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## Shell Eggs for Volume Food Buyers

Eggs are one of the most important staples of a kitchen due to the numerous culinary functions they perform. Anyone who prepares and serves food in institutions or commercial kitchens, and even in the household kitchen, appreciates that consistent quality of ingredients is as crucial to assuring an acceptable meal as appropriate handling and preparation. Therefore, volume food buyers must exercise care when purchasing shell eggs to ensure receipt of a consistent, high quality product. Meeting this challenge can be made much easier for all parties involved, through the use of detailed product specifications, and the requirement for independent third party certification to ensure deliveries comply with the specification requirements. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Livestock, Poultry & Seed (LPS) can assist in these processes.

USDA, AMS, LPS, Quality Assessment Division (QAD) ensures the integrity, quality, and weight of shell eggs bought by Volume Food Buyers. Through QAD, Shell Egg grading and certification services, USDA's QAD specialists help prepare explicit product specifications and assure compliance with detailed quality, weight, condition, and other requirements necessary to meet a Volume Food Buyer's needs. The grading and packing of the shell eggs is performed under the continuous supervision of the USDA representative who certifies that each delivery complies with the specifications.

**The following topics describe LPS, QAD, Shell Egg grading and certification services, and are included in this publication:**

- USDA Shell Egg Grading Program
- Know The Eggs You Buy
- Know Your Egg Sizes and Weights
- Specifics about Egg Specifications
- Official Identification
- Certification of Compliance
- Specification Approval Process and Application Form
- Example Specification 1: US Grade AA White
- Example Specification 2: US Grade A White or Brown

Shell egg producers, packers, wholesalers, food manufacturers, food service operators, food retailers, exporters and consumers rely on USDA's shell egg grading services. USDA's grading services are also used extensively by Volume Food Buyers that have USDA approved shell egg specifications.

**The following USDA services are available through AMS, LPS, QAD, Shell Eggs:**

- Independent third party certification of shell eggs for quality according to U.S. Standards.
- Certification that shell eggs meet contract specification requirements for quality, weight, condition, and other requirements according to a specification.
- Assurance of uniform product quality on a continuous basis regardless of supplier.
- Establishment of a common language that enables buyers and sellers to communicate about shell egg quality and other product characteristics without actually seeing the product.
- Establishment of a basis for fair, competitive bidding between suppliers.
- Independent third party audit programs of shell egg production and processing practices to determine compliance with marketing claims, export requirements, food defense requirements, and more.

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## USDA Shell Egg Grading Program

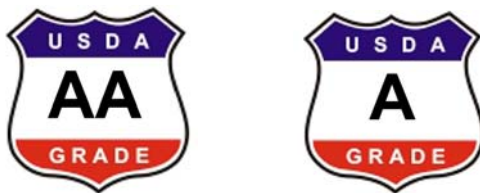
Shell Eggs are graded for quality and weight according to the Regulations Covering the Voluntary Grading of Shell Eggs (7 CFR Part 56). The United States Standards, Grades, and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs (AMS 56) have been developed and are administered according to the authorities contained in the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.). The Official U.S. Standards establish a basis for quality and price relationship and enable more orderly marketing. Consumers and Volume Food Buyers can purchase officially graded product with the confidence of receiving quality in accordance with official identification.

The regulations are available at: [www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/regulations](http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/regulations)

The standards, grades and weight classes are available at: [www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/regulations](http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/regulations)

The United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service administers a nationwide shell egg grading program to determine compliance for quality and weight according to the official U.S. standards and grades. Shell egg grading services are voluntary and provided on a fee basis to plants requesting the services. On a cost-per-dozen basis, the cost for this service is minimal. Many shell egg producers and suppliers of shell eggs utilize the services of USDA Federally-licensed Graders to examine and certify the eggs that they market. In order to participate in this program, processing plants must maintain strict requirements for sanitation, facilities, equipment, and methods of operation as outlined by USDA. Once approved, these processing plants are eligible for official USDA plant status.

In official USDA plants, the shell eggs are graded and packed under the continuous supervision of the USDA Grader, to ensure that they meet applicable quality and size standards, and comply with federal and/or local labeling regulations. In order for shell eggs to be eligible for official USDA designation, they must be check graded and certified by a USDA Grader. Officially graded shell eggs that pass the examination and evaluation process are eligible for the grade shield bearing the appropriate letter grade:



**Examples of USDA Grademark**

The official USDA consumer Grademark located on a case of eggs or an egg carton indicates that the eggs were processed and packed under the supervision of a USDA Grader in an official plant using the USDA voluntary shell egg grading service. If there is no USDA Grademark on the container, it was not processed and packed under the supervision of a USDA Grader.

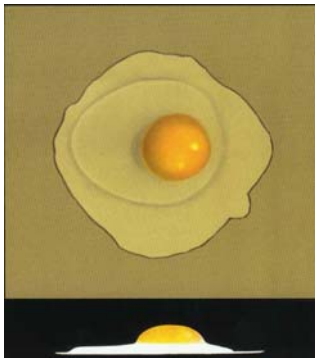
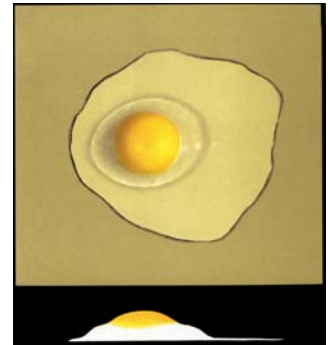
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## Know the Eggs You Buy

You can make better buys by choosing quality shell eggs that fit your needs. If you've been purchasing shell eggs by habit, or can't tell which grade would best meet your needs, here's some information that can help facilitate your decision making process.

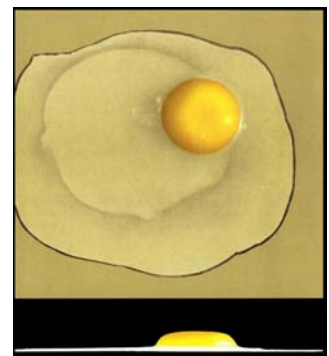
The official U.S. Grades define three quality levels that apply to all shell eggs sold: Grade AA, A, and B. Most eggs sold at retail are Grade AA or A. Grade B eggs are usually further processed into egg products, and used for baking, salad dressing, and other applications. The following pictures illustrate the criteria used to judge egg quality.

**U.S. Grade AA** is the highest grade and ideal when appearance is critical, such as when serving fried or poached eggs. A Grade "AA" egg, when "broken out," covers a small area. The egg white (albumen) is sufficiently thick and the yolk is round and upstanding. Notice the close proximity of the inner egg white ring to the yolk; this is indicative of the Grade AA egg.



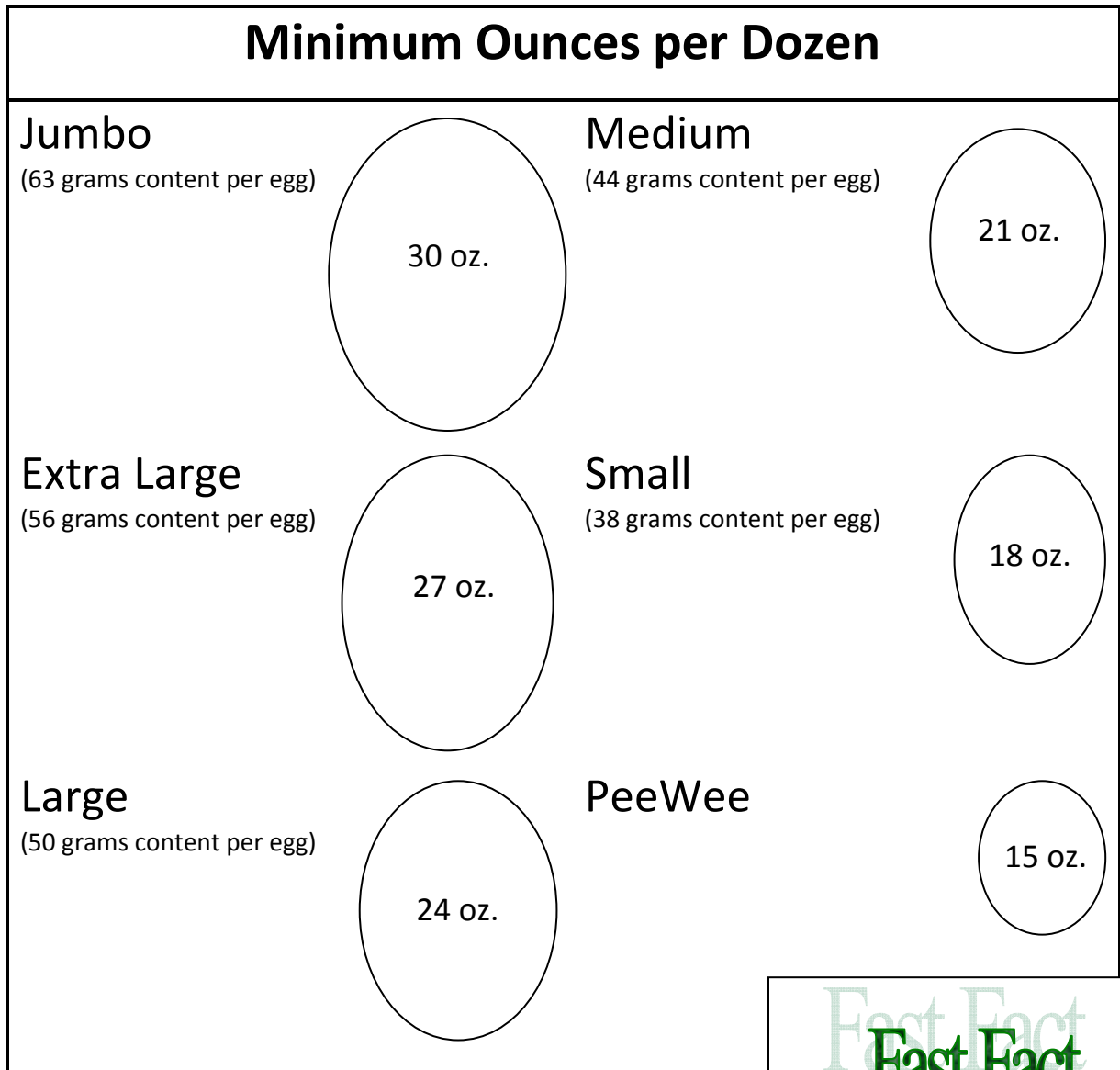
**U.S. Grade A** is the most common grade available and suitable when appearance is important such as when serving fried or poached eggs, as well as for general cooking. A Grade "A" egg, when broken out, covers a slightly larger area than the Grade "AA" egg. The yolk is round and upstanding. The white of a Grade "A" egg is somewhat thinner than the Grade "AA" egg. Notice how the inner egg white ring is flattening out, becoming larger in surface area than the Grade "AA" egg.

**U.S. Grade B** is satisfactory for general cooking and baking, where appearance of the whole egg is less important. The white is generally weak and watery and spreads out over a large area. The yolk may be enlarged and flattened. Notice how the inner egg white ring is flattening out, becoming larger than the Grade "A" egg.



## Know Your Egg Sizes and Weights

Size tells you the minimum required net weight per dozen eggs. It does not refer to the dimensions of an egg or how big it looks. Eggs of any weight (size) class may differ in quality. There are six official U.S. weight classes for the consumer grades of shell eggs. Sizes are classified according to minimum weight expressed in ounces per dozen. The six weight classes are as follows:



Remember, when purchasing shell eggs, shop for egg grade **and** size. And, look for the USDA Shield; this indicates that the eggs were certified for quality and checked for weight (size) under USDA supervision.

**Fast Fact**  
Food recipes are usually based on large egg sizes, and nutrition facts are based on the established serving size of one egg (in grams)

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## Specifics about Egg Specifications

The basis for an effective shell egg procurement program starts with a concise product specification that clearly states all requirements. The examination of product need not be limited to class quality, quantity, and condition. It may include method of packing, type of packaging and materials used, weights, sealing and marking of cases, handling and storage, and other contract factors contained in the specification or purchase contract. Some examples of shell egg specifications have been included in this Guide.

Items that are not to be verified by the grader may also be included in the specification, and identified by an asterisk (\*) and a footnote such as “Not USDA certified,” may include transport requirements, verification of UPC codes, or accordance with environmental initiatives.

For ease of understanding for both buyers and sellers, AMS recommends that shell egg specifications address specific items, including the following:

### Regulatory Requirements

“All delivered shell eggs shall be classified to the grade and size outlined in the current edition of the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Shell Eggs and United States Standards, Grades, and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs (7 CFR Part 56). Plant facilities, equipment, and all processing operations must comply with all USDA requirements.”

### Product Description

“All shell eggs are to be fresh. The shell color is white unless otherwise specified.”

### Grade Requirements

Grades reflect the quality of the eggs. Grade standards cover such factors as cleanliness and soundness of the shell, size of the air cell, and condition of the white and yolk.

“U.S. Grade AA Lot average shall:

Not be less than 87 percent AA quality. The balance (13 percent) may be within the next lower grades. Within the tolerance (13 percent) not more than 5 percent may be checks. Individual cases may not exceed 10 percent checks.

Grades apply to edible shell eggs in lot quantities rather than on an individual egg basis. Each lot of shell eggs meets the origin requirements for U.S. Grade AA or A accordingly. US Grade criteria are listed at right.

Not more than 0.50 percent leakers, dirties, or loss (due to meat or blood spots) in any combination, except that such loss may not exceed 0.30 percent. Other types of loss are not permitted.”

“U.S. Grade A Lot average shall:

As an option, a purchaser may elect to tighten criteria beyond that stated in the U.S. Grade Standards. For example: “A lot average of 95% Grade AA quality, with no individual case exceeding 10% Grade A quality.”

Not be less than 87 percent AA and A quality. The balance (13 percent) may be within the next lower grade. Within the tolerance (13 percent) not more than 5 percent may be checks. Individual cases may not exceed 10 percent checks.

Not more than 0.50 percent leakers, dirties, or loss (due to meat or blood spots) in any combination, except that such loss may not exceed 0.30 percent. Other types of loss are not permitted.”

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## Specifics about Egg Specifications

### Size/Weight

Size refers to the minimum weight per dozen eggs. Extra Large, Large, and Medium are the most common sizes. Large size eggs account for the greatest percentage of eggs sold.

“All products shall meet USDA minimum weight requirements for the applicable size.”

### Egg Count

Eggs for retail sale are usually packaged in dozen or 18-egg cartons, or on 30-egg flats.

Eggs for institutional use are more commonly packed loose on filler flats, in 30-dozen and 15-dozen cases. The number of dozen per case and the number of cases per purchase unit should be specified.

### Packing and Packaging

Cartons, cases, or other packaging material should be new, or if used, clean and free of odors. They should be the proper size and strength for the eggs to keep breakage to a minimum.

“Packaging must be of sufficient strength and durability to adequately protect the eggs.”

“Eggs shall be packed into new 15-dozen or 30-dozen fiber cases (insert applicable bursting strength).”

“Each case shall be fully taped across the length of the top and extend down each end to the hand hole. The tape may be gummed or plastic, 2-3 inches wide. The bottom of the cases shall be stapled or taped.”

“One dozen cartons may be either pulp or foam.”

### Expiration Date

Expiration dating on packaging material officially identified with the USDA Grademark is optional. However, the use of expiration dates requires an appropriate qualifying prefix. If a specification calls for an expiration date, each container and/or case shall bear an expiration date not to exceed a specific number of days, including the date of packing, which depends on the prefix used.

There are two options for qualifying prefix expiration dates, if a container/carton has:

**“EXP”, “Expiration date”, “Sell by”, “Not to be sold after date on end of carton”, “Purchase by”, “Last sale date on end of carton”**, may not exceed 30 days including the date of pack.

**“Use before”, “Use by”, “Best before”, “Best if used by”**, or other similar language generally indicating the maximum time frame for **expected quality**, may not exceed 45 days including the date of pack.



## Specifics about Egg Specifications

### Labeling of Shipping Container

<b>Grade</b> <b>A Large</b> Packed By: <b>Brand XYX</b> <b>Farms</b> 1234 Get Cracking Lane Anyplace, AR 55555 P-1234 EXP Dec 25	
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### Official Certification

All products must be officially graded by a representative of USDA prior to delivery. The contractor shall arrange and pay for the necessary shell egg grading and certification services provided by the USDA/AMS/LP&S, QAD personnel. A USDA Shell Egg Grading Certificate (Form LPS-210S), indicating that the product complies with approved specifications, will be issued for each delivery order of specified shell eggs.

An example of a LPS-210S certificate can be found in this Guide.

### Special Requirements

In addition to certifying the quality and size of eggs, shell egg specifications may include items that need to be met before certification can be completed. Below is a list of items that can be required for certification, upon the applicant's request:

Each shipping container **must** be clearly identified with:

- Name, address and zip code of packer or distributor, and production code number, if applicable.
- Grade and size.
- Official USDA stamp, date of grading or certificate number as well as the plant number.
- Expiration date, when applicable.

The certificate shall include the official U.S. consumer grade and size, the color of the eggs, lot numbers, as applicable, and other required information.

The "Additional Certification" section of the certificate shall carry the statement,

"Product represented by this certificate meets specification requirements for: \_\_\_\_\_."

and/or

"Product represented on this certificate meets the requirements for the stated grade and size as determined by online sampling on \_\_\_\_\_."

**Environmental Sampling** – "Shell eggs originate in a processing plant found to be free of all Salmonella species as determined by semi-annual environmental sampling and testing of the premises and equipment."

**Stamping of Individual Eggs** – "All eggs individually stamped with USDA approved ink with the letters 'U.S.' or 'U.S.A.' A lot average of 10 percent for individual eggs with partial, illegible, or no stamps in any combination is permitted with no individual case exceeding 20 percent."

**Disease Free Certification for Export Shipment** – Certifies that a company's flock is free of highly pathogenic avian influenza as identified by the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service of the USDA.

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## Official Identification

When it has been determined that the shell eggs comply with grade and specification requirements, the shipping containers of loose-packed or cartoned eggs are identified with a USDA stamp. The date of grading or a certificate number appears in the stamp as well as the number of the plant where the eggs have been processed. The following types of stamps are used to identify shell eggs that comply with specification requirements:

### USDA Grade AA / A Stamp



(Date Inserted in Center of Stamp)

### USDA Grade AA / A Shield



### USDA Contract Compliance Stamp



(Certificate Number Inserted in Center of Stamp)

**Product not meeting the specification requirements, as verified by the USDA grader, is not eligible for USDA certification.**

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## **Certification of Compliance**

When the specification requires the issuance of a grading certificate, a Shell Egg Grading Certificate (Form LPS-210S), indicating that the product complies with USDA approved specifications, will be issued and provided to plant management, for each delivery order of specified shell eggs. A statement, indicating that the product meets all specification requirements or any special certification statements, such as “disease free” certification, will appear in the “Additional Certification” and “Remarks” sections of the LPS-210S.

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## Specification Approval Process

In order to receive USDA certification for shell eggs processed according to a Volume Food Buyer's specification requirements, the specification must be reviewed and approved by the National Supervisor, Shell Eggs. This review process ensures that the specification accurately describes each item and is certifiable. The entire process is quick and easy and can be accomplished within a short period of time.

### **Please submit shell egg specifications for approval as follows:**

1. The applicant must submit Form PY-33, Application for Specification Approval, and the complete specification to the National Supervisor, Shell Eggs for review and approval. Submit the completed PY-33 to:

[Mark.Perigen@ams.usda.gov](mailto:Mark.Perigen@ams.usda.gov)

Form PY-33, Application for Specification Approval is available on the AMS website at:

<http://eforms.ams.usda.gov/>

2. The National Supervisor, Shell Eggs shall review the application and specification and either approve them, or advise the applicant of the reason(s) for disapproval.
3. Upon approval of the specification, an approval letter, enclosing a copy of the approved specification, shall be sent to the applicant.
4. The National Supervisor, Shell Eggs then distributes copies of the approved specification to USDA grading personnel nationwide.
5. Prior to actual production, USDA grading personnel will review all specification requirements with management at each applicable processing location.

For additional information about LPS, QAD, Shell Egg Grading and Contract Acceptance and Certification Services, contact the National Supervisor, Shell Eggs at (209) 522-5251 or e-mail at [Mark.Perigen@ams.usda.gov](mailto:Mark.Perigen@ams.usda.gov). Information is also available on the LPS, QAD, website at:

[www.ams.usda.gov/poultry](http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
 AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE  
 POULTRY PROGRAMS

Response is required in order to obtain specification approval applicable to grading service specification (CFR 56.4 and 70.10).  
 According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0127. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 2 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building., 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**APPLICATION FOR  
 SPECIFICATION APPROVAL**

I hereby apply for Acceptance Service certification of the product(s) checked below. It is understood that:

- The applicant will provide an approved copy of the specifications to plant management and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) representative at each plant packing to these specifications.
- Any graded or inspected product subject to these specifications which does not meet the terms of the specifications will be placed under USDA retention. Retained product will be released only when reworked to meet specification requirements, or when verbal or written authority is granted by the applicant to waive specific requirements.
- The applicant will provide waivers to specific requirements directly to plant management and the USDA representative at the packing location.
- When applicable, the applicant is to verify that all products procured under the Acceptance Service certification program are properly identified and accompanied by the required certification documents when received at destination.
- Any product bearing any USDA identification shall at all times comply with USDA requirements and regulations.

PRODUCT	APPLICABLE REGULATIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> SHELL EGG	Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Shell Eggs (7 CFR 56) United States Standards, Grades, and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs (AMS 56)
<input type="checkbox"/> POULTRY	Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit (7 CFR 70) United States Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry (AMS 70.200 et. seq.)

TITLES OF PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO GRANT SPECIFICATION WAIVERS	TELEPHONE NUMBERS (Include Area Code)
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NAME OF APPLICANT*	ADDRESS OF APPLICANT (Street and No., city, State, and ZIP Code)
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	
DATE OF APPLICATION	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

**FOR USE BY AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE**

DATE APPLICATION APPROVED	DATE SPECIFICATIONS APPROVED
TITLE	SIGNATURE OF USDA OFFICIAL

\*No member of or delegate to Congress, or Resident Commissioner, shall be admitted to any benefit that may arise from this service unless derived through service rendered a corporation for its general benefit.

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**US Grade AA Large White Shell Eggs**

**COMPANY NAME:** LLH Farms  
**ADDRESS:** 123 Tara Avenue  
Anytown, USA 45678

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**

All product must originate from LLH Farm’s approved suppliers list and be officially graded by a USDA, AMS, LPS, QAD representative (USDA Grader) prior to delivery. The supplier shall arrange and pay for the necessary shell egg grading and certification services provided by AMS LPS, QAD. A Shell Egg Grading Certificate (LPS-210S), indicating that the product complies with LLH Farms approved specifications must be issued for each delivery order of specified shell eggs.

**REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:**

The following items are to be monitored by the Grader. All delivered shell eggs shall be classified to the grade and size outlined in the current edition of the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Shell Eggs and United States Standards, Grades, and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs (7 CFR Part 56). Plant facilities, equipment, and all processing operations must comply with all USDA requirements. All cases of eggs shall bear the U.S. Grade AA shield.

**PRODUCT DESCRIPTION:**

Shell eggs packed for LLH Farms shall be U.S. Grade AA, Large. During instances where shortages occur, the substitution of Grade AA extra large eggs may be permitted, contingent upon written approval by an LLH Farms Quality Assurance representative.

All eggs for processing shall be nest run eggs, of current production, not previously processed. Eggs from previous processing dates or eggs returned from distribution in commerce are not eligible for processing. The shell color shall be white.

**GRADE REQUIREMENTS:**

Grades apply to eligible shell eggs in lot quantities rather than on an individual egg basis. Each lot of shell eggs meets the origin requirements for U.S. Grade AA as follows:

**U.S. Grade AA** – Lot average shall not be less than 87 percent AA Quality. The balance (13 percent) may be within the next lower grades. Within the tolerance (13 percent) not more than 5 percent may be checks. Individual cases may not exceed 10 percent checks.

## Example Specification 1

**Weight Class** – All product shall meet USDA minimum weight requirements for large or (extra large eggs upon written approval by LLH Farms, Quality Assurance).

### **PACKAGING AND PACKING REQUIREMENTS:**

All packaging materials (filler flats and corrugated fiber cases) shall be new. Eggs shall be packed loose in 30 dozen cases.

### **LABELING:**

Each shipping container must be clearly identified with:  
Statement of Identity (“Eggs”)  
Contents: “30 Dozen”  
Manufacturer name and address  
USDA Plant Number preceded by the letter “P”  
U.S. Grade and Size Classification – “AA Large”  
Date of pack (3 digit Julian Code or consecutive day of the year)  
Date of expiration – 30 days maximum from date of pack  
Government certification seal – U.S. Grade AA Stamp or Computer Generated Shield  
Special Instructions – “Keep Refrigerated, Fragile Handle With Care, Store Away From Strong Odors, Use Only Clean Uncracked Eggs.”

### **COOLER TEMPERATURES:**

Maximum allowable product ambient air temperature during storage and shipping is 45 °F.  
Temperature of cooler is to be noted on the Bill of Lading.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING:**

Shell eggs must originate from a processing plant found to be free of all Salmonella species as determined by semi-annual environmental sampling and testing of the premises and equipment.

Company Approval (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

USDA Approval (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **U.S. Grade A Shell Eggs**

**Company Name:** Hungry Hippo Stores, Inc.  
**Company Address:** 123 Breakfast Lane  
Egg Soufflé, AR 98765

**Revision Date:** 04/03/2017  
**Supersedes Version Dated:** 12/04/2007

### **General Requirements:**

Shell eggs supplied to Hungry Hippo Stores shall be U.S. Grade A as outlined in the current edition of the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Shell Eggs, 7 CFR Part 56, and the U.S. Standards, Grades, and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs, AMS 56, and should conform to the following specifications.

### **Facility Sanitation Requirements:**

Plant facilities, equipment and all processing operations must comply with all USDA requirements.

### **Product Description:**

All shell eggs (white and brown) produced for Hungry Hippo Stores must be graded by a USDA grader and must be washed, sanitized and dried according to USDA guidelines. Organic eggs must meet the requirements of the USDA National Organic Program and must bear the USDA Organic Seal.

### **Grade:**

Lot average shall not be less than the following standards:

1. At Origin:

90% must be "A" Quality. The balance (10%) may be within the next lower grade; within this tolerance (10%) no more than 4% may be checks. Individual cases may not contain less than 85% Grade "A" quality and not over 15% "B" quality. No individual case may contain over 8% checks.

2. At Destination:

85% must be "A" Quality. The balance (15%) may be within the next lower grade. Within this tolerance (15%) no more than 5% may be checks. Individual cases may not contain less than 80% Grade "A" quality and not over 20% "B" quality. No individual case may contain over 10% checks.

**Weight:**

All products shall meet USDA minimum weight requirements for the applicable size. It is permissible to pack the next larger size of eggs into cartons (for example, large eggs packed in medium cartons), provided they are not intermingled in the same carton with the lower marked weight class.

**Age:**

All eggs must be of current production. Eggs from in-line layer production facilities must be packed within 24 hours following the date of lay. Off-line eggs must be packed within 168 hours from date of lay (no more than 7 days old).

**Packing and Packaging:**

**Cartons** - Eggs shall be packed in new consumer-size packages bearing Hungry Hippo's approved brand names(s) and the USDA official grademark, except for Jumbos and "specialty eggs." All federal regulatory information must be stated on cartons. Additionally, any other labeling information required by State egg laws must be present.\*

**Cases** – Eggs shall be packed in new 30 dozen cases. After filling, each case shall be fully taped across the length of the top and extending down each end by at least 2.5 inches. Tape may be gummed paper or plastic, 2-3 inches wide. Bottoms of cases are to be stapled or taped.

**Case Labeling** – Each shipping container must be clearly identified with:

- Statement of Identity ("Eggs")
- Name and address of packer or distributor
- Grade and Size
- UPC Number
- "Best By" date, "Use By" date, "Exp. Date," or "Sell By" date, as applicable
- "Keep Refrigerated" statement
- Labels must be visible on all pallets

**Code Dating** – Cartons must bear the Julian pack date as required by USDA. Additionally, cartons must bear an expiration (Exp) date not to exceed 30 days (including date of pack). The expiration date is to be shown as follows:

Exp 8-3-08  
or  
Best by 8-3-08  
or  
Use by 8-3-08  
or  
Sell by 8-3-08

\* Packer is responsible for labeling requirements for the State in which the eggs are marketed; these requirements will not be certified by the USDA grader.