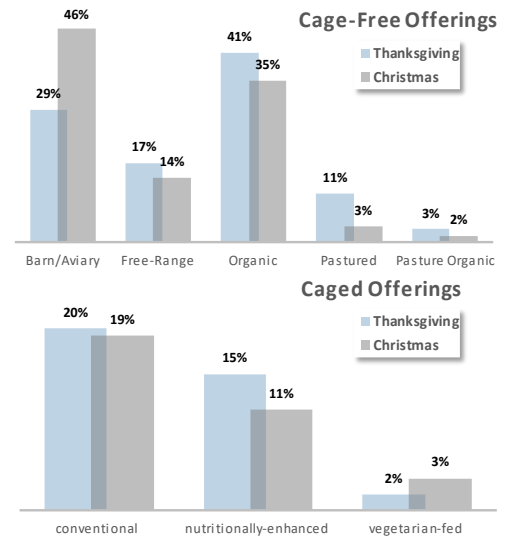


Shell Egg Marketing During the Holidays

Thanksgiving and Christmas are key marketing events on the calendar for shell eggs. With the arrival of November, thoughts turn to family gatherings and Grandma's pumpkin pie (50 million estimated to have been eaten during Thanksgiving 2018, at 3 eggs per pie, that's 150 million eggs!). As December arrives, community-organized cookie walks offer tons of baked treats to eager consumers as Christmas season kicks into high gear and purveyors of egg nog open the spigots. Retailers are eager to please and step up their promotional campaigns for shell eggs. Typically, store ads peak 2-3 weeks ahead of each holiday, giving shoppers plenty of lead time to prepare for their holiday feasts.

During the recent Thanksgiving marketing period, supermarket shell egg features outpaced those for Christmas by 13%. Caged shell eggs at Thanksgiving accounted for 36% of store features with 15% of these comprised of nutritionally-enhanced, national branded offerings. At Christmas, the share of features for caged eggs declined 3% from Thanksgiving to 33% and ads for nutritionally-enhanced, national branded shell eggs declined 4% to 11%.

Grocery retailer marketing efforts for both holiday seasons focused heavily on shell eggs from cage-free production systems with 65% of shell egg features at Thanksgiving and 68% at Christmas. In November, cage-free features were led by organic offerings with 41% of cage-free ad share with those from barn/aviary systems, as defined by the [United Egg Producers](#), accounting for a 29% share. Features ahead of Christmas were dominated by shell eggs from barn/aviary systems with 46% of feature share. Organic offerings, at 35% of ad share, remained prevalent but less so than during the Thanksgiving period.



Non-organic free-range shell eggs, where hens are physically outdoors for not less than a certain number of hours per day, were prominently featured during both holidays, accounting for 17% of Thanksgiving cage-free ads and 14% at Christmas. Organic shell eggs raised in free-range conditions accounted for 29% of all organic shell eggs featured in November (8% of all egg types) and 24% in December. Pastured production, where the hens spend their days outside with portable coops

for egg laying and for shelter from inclement weather, has been slowly growing in recent years with a current non-organic flock estimated at 2.5 million hens. Non-organic pastured shell eggs saw a 7% ad share of all eggs featured at Thanksgiving but dropped to 2% at Christmas. Shell eggs from organic pasture systems, with a current flock size estimated at 1.3 million hens, saw an overall share in November of 2% (7% within the organic category) and 1% (4% within the organic category) at Christmas.

At Thanksgiving, featuring of brown-shelled types outpaced white by 65-35%, 68-32% at Christmas and, not surprisingly, 90% of all shell egg offerings during both holidays were Large class. Average wholesale prices ahead of Thanksgiving were as much as 19% higher than they were ahead of Christmas. This is reflected in the average advertised prices for shell eggs of all types at Thanksgiving compared to Christmas (*see table at left*).

Average Featured Supermarket Sale Ad Prices for Shell Eggs

Thanksgiving/Christmas 2018 Marketing Periods				
Large class; dollars per dozen	Thanksgiving 2018		Christmas 2018	
	White	Brown	White	Brown
CAGED Production				
conventional	1.29	1.69	1.26	1.89
nutritionally-enhanced	2.45	2.50	2.25	2.50
vegetarian-fed	--	2.61	2.50	2.11
CAGE-FREE Production				
Barn/Aviary	2.26	3.02	1.96	2.41
nutritionally-enhanced	--	2.89	2.79	2.77
vegetarian-fed	--	2.90	2.50	2.74
Free-Range	2.06	3.23	3.25	3.08
nutritionally-enhanced	--	4.99	--	3.01
vegetarian-fed	2.50	3.13	2.99	2.67
Pastured	--	5.26	--	4.65
Organic	--	4.04	3.99	3.98
nutritionally-enhanced	--	4.23	--	4.26
free-range	--	4.25	--	4.26
pastured	--	6.31	--	5.83

"--" denotes types not observed in surveyed supermarket ads during these marketing events. Source: USDA AMS Agricultural Analytics

For more information, see the [Feature Advertising by U.S. Supermarkets Meat and Poultry Thanksgiving and Christmas reports](#).

