



California Shell Egg Food Safety Regulation Guidance

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To support the consumption of high quality, safe eggs, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Section 1350 (Shell Egg Food Safety) and Section 1354 (Product Labeling) of Title 3 of the California Code of Regulations require any in-state or out-of-state egg producer or egg handler selling chicken eggs in California to implement *Salmonella enterica* serotype *Enteritidis* reduction measures and label products accordingly.

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Enhanced Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) Testing and Vaccination applies to:

- All shell egg producers with 3,000 or more laying hens whose eggs are sold in California.
- Laying hens whose shell eggs are not pasteurized.

California Shell Egg Food Safety Regulations Guidance Information

I. Environmental SE Tests (Title 3, Section 1350 (c)(2))

A. **Chick Papers:** While there may be various effective methods for environmental testing related to chicks being placed, SEFS recommends that 10% of chick papers be tested for *Salmonella enteritidis* (one paper for every ten boxes of chicks). Check with the laboratory you use for SE testing to determine the best way to submit samples. Currently the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory is accepting three types of specimens:

1. Chick papers that are swabbed with pre-moistened (double strength skim milk or commercially available evaporated milk) 3x3 gauze pads at the farm after the chicks have been removed. One gauze pad is rubbed across the surface of the five papers and placed into a sterile plastic bag. After collection of up to 20 papers (four gauze pads pooled), add approximately 15-30 ml double strength skim milk. Continue this process until 10% of the total chick delivery has been sampled. Deliver samples to laboratory within 48 hours after collection. Samples may be frozen if unable to deliver to laboratory within 48 hours.

2. Portions of chick papers totaling 25 grams should be cut out using disinfected scissors or torn out with sterile gloves, pooled in a sterile container and delivered to the laboratory **from the farm.**

(Example: Farm receives 100,000 chicks. That is 1000 boxes. Farm must sample at least 10% of the total or 100 boxes. Five chick papers per swab would yield 20 total swabs. Those 20 swabs **may be pooled** into 5 bags of 4 swabs in each.)

3. Chick papers (one paper for every ten boxes of chicks) are removed at the farm and placed into a clean plastic trash bag and submitted to the laboratory within 48 hours of collection. Samples submitted by this method will be charged an additional processing fee and only samples from one producer will be set up per day (first come, first served unless special arrangements are made in advanced).

B. Pre-Depop SE Environmental Sampling: We recommend these take place **2-4 weeks** prior to the end of production or movement of flocks (whether movement is to another house on premises or different premises). Use a sterile drag swab to complete testing (contact the AHFSL at 253-445-4537, if you need to purchase drag swabs or have questions about how to make one). Swabs should be collected in the same manner as FDA guidelines, however, pre-depopulation swabs **may be pooled** in whirlpak-type bags with sufficient milk to keep the pads wet (no more than a tablespoon or approximately 15ml). If the collection time is greater than 6 hours, the use of a cooler with frozen gel packs is recommended for storage of the samples prior to shipment to the laboratory.

www.fda.gov/food/foodscienceresearch/laboratorymethods/ucm114716.htm

**If pre-depopulation samples were missed, pre-placement environmental samples will be accepted in their place, to ensure the environment is free from SE prior to new flocks being placed.

IMPORTANT: ONLY PRE-DEPOPULATION AND CHICK SWABS MAY BE POOLED (all other environmental samples must follow FDA swabbing guidelines)

- II. SE Vaccination Program (Title 3, Section 1350 (c)(3))
Regulation requires a minimum of two attenuated live vaccinations and one killed or inactivated vaccination or a demonstrated equivalent SE vaccination program approved by CDFA. Vaccines are available through livestock supply companies or directly through the manufacturer. Proof of regulatory compliance will be required for verification, including signed/initialed and dated documentation.
- III. Enclosure Requirements (Title 3 Section 1350(d))
 1. Stocking density requirements apply to all laying hens whose eggs are sold in California, regardless of flock size.
 - a. As of January 1, 2022, an enclosure shall be a cage-free housing system that complies with the following: All Shell Eggs and Liquid Egg Products sold must be cage free and meet usable floor space of 2017 edition of UEP Certified Cage Free (https://uepcertified.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CF-UEP-Guidelines_17-3.pdf).
- IV. California Product Labeling (Title 3 Section 1354 (f))
 - A. The principal display panel for containers for all eggs sold in California must have the following statement: "California Shell Egg Food Safety Compliant" or "CA SEFS Compliant" or equivalent approved by CDFA. The Statement shall be legible and plainly marked on each container in letters not less than ¼ inch in height.
 - B. In order for CDFA to verify that eggs which are transported for sale in CA are CA SEFS Compliant eggs, we advise all pallet, nest run and case labels include CA SEFS Compliant statement and farm of origin identifying information. Additionally, it is required (Title 3 Section 1358.4) that all shipping invoices, bills of lading and/or shipping manifest should include the following information; CA SEFS compliant statement (or Not for California Consumption).
- V. Segregation
 1. CDFA strongly advises the implementation of a documented Segregation Plan as part of the SE Prevention Plan. In the event of an SE incident (including deficiencies in prevention measures found during audits), a documented and verifiable segregation plan should be in place, that explains procedures for how the affected eggs, in all phases of production, processing and transport, shall be segregated from CA Compliant eggs.