

FOOD SAFETY LABELLING OF EGGS FOR RETAIL SALE

Eggs (Marketing Standards) Regulations 1995

Eggs that have been incorrectly stored or handled can be a source of food poisoning. The above legislation imposes strict labelling requirements in order to ensure consumers know the safe shelf life of eggs and how best to store them.

How must eggs be labelled when sold in small packs?

Small packs sold by retailers must be labelled with the following information:


- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Quality Grade | for retail sales this must be 'Class A' |
| 2. Weight Grade | XL – very large; L – large; M – medium; S – small |
| 3. Best before date | this is indicated by the date and month, e.g. Best Before 17/4 or 17 April |
| 4. Storage conditions | 'Keep refrigerated after purchase' |
| 5. Packing centre number | This is a code e.g. 9-4-463 |
| 6. Name and address of the packer | |
| 7. Number of eggs in the pack | |

How must eggs be labelled when sold loose by retail?

Many retailers sell eggs from large open trays, which are often known as Keyes trays. Customers buying this way must be informed of the size and quality of the eggs. This should be done by way of a notice displayed alongside the tray clearly giving all the information in points 1 to 5 above.

Retailers will find the large outer box containing the trays is usually labelled with the required information. If the box is not labelled, you must ask your supplier for the information.

Remember to give customers clean boxes for their eggs. It is an offence to supply loose eggs in previously used boxes. This is to reduce the risk of passing disease.



Why is the sell by date different to the best before date?

All boxes of eggs will be marked with the best before date. Some packers also mark the sell by date to ensure retailers clear the stock by that time. The best before date tells customers that the eggs should be consumed by that date. The best before date is calculated as 28 days from the date of lay. Eggs must be sold at least a week prior the best before date to give customers time to use them up at home. This will also help ensure the eggs you stock remain class A while on your shelves.

Retailers must clear eggs from their shelves at least 7 days before the best before date, after this time it is illegal to offer them for sale.

How should eggs be stored and handled?

Eggs should be kept in cool temperatures of between +5°C and +12°C. They must not be refrigerated and must not be stored in sunlight. Small cracks will cause eggs to deteriorate and lose weight quickly, so they should be handled as little as possible. This is particularly important for loose eggs on trays

What if I fail to follow this guidance?

It is a criminal offence to stock eggs that are stale, old and no longer meet Class A standards. Stocks that are older than 21 days from the date of lay must not be offered for sale.

If you are selling loose eggs from trays, it is a criminal offence to fail to label them with the information required by the Regulations. Pre boxed eggs must also be fully labelled.

The maximum penalty upon conviction for any of these offences is £5,000.

How can I get further advice?

If you require further information or clarification on the above points, please do not hesitate to contact the:

Trading Standards Service, 222 Upper Street, London N1 1XR
Tel: (020) 7527 3198

or

Commercial Environmental Health, 222 Upper Street, London N1 1XR
Tel: (020) 7527 3816

Email: trading.standards@islington.gov.uk

In offering the above advice, this Authority wishes to make it clear that only the Courts can interpret the Law.