

ANIMAL CARE PROGRAM

GUIDANCE: EGG PRODUCERS



Purpose

This guidance explains the requirements of 1) California egg producers¹ keeping an egg-laying hen² for the purpose of producing shell eggs³ or liquid eggs⁴ and 2) egg producers outside of California keeping an egg-laying hen for the purpose of producing shell eggs or liquid eggs for commercial sale⁵ in California.

Scope

All California egg producers and egg producers outside of California keeping an egg-laying hen for the purpose of producing shell eggs or liquid eggs for commercial sale in California must confine the covered animal⁶ on a certified operation⁷ (farm) in compliance with the [Animal Confinement regulations](#).

Instructions

An egg producer must:

- 1) Meet the confinement requirements for keeping an egg-laying hen.
- 2) Have a valid Certificate of Compliance⁸ for each farm location where egg-laying hens are kept.
- 3) Renew Certificate of Compliance annually.

1) Confinement of an Egg-Laying Hen

- Confine an egg-laying hen in an enclosure⁹ that does not prevent an egg-laying hen from lying down, standing up, fully extending its limbs¹⁰, or turning around freely¹¹.

AND

- Confine an egg-laying hen in a cage-free housing system compliant with the following:
 - Enclosure is an indoor or outdoor controlled environment allowing hens to roam freely and unrestricted;
 - Enclosure provides enrichments allowing hens to exhibit natural behaviors, including, at a minimum, scratch areas, perches, nest houses, and dust bathing areas;
 - Employees can provide care while standing within the egg-laying hens' usable floorspace¹²;

¹Egg producer as defined in [3 CCR § 1320\(m\)](#).

²Egg-laying hen as defined in [3 CCR § 1320\(l\)](#).

³Shell eggs as defined in [3 CCR §§ 1320\(s\) and \(z\)](#).

⁴Liquid eggs as defined in [3 CCR § 1320\(t\)](#).

⁵Commercial sale as defined in [3 CCR § 1320\(e\)](#).

⁶Covered animal as defined in [3 CCR § 1326\(h\)](#).

⁷Certified operation as defined in [3 CCR § 1326\(e\)](#).

⁸Certificate of compliance as described in [3 CCR § 1326\(d\)](#) and used throughout Animal Confinement regulations.

⁹Enclosure as defined in [3 CCR § 1320\(n\)](#).

¹⁰Fully extending its limbs as defined in [HSC § 25991\(k\)](#).

¹¹Turning around freely as defined in [HSC § 25991\(q\)](#).

¹²Usable floorspace as defined in [3 CCR § 1320\(bb\)](#).

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Enclosure provides the minimum amount of usable floorspace per egg-laying hen required by [United Egg Producers' Animal Husbandry Guidelines for U.S. Egg-Laying Flocks: Guidelines for Cage-Free Housing](#), 2017 edition:

- For **multitiered aviaries**, providing egg-laying hens access to multiple elevated platforms, hens must have a minimum of one (1) square foot of usable floorspace per hen;
 - For **partially slatted systems**, providing egg-laying hens access to elevated flat platforms, hens must have a minimum of one (1) square foot of usable floorspace per hen;
 - For **single-level floor systems**, bedded with litter providing egg-laying hens with limited or no access to elevated flat platforms, hens must have a minimum of one and one-half (1.5) square foot of usable floorspace per hen;
 - For any **other type of cage-free housing system** not described above it shall provide a minimum of one (1) square foot of usable floorspace per hen in systems that provide hens with access to vertical space and a minimum of one and one-half (1.5) square feet of usable floorspace per hen in systems that do not provide hens access to vertical space.
- Exceptions¹³ to these confinement requirements:
 - During examination, testing, individual treatment, or operation for veterinary purposes.
 - During transportation.
 - During rodeo exhibitions, state or county fair exhibitions, 4-H programs, and similar exhibitions.
 - During slaughter.
 - During temporary periods for animal husbandry purposes for no more than six hours in any 24-hour period, and no more than 24 hours total in any 30-day period.

2) Obtain a Certificate of Compliance

- A valid certification in the form of a Certificate of Compliance issued by an accredited certifying agent¹⁴, CDFA, or another governmental entity¹⁵, identifies a farm as confining egg-laying hens and maintaining production records in accordance with the Animal Confinement regulations.
- To initiate the process for certification, an egg producer must:
 - Apply for certification
 - Certification may be obtained from an accredited certifying agent, CDFA, or another government entity.
 - Certification is required by January 1, 2024.
 - Pass an on-site inspection¹⁶
 - The on-site inspection is used to assess whether each farm location complies with the Animal Confinement regulations and to verify information provided on the application for certification of the operation's activities is accurate and truthful.
 - Maintain records¹⁷
 - For a period of 2 years from their creation to document the egg-laying hens were kept in compliance with the Animal Confinement regulations.

¹³Exceptions as described in [3 CCR §§ 1324-1324.1](#).

¹⁴Certifying agent as defined in [3 CCR § 1326\(f\)](#).

¹⁵Governmental entity as defined in [3 CCR § 1326\(n\)](#).

¹⁶On-site inspection as described in [3 CCR § 1326.5](#).

¹⁷Records as defined in [3 CCR § 1326\(w\)](#) and described in [3 CCR § 1326.2](#).

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3) Renew Certificate of Compliance Annually

- To continue certification and compliance with Animal Confinement regulations, an egg producer must annually submit renewal information¹⁸ to the certifying agent for the purpose of renewing a Certificate of Compliance.
- An on-site inspection must be conducted by the certifying agent at least once every 12 months for each egg producer location keeping egg-laying hens to determine whether certification of the egg producer should continue.

¹⁸Renewal information as described in [3 CCR § 1326.8\(a\)](#).