



Selling Yard Eggs in Texas

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Backyard egg producers may sell their eggs under certain conditions set by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

Producers selling eggs from their own flocks to the end customer must obtain a license from DSHS or their local health department. You also need a license to sell eggs to restaurants or retailers or to resell other producers' eggs.

If you sell at a farmers market, you must meet all the requirements set by state and other local jurisdictions. The eggs must always be stored at 45°F or lower. Unlicensed producers must label their egg cartons *Ungraded* followed by *Produced by [producer's name]*, along with the producer's address in legible, printed, boldface type.

The egg cartons must include a Safe Handling Instructions statement inside the lid or on the principal display panel (the part of a label that is most likely to be displayed or examined under customary conditions of dis-

play for retail sale) or information panel (any panel next to the principal display panel):

SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS:
To prevent illness from bacteria:
keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs
until yolks are firm, and cook foods
containing eggs thoroughly.

If this statement appears inside the lid, the words *Keep Refrigerated* must appear on the principal display panel or information panel (Fig. 1).

Only graded eggs of a Grade A or better can be described as *fresh*, *yard*, *selected*, *hennery*, *new-laid*, *infertile*, or *cage*, or with words that have similar meanings. Only certified organic producers can label their eggs as being "organic."

Licensed producers must submit monthly or quarterly reports to the Texas Department of Agriculture and keep the reports at the

- Thoroughly clean all equipment and processing rooms at the end of each processing day; make sure that they remain reasonably clean throughout the processing shift.
- Keep the processing equipment far enough away from walls and other equipment that it can be cleaned, maintained, and inspected.
- Provide sufficient overhead lights to facilitate cleaning the room.

Note: These are just basic guidelines. Before selling eggs, review and follow the recommendations outlined in the current version of *Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Shell Eggs*, which is available at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Regulations%20for%20Voluntary%20Grading%20of%20Shell%20Eggs.pdf>.

Cooking practices

Consumers should store their eggs in the refrigerator until used. Never eat raw eggs.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends that all eggs and egg dishes be cooked until the yolks are firm or to a minimum internal temperature of 160°F. Use a food thermometer to measure the temperature.

When preparing recipes that call for raw or undercooked eggs, use pasteurized eggs or egg products.

For more information

Grading eggs: Texas A&M Poultry Science Center, 979-845-4319. USDA Egg-Grading Manual, <https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/shell-egg-grades-and-standards>



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Handling and consuming yard eggs: County office, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, <http://counties.agrilife.org/>

Handling yard eggs: *Small-Scale Egg Handling*, <http://sd.appstate.edu/sites/sd.appstate.edu/files/egghandling.pdf>

Obtaining an egg license: Texas Department of Agriculture Egg Quality Program, 512-463-7698, <http://texasagriculture.gov/regulatoryprograms/eggqualityprogram.aspx>

Obtaining retail permits: DSHS–Retail Food Establishments Group, 512-834-6753, <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/foodestablishments/>

Organic certification: Organic certification department, Texas Department of Agriculture, 512-936-4178, <https://www.texasagriculture.gov/RegulatoryPrograms/Organics/OrganicContacts.aspx>

Acknowledgments

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