*

Product and Process Management

Background Information

Packing Centres will ensure that all inspections and testing as detailed in the Quality Assurance/HACCP Plan are carried out and records are available. All incoming materials other than eggs that could affect the egg quality will be from an approved source and records of these approvals maintained. Controls with respect to egg weights and non-conforming product will be in place.

3.19 EGG GRADING AND PACKING CONTROL

a) Packing Centres must ensure that their packing equipment is maintained so as to meet all the Egg specifications.

b) A preventive maintenance programme must be in place that defines the acceptable limits of operation of the equipment.

c) Records must be available showing that the equipment is functioning correctly.

3.20 INSPECTION AND IN-PROCESS TESTING OF EGGS

a) All incoming eggs must be approved on the basis of checks for cleanliness and Producer approval status. Records of these approvals must be maintained.

b) Incoming checks must also be shown on the Quality Assurance/ Hazard Control Plan.

c) In-process checks (e.g. candling, manual grading checks, etc.) must be carried out according to the Quality Assurance/Hazard Control Plan. Records must be maintained and must show that the controls are effective.

d) Shelf life assessment must be in place and the shelf life testing frequency must be determined by risk assessment and/or previous history.

e) Training records for operatives carrying out these inspections/ tests must be maintained.

3.21 PACKAGING OF EGGS

a) Certificates of conformity must be maintained for all egg packaging that confirms its suitability for use in the food industry.

b) Packaging must be stored in a manner that prevents any risk to product safety or quality (e.g. in a separate storage room).

3.22 EQUIPMENT CALIBRATION

Note: Packing centres must be aware of the need to document the procedures used to control, calibrate and maintain inspection, measuring and test equipment.

The following specific requirements apply:

a) A register of all such equipment must be maintained which includes;

   i. Identity/location,

   ii. Operating range,

   iii. Tolerance and accuracy required,

   iv. Calibration frequency and responsibility,

   v. Calibration method or reference,

   vi. Operational checking (e.g. start-up checks) to ensure continuing accuracy.

b) Records of all calibrations with traceability to a National or International Standard must be maintained.

c) When a device is found to be out of calibration, an assessment of the validity of previous inspection results, the likely impacts and the appropriate corrective and preventive actions must be carried out and recorded.

3.23 CONTROL OF EGG WEIGHTS

a) The weight of eggs must be checked on a planned basis to determine compliance with the egg specification (Appendix 4.2).

3.24 CONTROL OF NON-CONFORMING PRODUCT

a) **There must be a documented procedure to ensure that product/material at any stage, which does not conform to requirements, is prevented from unintended use or release (Category 1).**

b) The procedure must provide for clear identification, adequate segregation and final disposition of the nonconforming product. Records of such disposition must be maintained.

c) Incidents with a potential to cause a food safety hazard must be recorded and reported in writing to the person responsible.

d) **Disposing of eggs must only be conducted in accordance with the regulations and in a manner that permits full traceability, and must only be authorised by the personnel specified in Section 3.3 (Category 1).**

3.25 FINAL INSPECTION AND TESTING

a) **All quality assured finished product must be inspected for dispatch according to a documented inspection procedure (including any specific tests required by customers) (Category 1).**

b) The personnel with responsibility and authority for final product approval and release must be identified in the procedure and the approval/release documentation.

c) This inspection must ensure that final product:

   i. Is free from visible contamination before final inspection.

   ii. Meets internal and customer requirements for quality and safety.

Hygiene and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)

Background Information

Management will have ensured that the premises are designed, constructed and maintained to prevent and control the risk of contamination, and to comply with all relevant legislation pertaining to food safety. The requirements listed below define the essential management procedures necessary to implement hygiene/GMP in accordance with this Standard. However, compliance with these requirements does not in any way lessen the responsibility on Packing Centres to conform to existing statutory requirements.

3.26 GENERAL

a) Management must document and display on-site its Hygiene Policy and GMP Policies.

b) Management must define who has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with hygiene requirements, and must be able, through audits and records, to demonstrate that these requirements are being met.

3.27 SITE SECURITY

a) Packing Centres must ensure that site security is maintained to prevent possible product contamination.

b) All personnel working in the Packing Centre (temporary or otherwise) must be aware of and have participated in training on the site security policy in order to prevent possible product contamination.

c) Management must document how visitors are managed to minimise risk to product.

d) Training of all relevant staff regarding site security must take place and be documented.

3.28 CLEANING AND SANITATION

a) Packing Centres must document and implement a comprehensive cleaning and sanitation programme covering both the exterior and interior of the Packing Centre and the transport facilities. The programme:

   i. Must state the frequency and method of cleaning (including safety hazards)

   ii. Must identify the person/s who is/are responsible for cleaning.

b) Records verifying the effectiveness of cleaning must be maintained.

c) **A designated person must verify/be responsible for the effectiveness of the cleaning and sanitation programme (Category 1).**

d) **Where cleaning is done by a subcontractor, a contract with full specification must be in place (Category 1).**

e) *The cleaning programme should reference a site map (internal and external).*

3.29 PEST CONTROL

a) **Packing Centres must implement a documented pest control programme and all baiting materials must be certified by the Pest Control contractor (where applicable)/manufacturer as appropriate for the particular use (Category 1).**

b) An annual review (e.g. by field biologist) of the programme must be conducted to establish its suitability and effectiveness.

c) Buildings must be kept in good repair and condition to prevent pest access and to eliminate potential breeding sites. Openings must be sealed, or protected with fine wire mesh screens and animals (such as birds, pets, wildlife, etc.) must be excluded from the premises and other at-risk areas.

d) Where baiting supplies are stored on site, the store must be kept locked.

e) All bait stations and electronic fly killers must be secured, numbered and clearly indicated on a site map.

f) Inspections for pest control must be made and recorded (minimum 8 visits per year) by an independent contractor.

g) *A multi level baiting system should be in place, such as:*

   i. First line of defence: Perimeter with bait points at 6-8m intervals along the entire perimeter;

   ii. Second line of defence: Along factory building wall;

   iii. Third line of defence: Internally where there is a risk of rodent ingress.

h) Bait containers must be secured to the ground or wall and protected from birds and species other than pests.

i) All air vents and intake points must be covered with 1.2-mm screens/meshes to prevent pest ingress.

3.30 MAINTENANCE

a) A preventive maintenance programme for essential equipment affecting product quality/safety must be in place, the procedure and frequency for which to be determined by risk assessment.

b) Maintenance schedules and procedures must be documented.

c) All internal maintenance staff must receive training in hygiene.

d) All external maintenance personnel must be made aware of the company hygiene regulations prior to commencing work.

e) Maintenance procedures must indicate the precautions taken to ensure that the product is not contaminated in any way by the maintenance activity whether carried out by own or contracted staff (e.g. ventilate production area post-maintenance).

f) A record of maintenance activities must be maintained.

g) There must be a procedure to approve equipment for re-use after maintenance is complete.

h) *Ensure that a system for accountability of tools used and equipment parts removed during maintenance has been developed and implemented.*

Environmental Hygiene

Background Information

Packing Centres must be aware that the structure and fabrication of the premises and the supply of services must be such as to minimise contamination.

Packing Centres will appreciate that structures within food premises need to be soundly built, constructed of durable materials, and easy to maintain, clean and disinfect. This can be achieved with a number of building materials including stainless steel sheeting, PVC sheeting, tiles, smooth finish plaster treated with non-toxic/non-peel food grade paint, or other equivalent materials.

3.31 GENERAL

a) A glass/hard plastics policy and written procedures for handling breakages in all process and storage areas must be in place. This must cover all plastics that are likely to give rise to sharp fragments.

b) Where glass/hard plastics are present a glass/hard plastics register must be maintained.

3.32 EXTERIOR, STRUCTURE AND GROUNDS

a) The grounds and all areas of the premises must be well presented and maintained so as to minimise sources of contamination.

b) A perimeter fence, wall, or other suitable physical demarcation must protect access to the grounds.

c) Equipment, pallets, and other materials stored in the Packing Centre grounds must be stored neatly and in clean and clearly defined areas.

d) Any unused buildings, service buildings etc. must be maintained in good repair and free from debris.

e) There must be a clearance of one metre wide around the factory to avoid rodent infestation.

f) Exterior finish of the premises must be maintained in sound condition (i.e. no flaking paint or broken plaster).

g) The grounds must be kept free of debris and there must be no stagnant water, potholes or open drains.

h) Roofs, valleys, and gutters must be maintained in good repair and free from debris and weeds.

i) Areas directly outside the premises must be free of weeds, grass, rubbish, or any item that may harbour pest and/or disease.

3.33 ENTRY TO PRODUCTION

a) A procedure must be in place to ensure good hygiene practices at entry and exit from all production areas.

b) The entry point must contain a hygiene barrier for staff entry and exit from the production area.

c) Wash-hand basins must be provided at all entry points to production areas.

d) Taps in production areas must be knee, foot, arm or electronically operated.

e) Paper towel dispensers and used towel disposal facilities must be in place.

f) Hand washing/sanitising facilities must be provided at each hand washing point and clearly identified.

g) Hand-washing instructions must be posted adjacent to each wash station.

3.34 INTERIOR: GENERAL

a) All pipes, pipe work, lagging, electrical cables etc. must be clean, secure and properly constructed.

b) A schedule of internal cleaning must be in operation.

c) Working surfaces that come in contact with food must be in sound condition, impermeable to water, durable and easy to clean, maintain and disinfect.

d) Work surfaces must be made of smooth, non–absorbent materials and inert to food, detergent and disinfectant under normal working conditions.

e) All equipment must be placed or installed in a manner that permits cleaning all around.

f) All electrical fittings and cables must be to an approved standard and retained within the premises structure.

g) *Ensure a solid barrier, large enough to limit impact (e.g. from forklifts), is constructed to protect internal walls and to prevent damage.*

h) Pallet racking must be of sound structure, free of peeling paint, corrosion free and be secured to the ground.

i) *Use stainless steel equipment (where metallic equipment is used) in the process area.*

j) Aprons, where used, must be subjected to frequent cleaning (e.g. in wash cabinets designed to minimise the risk of cross contamination).

k) Hoses (which would ideally be completely constructed of corrosion free materials) must be maintained in a clean and tidy condition and must always be kept off the floor when not in use.

3.35 INTERIOR WALLS

a) Wall surfaces must be designed and constructed to be durable, smooth, light coloured, easily cleaned and impermeable to liquids.

b) They must be maintained in a clean condition, free from cobwebs and moulds, etc.

c) *Ensure junctions and joints are smooth and impervious.*

d) *Ensure wall-to-floor junctions are sealed and constructed so as to be easily cleanable.*

e) Ledges and sills must be sloped and kept free from dust, dirt or other miscellaneous items.

f) Walls must be well maintained, e.g. no flaking paint or broken plaster, no damaged or missing tiles, all tile cracks sealed or grouted.

3.36 CEILINGS AND OVERHEADS

a) Ceilings must be designed and constructed to be of sufficient height, smoothness and colour (light) to allow for easy cleaning. Materials used must prevent the likelihood of the shedding of particles.

b) *Ensure all joints are sealed and impermeable.*

c) Ceilings must be maintained in good repair, clean and be free of condensation.

d) *Ensure access to the void above false or cavity ceilings to enable cleaning and inspection.*

e) Girders and overhead pipe-work and structures must be clean, free from rust, dust, mould growth, flaking paint and other extraneous material.

f) Skylights are undesirable, but where present they must be clean and be fitted with fly screens where they can be opened.

3.37 FLOORS

a) Floors must be constructed of durable, non-slip, water resistant material and be maintained in good condition (i.e. no holes or cracks).

b) Floors must be kept clean and free from the accumulation of water or debris especially in corners or in areas hidden by machinery.

c) Rubber mats or plastic meshes, where used, must be easily removed and easily cleaned.

d) Concrete floors must be treated with a floor sealant to prevent dust in the premises.

3.38 DRAINAGE

a) Drainage must be such as to prevent risk of contamination.

b) Stagnant pools of liquid on floors must be prevented by adequate sloping towards the drainage channels or by other management techniques.

c) Where drainage channels crossing personnel working areas and passage-ways are present, these must be protected with removable covers to facilitate cleaning.

d) Drainage from on-site laboratories must be designed to exit the building before joining up with other waste systems.

e) Where manholes are present inside a premises they must be doubly sealed and secured to prevent overflow and odour.

f) Drains must be constructed in a manner that will prevent odours or vermin entry to the premises (such as by using swan neck waste pipes and gridded drain covers).

g) A cleaning schedule for drains must be in place with spot-checks to ensure on-going cleanliness.

h) *Ensure direction of drainage flow is opposite to that of product flow.*

3.39 DOORS

a) Doors and door frames must be constructed of durable impermeable material; these must be tight fitting and of smooth easy-to-clean finish.

b) Glass must not be used in doors opening into storage or production areas; other clear shatterproof material must used instead.

c) All external and internal doors (excluding emergency doors) leading from non-process into process areas must be designed and operated to prevent pest ingress.

d) All chill doors must be capable of being opened from both sides.

3.40 WINDOWS

a) Windows opening to the exterior in production areas must be at least two meters above ground, have sloping ledges and if opening, fitted with suitable and effective fly-screens.

b) They must be constructed of shatterproof material or, if glass/hard plastic, laminated to prevent shattering.

c) Windows, window frames etc. must be tight fitting, maintained in good condition, free from cracks, moulds, flaking paint etc. and must be clean.

3.41 LIGHTING

a) Lighting in production areas, must be designed to be permanently fixed, easily cleaned and must be protected by shatterproof covering.

b) Lighting must be adequate at all times for the particular operation and must be of a type that does not distort colour where process decisions are taken on the basis of colour.

3.42 EXTRACTION AND VENTILATION

a) Vents from drains, sewers and rainwater drainpipes must not be located within the plant.

b) Ventilation systems must be designed and constructed so that air does not flow from contaminated areas to clean areas.

c) All ventilation equipment must be serviced and maintained clean as per the recommendations of the manufacturer(s).

3.43 CLEANING MATERIALS AND STORAGE

a) All cleaning equipment and materials, chemicals and other substances likely to contaminate product must be stored in a lockable, secure place (ideally with appropriate bunding) away from production.

b) A safety data sheet must be available for each chemical in stock.

c) Adequate safety and protective clothing, footwear and apparatus must be available when handling such substances.

3.44 ELECTRONIC FLY KILLERS

a) There must be a programme and records for the inspection of electronic fly killers and for replacement of the light tubes.

b) Electronic fly killers must be located away from egg packing areas and from packaging equipment or packaging operations.

c) Electronic fly killers must not be located close to or above exposed unpacked product.

Note: Give consideration to locating the electronic fly killers in order to ensure effective operation and to minimise their potential to contaminate product.

3.45 WASTE MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL

Background Information

Containers for use within the plant and skips/compactors are both important elements in the management of waste. Bord Bia supports the concept of "reduce/reuse/recycle" in the management of all waste materials.

a) **There must be a documented programme for the management and disposal of all organic and inorganic waste material and appropriate licences/permits must be in place (Category 1).**

b) Waste materials must be controlled in the packing area and must be stored in containers pending collection/disposal.

c) Packing Centres must have procedures to prevent waste material coming in contact with product.

d) The plant cleaning schedule must include all waste areas.

e) Waste containers must be clearly designated and identified according the type of waste (separate waste containers for food and non-food materials) to be disposed of in them.

f) Waste containers must be available at appropriate locations.

g) Skips/compactors must be covered at all times except when being filled and be located as far as practicable from the "Clean" area.

h) Skips/compactors must be sited on a concrete surface that ensures that any leakage is contained and disposed of safely.

i) Skips/compactors must be emptied according to a documented schedule, and spillages cleaned up immediately.

j) Discarded wrapping, packaging and other refuse must be placed in designated bins or skips/compactors so that it does not compromise the hygiene of the premises and does not provide a habitat for pests and vermin.

3.46 STORAGE AND TRANSPORT OF EGGS

a) Records must show that stock is rotated on a 'first in first out' basis.

b) Transport of eggs must only be undertaken by approved[2] transporters and a record of this approval maintained.

c) Transport inspection procedures must be in place and documented to ensure that only clean suitable transport is used.

d) All product must be stored in clean, dry, well ventilated stores where the ambient temperature is monitored (min and max) and recorded.

e) *Control the temperature of the egg stores to ensure that ambient temperature does not exceed 18°C.*

2 As described in S.I. No. 810/2007 Art. 3.

Personnel Hygiene

Background Information

Packing Centres will be aware of their management responsibility to ensure that all aspects of personnel hygiene are addressed and to ensure compliance with the specific requirements of this standard. Every person working in a Packing Centre will be aware of the importance of maintaining a high degree of personal cleanliness. Food handlers may refer to relevant legislation in Appendix 4.1.

3.47 HYGIENE: GENERAL

a) **A documented Hygiene Plan must be in place and communicated clearly to all personnel (Category 1).**

b) **A documented training programme for staff must be in place (Category 1).**

c) Training records must be available to demonstrate that all operatives have been trained in the Hygiene Plan.

3.48 MEDICAL RECORDS

Background Information

Management and employees will be aware of the need to control infectious disease and to have adequate on-going medical screening of employees.

a) **Participants must have a procedure in place to ensure that no person that is likely to be a carrier of or suffering from a disease likely to be transmitted through food or that has infected wounds, skin infections, sores or diarrhoea is permitted to handle food or to enter any food-handling area in any capacity (Category 1).**

b) The procedure must ensure that any person so affected who is likely to come into contact with food immediately reports the illness or symptoms, and if possible their causes, to the food business operator.

c) All personnel must have conducted a medical examination, within 4 weeks of commencement of employment.

d) During induction training, all personnel must be made aware of their personal responsibility that where they are taking medication that has the potential to effect their capability to discharge their duties, this must be notified to management.

e) *Ensure that each visitor/contractor completes a medical questionnaire on entering the food-handling area.*

Note: the HPSC report[3] on prevention of food borne diseases states that the most effective preventive measure that can be taken to prevent food contamination is effective and thorough training of all staff. The findings of this report could be taken into consideration in designing the hygiene training for food handlers and in defining the conditions under which employees may continue to handle food and food products

3.49 FIRST AID

a) At least one member of staff must be trained in First Aid procedures, and fully stocked first aid kits must be available to treat minor injuries.

b) Cuts, sores and grazes must be completely covered after treatment with a distinctively coloured waterproof dressing incorporating a metal detectable strip.

3.50 PERSONAL HYGIENE

a) Hands must be washed with unperfumed soap immediately after using a sanitary convenience.

b) Perfume/aftershave must not be worn.

c) False nails are not permitted and fingernails must be kept short, clean and unvarnished.

d) No loose jewellery, except plain wedding rings and sleeper ear-rings may be worn by personnel working in the production area.

e) No rings or studs to be worn in exposed parts of the body.

f) All head hair, including facial hair must be contained (e.g. by means of a snood, mop cap or other covering) to prevent contamination of product.

3 Health Protection Surveillance Centre: Preventing Foodborne Disease: A Focus On The Infected Food Handler (2004).

3.51 PERSONNEL CLOTHING AND LOCKER ROOMS

a) All personnel (food operatives) working within the plant must be provided with suitable protective clothing, suitable headgear and footwear.

b) Clean, appropriate protective clothing must be available at all times and re-issued as required.

c) Used and unused protective clothing must be segregated to prevent contamination.

d) Protective clothing must be removed before using the toilets or canteen facilities, and must not be worn outside.

e) Facilities (including individual lockers) must be provided that ensure the separation of personal and protective clothing.

f) Specific facilities must be in place that provide for the hygienic handling of used or contaminated clothing.

g) A scheduled laundering of all protective clothing must be in place.

h) Where work clothing is laundered on site, the wash cycle must exceed 80°C operating temperature.

i) All persons (including visitors/contract workers/service personnel) entering production areas of the plant must wash hands and wear protective clothing provided. Notices to this effect must be posted in appropriate areas.

3.52 STAFF FACILITIES

a) Smoking, eating and drinking must only be permitted in designated areas and there must be clear signs to this effect.

b) All personnel facilities (canteens, locker-rooms, toilets, rest-rooms) must be included in the sanitation programme and maintained in a clean condition.

c) All toilets, including office toilets, must be clean and adequately ventilated and toilets must not lead directly into the packing area.

d) Odourless liquid soaps and sanitising liquids must be provided and dispensed from wall-mounted units.

e) Paper towel dispensers and a bin for used paper towels must be provided in every wash area. The use of air driers is not permitted in food production areas.

f) Advisory signs must be clearly displayed in all toilet areas indicating that hands must be washed after the use of the facilities. The signs must also instruct on how to wash hands correctly.

g) *Ensure that at least one toilet and one hand basin is available for every 15 male or 10 female employees.*

4 Appendices

Reference Information[1]

DISEASE/SALMONELLA CONTROL

- Diseases of Animals (Poultry Feed) Order 1991 S.I. No. 364 of 1991.
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 2160/2003 on the monitoring and control of Salmonella.
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1168/2006 implementing Regulation (EC) No. 2160/2003.
- EC (Control of Salmonella in Laying Flocks of Domestic Fowl) Regulations. S.I. No. 247/2008.

FOOD LAW/FOOD SAFETY/FOOD AND FEED HYGIENE

- Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council, laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety.
- Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29th April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs.
- Regulation (EC) No. 1935/2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.
- European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 910 of 2005). Amended by European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 387 of 2006) and European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 56 of 2007).
- European Communities (Drinking Water) (No.2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 278 of 2007).

EGGS – HYGIENE

- Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29th April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.

1 All references given in the standard must be taken on an 'as amended' basis.

EGGS – MARKETING STANDARDS

- European Communities (Marketing Standards for Eggs) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 810 of 2007). This national legislation transposes Council Regulation (EC) 1028/2006 and its implementing rules Regulation (EC) No. 557/2007 and Regulation (EC) No. 1336/2007 which were repealed and replaced by Commission Regulation (EC) No. 589/2008 and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 598/2008. New Irish legislation is currently being drafted.
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007, establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 589/2008, laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 as regards marketing standards for eggs.
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 598/2008, laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 as regards marketing standards for eggs.

MARKING OF EGGS/LABELLING, PRESENTATION AND ADVERTISING OF FOODSTUFFS

- Directive 2000/13/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 44 of 1993).

MISCELLANEOUS

- List of Approved Disinfectants. June 1993 Disease of Animals (Disinfectants) Order, Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF).
- List of Approved Laboratories – Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF).

GUIDELINES FOR BEST PRACTICE

- Code of Good Agriculture Practice to Protect Water from Pollution by Nitrates Departments of Agriculture and Environment July 1996 (S.I. No. 378 2006).
- FSAI Guidance Note No. 11. Assessment of HACCP Compliance.

Egg Specification

EGG GRADING STANDARDS

Only grade A eggs of hens *(Gallus gallus)* may be marketed under this Egg Quality Assurance Scheme. The eggs must be graded as follows:

Very Large (XL)	-	73 g and more
Large (L)	-	from 63 g up to 73 g
Medium (M)	-	from 53 g up to 63 g
Small (S)	-	under 53 g
Mixed weight	-	Contains eggs of different sizes, min. net weight on box.

This weight grading must be indicated on packs by the respective letter or by the respective terms or by a combination of both. In addition the respective weight ranges may be shown on packs and eggs. The DAFF recommendation is that, insofar as consumer information is concerned, the use of terms "very large, large…" etc is preferable to letters, while the use of weight gradings alone is not acceptable.

Note: eggs of a larger size may be substituted for eggs of a smaller size where sufficient smaller sized eggs are not available.

EGG QUALITY CHARACTERISTICS

Class A eggs must have the following quality characteristics*:

	Class A
Cuticle	Normal shape, clean and undamaged
Shell	Normal shape, clean and undamaged
Air Space	Height not exceeding 6 mm in depth, stationary
Yolk	Visible on candling as a shadow only, without clearly discernible outline, slightly mobile upon turning the egg, and returning to a central position
Albumin	Clear, translucent. Free from discoloration, cloudiness, blood spots and meat spots
Germ	Imperceptible development
Foreign Matter	Not permissible
Foreign Smell	Not permissible
Washing/Cleaning	Not permissible, either before or after grading

* Evidence must be available to demonstrate that the test methodology used is reliable.

In partnership with

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Irish Food Board

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