

Ready-To-Lay Pullets and Eggs as 4-H or FFA Projects

The farm market laying flock and the urban backyard egg-producing flock are responsible in an explosion of interest in raising egg producing chickens.

Egg-producing hens have great personalities and quickly become tamed to the point that even young children are able to care for them.

The interest in “Farm to Table” foods have spurred the demand for small farm flocks that market eggs at farmer’s markets, food cooperatives and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) organizations.



Depending on the breed and genetic background of the hens, eggs come in many colors and sizes. Purebred hens provide interesting body shapes, plumage colors and egg colors. However, modern hybrids provide superior efficiency and prolific production of quality eggs.

4-H and FFA members, as well as adults will become proficient producers of quality eggs if they understand the background and husbandry techniques in egg production.



“Farm Fresh,” “Natural,” “Nest Run,” and organic eggs are popular at Farmer’s Markets.

Origin and History of the Chicken

Most scientists agree that the Southeast Asian Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*) is the primary wild ancestor of chickens. However, because DNA studies show that the Red Junglefowl lacks the gene for yellow skin (and shanks) it is believed that some point, hybridization with the Grey Junglefowl (*Gallus sonneratii*) of India has occurred. The body structure of the Indian Gamebird (Cornish) and the Brahmas of China gives physical evidence of Grey Junglefowl influence. The tail carriage of the breed Sumatra indicates genetic contributions of the SriLanka Junglefowl (*Gallus lafayetti*). No doubt the Green Junglefowl (*Gallus varius*) has also contributed to modern chickens.

The classification of today’s chicken (*Gallus gallus domesticus*) recognizes its primary origin, the Red Junglefowl. Domestication probably occurred 7,000-10,000 years ago in Southeast Asia and Oceania.

Distribution of Chickens occurred rapidly and was widespread because of their ability to provide meat and eggs without being competitive for human food sources. But it is believed that the sport of Cockfighting was the principle reason for dispersion of chickens.

The Auracana, originally found in Auracania region of Chile continues to provide confusion. Some scientists believe that it was Pre-Columbian and originally from Polynesia. But DNA evidence disputes this theory.



Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*)

It is interesting to note that Charles Darwin borrowed extensively from pigeon and chicken breeders of his time in order to formulate his *Origin of the Species*. Sir John Sebright developer of the Sebright Bantam was often quoted by Darwin in the mid-19th century.

When Hugo de Vries, Karl Correns, and Erich Tschermak “rediscovered” Gregor Mendel Laws of Genetics in 1900, the observations of poultry producers were rapidly proven by modern genetics.

	Father's Genes		
	B	b	
Mother's Genes	b	Bb	bb
	b	Bb	bb

Even the Punnett Square, that we all learned to use in Biology Class, was named for R.C.Punnett, who utilized chicken gene traits to prove Mendelian Genetics at the beginning of the 20th century.



The Sebright Bantam was developed by Sir John Sebright in the early 19th century.

Egg Producing Breeds of Chickens

All chickens produce eggs that can be used by people for food. By providing proper diets and environment, specifically light, chickens can be stimulated to produce quantities of nutritious eggs.



By selecting for specific physical traits, generation after generation, breeds chickens were developed. In 1874 the American Poultry Association published the first Standard of Excellence that outlined the breed characteristics. This ushered in the “Golden Age of Pure Breeding” and poultry led the way for all species of livestock.

Heavy breeds such as the Brahma, matured slowly and did not excel in egg production. Light breeds, including the Minorca, Leghorn and Ancona, were great egg producers, but lacked the size to be good meat producers. Dual purpose breeds like the Rhode Island Red, Barred Rock and White Wyandotte met both requirements, but seldom produce more than 250 eggs per year!

Breeds with white earlobes tend to produce white eggs and those with red earlobes usually produce brown eggs.

Therefore, any pure breed of chicken can be kept for egg production. However, modern egg production hybrids far surpass the pure breeds in egg production and feed efficiency. These birds will produce well over 300 eggs per year and will convert about 2 pounds of feed into a dozen large eggs!

County Fair Entry Books Can Be Confusing

Most Wisconsin county fair entry books follow State Statutes that were passed before Hybrid Laying chickens were readily available. Therefore, the terminology of “Crossbred egg type white earlobes” and “Crossbred egg type red earlobes” inaccurate today! The appropriate entries for these classes are the hybrid white and hybrid brown pullets as pictured above. **Crossbreds or purebreds will be down-graded as production pullets.**

Hybrid Laying Hens

Much of the credit for Hybrid Layers can be given to Henry A. Wallace, the founder of Pioneer hybrid seed corn company in 1926. The successes achieved in corn led Wallace to believe that similar gains could be achieved with the laying hen. In 1936 Wallace established Hy-Line poultry genetics on his farm in Iowa. In 1944 the DeKalb seed corn company began development of its own hybrid layers. Universities and other hatcheries also started their own lines of hybrid layers, giving us the Wisco White and the California White.

Today, the majority of hybrid layer genetics is concentrated in several large international companies. These companies produce the parent stock that hatcheries purchase to produce the chicks that they sell to producers. Poultry project members should familiarize themselves with these companies and ask their suppliers of chicks the origins of their birds. These major suppliers include:



Located in France, NOVOGEN is the layer genetics firm originating from the Grimaud poultry genetics company in France.



Hy-Line

Hy-Line headquarters are located in West Des Moines, IA with many world-wide sites. Hy-Line is a privately owned corporation.

Sources of Layer Chicks

There are many sources chicks that will grow into ready-to-Lay pullets for your fair project. Local and mail order hatcheries purchase their chicks from large commercial hatcheries and divide them into small lots for the project member.

Tractor Supply, Fleet Farm, and Farm and Fleet stores as well as many hardware and feed stores have “Chick Days” when you can purchase chicks. Mail order hatcheries including Stromberg’s, Purely Poultry, Sunnyside, Cackle and Abendroth’s handle excellent quality chicks.

Study the lines that are available and purchase according to price and availability on the day that you need them. Most layers are only available as pullets because the cockerels are not needed and are not efficient meat birds.

Layer Pullets begin to lay at 18-20 weeks of age. So, **calculate 5 months prior to your fair for delivery of your chicks.** Place your order at least one month before delivery to insure your desired date.



Hendrix Genetics is located in Holland and markets its products as: Babcock, DeKalb, ISA, Shaver, Hisex and Bovans



SHAVAR





Hybrid layer chicks will be referred to as White or Brown. They may have a hybrid number or a specific name to identify the line.

White Layers are yellow as chicks and may have a spot or two of black. They grow into a “Leghorn type” pullet, but should never be exhibited as a purebred Leghorn! They are hybrids, not purebreds!

Browns are light buff or red as a chick. They may have variety names such as Cinnamon Queen, Pumpkin Red, Golden Comet, Red Stars or Gold Sex-Link. These birds should never be exhibited as purebred New Hampshire or Rhode Island Reds! They lack the correct size, color and body shape to be shown as purebreds!

Cute, fluffy, yellow hybrid chicks will grow rapidly.

Combine your order with other project members and even farm-market growers because the larger the order, the lower the price per chick. This is also a way to get to know other producers and to learn from their expertise.

Save the paper work that comes with your chicks! This will include an National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) certificate which will be necessary along with your U.S.D.A. premise ID number at check-in at your county fair.

Keep accurate financial records of your project and have someone take photos of you performing skill tasks with your birds for your record book. They grow fast. You can't recreate skills with chicks when they've already grown.



Healthy chicks are bright-eyed and perky! They make a brisk, sharp “cheep, cheep” sound.

Raising Layer Chicks

Rear your chicks as described in the “Raising Broiler” information packets. Besides the proper temperature, remember **F.L.A.W.S.**

Feed must be fresh and nutritious. Commercially produced feed is a little expensive, but will produce great results. Follow the feeding instructions on the bag. A coccidiostat such as amprolium is recommended for birds that free range. A pullet should grow from chick to 18 weeks by consuming 10-12 pounds of feed.

Light stimulates growth and reproductive development. Small brooders are heat with light bulbs, but 16 hours of light should be provided per day as they grow.

Fresh **Air** is provided by good ventilation. Prevent over-crowding! If the coop has an odor, it lacks ventilation! Your pullets may be free ranged as soon as the weather permits.

Water is the most often neglected nutrient, yet the least expensive! Fresh water should be provided at all times.

Security means protection from predators such as hawks, raccoon, fox and opossums as well as Biosecurity.

Judging Ready-to-Lay Pullets

Ready-to-Lay pullets are production-type females that are 18-20 weeks of age and have laid their first eggs. The birds have maximized their development in the growing barn and are able to easily adapt to life in the laying facility, whether it is cage-type, cage-free or free range. They should weigh 3.5-4 pounds.

Over the years, poultry producers have developed criteria to evaluate pullets based on characteristics that predict future production. The American Standard of Perfection is never used to evaluate production birds!

It is known that early maturing pullets produce more eggs and are productive longer than “late bloomers.” The judge assumes that the birds in the class are representative of an entire flock that is 18-20 weeks of age and are ready to be moved into the laying facility.

Therefore, young birds will be placed down because they are too immature to be placed in a laying barn. Birds that are older than 20 weeks of age are down-graded because they represent a flock that will not adjust to placement in laying facilities very well.

Pigmentation, handling qualities and abdominal capacity, vigor and vitality, and head and head parts govern the placing of egg-type pullets and will be discussed in further detail.

The percentage is determined by the impact of the characteristic on future production.

EGG-TYPE HEN SELECTION CRITERIA

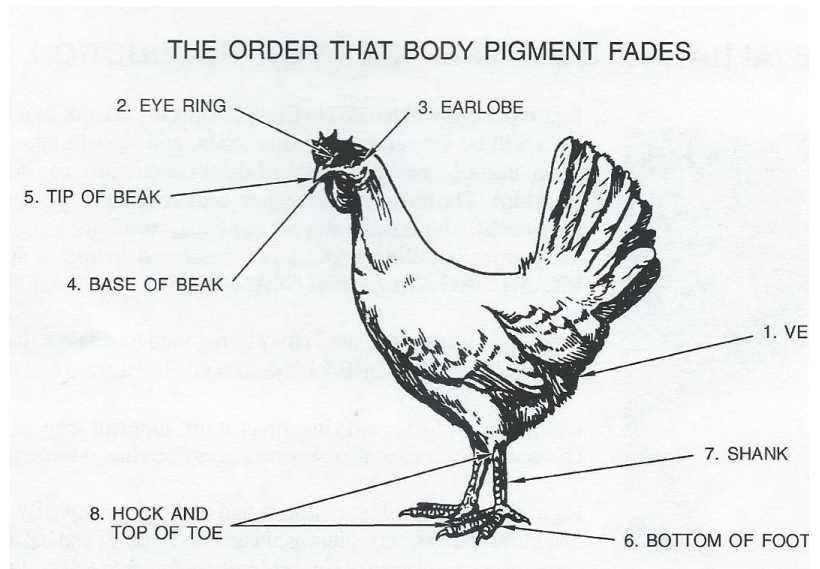
<i>Qualities and characteristics</i>	<i>Percent of Criteria</i>
Pigmentation	35%
Handling qualities and abdominal capacity	35%
Constitutional vigor and vitality	15%
Head and head parts Body type and shape	5%

Pigmentation (35%)

Pigmentation is the term used to describe the presence or absence of yellow pigment (xanthophyll pigment) in the skin, shanks, and feet of the egg-type hen. Hybrid layers exhibit yellow pigmentation in the skin and other parts of the body. In addition, the color of the yellow pigment may be exhibited in varying degrees of intensity.

Yellow pigment fades (bleaches) from body parts as a hen lays eggs. Therefore, the order of fading and the rate at which pigment fades are important considerations when evaluating hens. The judge will “read” pigmentation as an indicator of number of eggs a hen will lay. The further into the sequence of bleaching a pullet is at her age, the greater her laying potential.

Although pigmentation is a reasonably good indicator of egg production, it may not be entirely accurate. Factors such as body size, health of bird, feed composition, amount of pigmentation prior to laying, and environmental temperature affect rate of fading. Therefore, other selection factors may supersede the pigmentation factor.



The pigmentation in the vent, head parts, and leg parts are evaluated by the judge.

The chart below can also determine the length of past production. This is useful for culling layers that are not productive. Pigmentation returns in the same order once a hen stops laying.

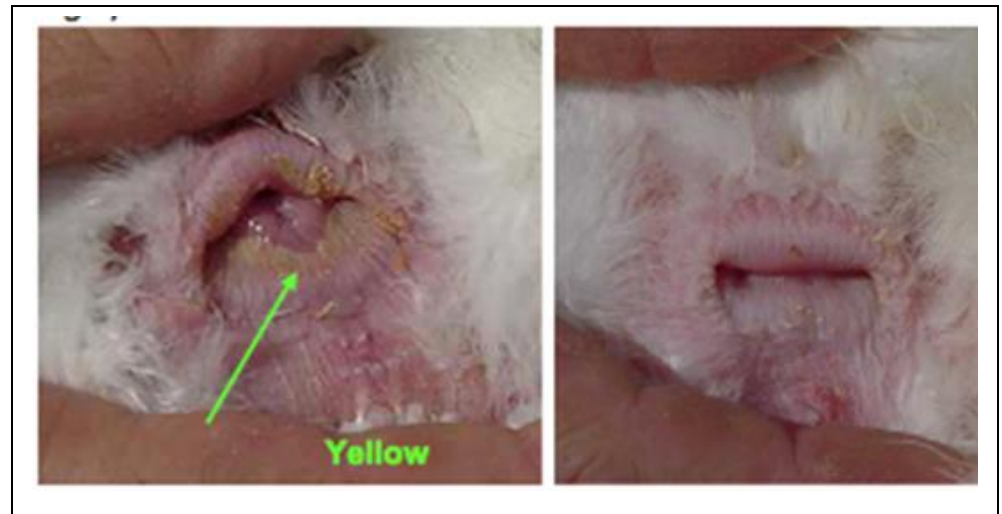
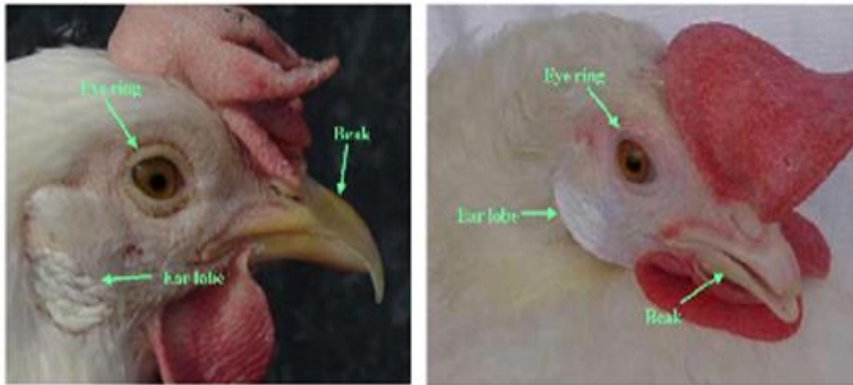


Figure 4. Comparison of the yellow color in the eye ring, ear lobe and beak of a poor layer (photo on the left) and a good layer (photo on the right)



THE RATE AT WHICH BODY PIMENTS FADES

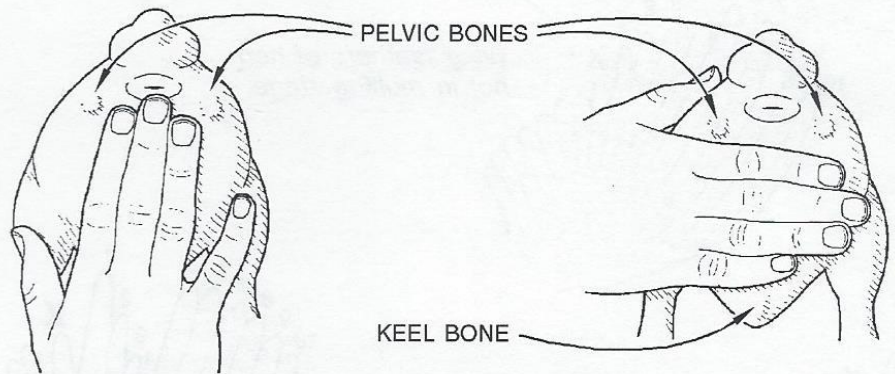
<i>Body Part</i>	<i>Total No. Weeks to Bleach</i>	<i>Total No. Eggs Laid</i>
Vent	0 to 2	0 to 10
Eye Ring	2 to 2.5	10 to 12
Earlobe (white hybrid only)	2.5 to 3	12 to 15
Beak, 1/3 bleached (base)	3 to 4	15 to 20
Beak 2/3 bleached	4 to 5	20 to 25
Beak, entire	5 to 8	35
Bottom of foot	8 to 12	68
Shank	12 to 20	159
Hock and top of toes	20 to 30	180

Handling Qualities and Abdominal Capacity (35%)

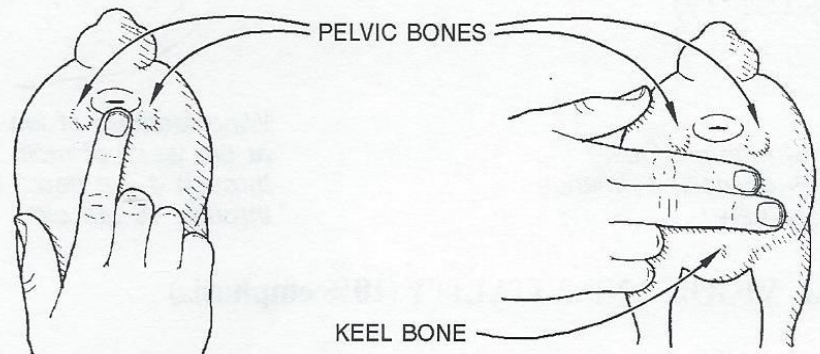
Handling qualities refer to the general condition of the abdomen. It is a good indicator of egg production. The abdomen of a layer is wide, soft (lacks fat), and expanded. Her pelvic bones are thin and flexible. Her vent is moist, large and oblong in shape. In contrast, the abdomen of a non-layer is narrow, hard (fatty), and contracted. Her pelvic (pubic) bones are thick and ridged. Her vent has some moistness but is small and round in shape.

Abdominal capacity of a hen is measured and expressed by one's fingers' width. A hen for example having a 3 fingers' width between pelvic (pubic) bones by 4 fingers' width between pelvic (pubic) bones is a much better than a hen that is 1 finger width by 2 fingers width.

MEASURING ABDOMINAL CAPACITY (Feathers Removed for Illustration Purposes)



A 3 fingers' width by 4 fingers' width indicates excellent abdominal capacity.



A 1 finger's width by 2 fingers' width indicates poor abdominal capacity.

Plumage Conditions (15%)

Production pullets should show healthy plumage, not necessarily the feather quality that exhibition poultry are required to have. The feathers that production pullets have at county fair time should be clean and well grown out. Broken, stained, and dirty feathers demonstrate lack of proper care and over-crowding. Just like a dairy cow or market hog that is shown at the fair is cared for much more intensely than an animal in the herd. Bathing your birds before the fair and oiling the legs, comb and face will show your birds best qualities.

Constitutional Vigor and Vitality (10%)

A healthy and vigorous egg-type hen produces eggs for a long time. A high quality hen is alert and has quick movements. In contrast, a non-productive pullet has a dull look in the eyes and sluggish in its movements. Birds that are cared for properly when young will be vigorous though out life. Unthrifty young birds never catch up.

Head and Head Parts and Body Type and Shape

The pullet's eyes should be bright, alert, and round. Her beak should be short. Her skull is round and flat from side to side. Her comb and wattles should be large, bright red and glossy. They should feel velvety soft and warm when touched. A non-productive pullet's head is oblong with eyes that are dull and sleepy. Her comb and wattles are shrunken and dull and feel rough and cool when touched.

Unlike exhibition pullets, production pullets' type generally slopes downward from shoulders to a narrow base of the tail. Also the tail placement of production hens is typically 90 degrees or more.



Examples of high quality hybrid production type pullets. Note the body carriage and tail placement are different from purebred exhibition pullets. Also, production pullets may have been “debeaked” when young. This is the process of removing the tip of the beak to prevent cannibalism and feed waste.

Exhibiting Eggs as a 4-H or FFA Project

Many county fairs have competitive classes for Shell Eggs. Competing in the Egg classes complete a project member’s competition in the poultry project and learning about eggs helps to understand the live bird project. Classes that are offered include: large white, large brown and large colored (blue or green) as well as bantam sized eggs. Some fairs also have classes for duck eggs! There are even classes for egg displays which highlight artistic and creative abilities!

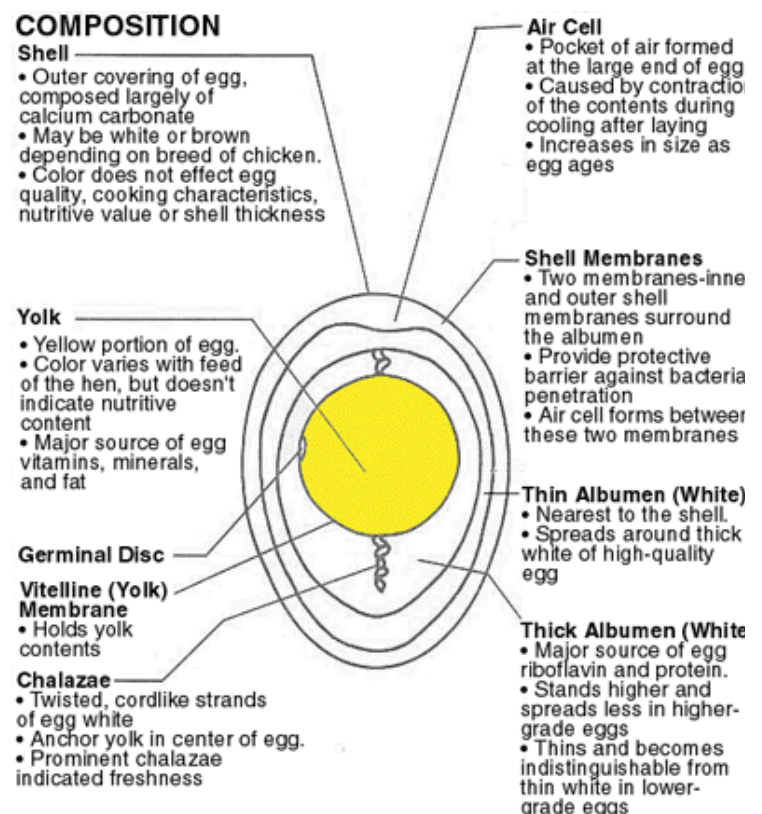
Composition of an Egg

The hen’s egg is a complete unit designed to provide all of the nutrition necessary for the development of an embryo into a chick!

Humans discovered the nutritional value of eggs many thousands of years ago. Archeological records show that nomadic people of Africa searched the dessert for infertile ostrich eggs that had dehydrated in the sun, as a light-weight source of food for their journeys.

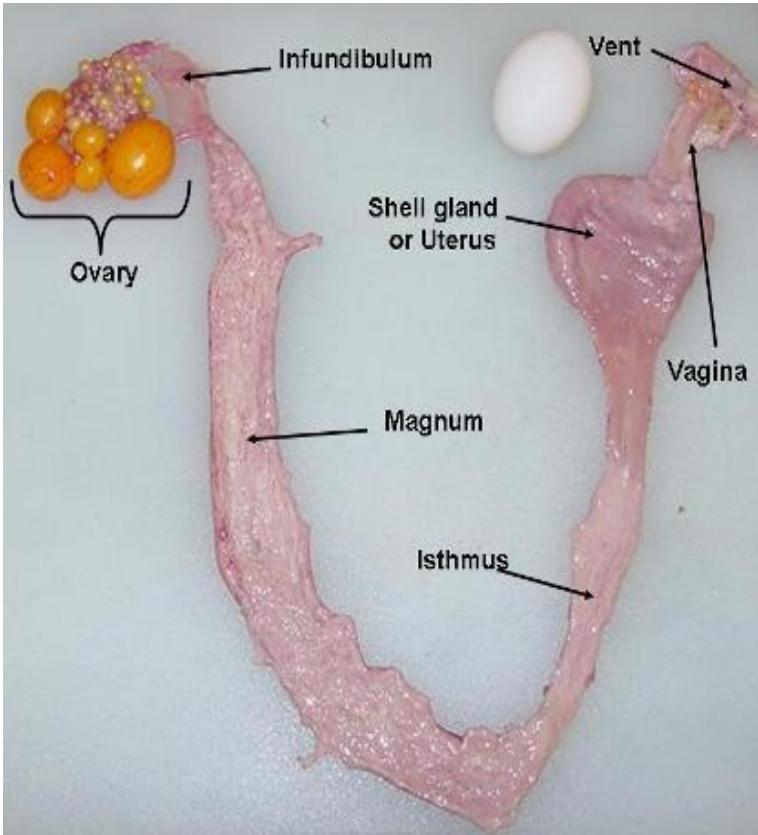
Today, eggs are a valuable part of a nutritious diet. Besides carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals, eggs provide the essential amino acids--the building blocks of protein.

Eggs are essential in baking and cooking recipes, providing structural components and flavor.



How an Egg is Formed

The egg is formed in the reproductive tract of the hen. All components necessary for the embryological development of the chick must be included inside the shell. Once the egg is laid, incubation or “pregnancy” takes place entirely outside the female’s body. The proper temperature, humidity, air and occasional rotation of the egg is all that is necessary for the egg to develop!



The female reproductive system has two functions: Reproduction (egg laying) and sex hormone secretion.

The reproductive system is made up of two distinct sections, the ovary and the oviduct. Unlike mammals, birds have one complete reproductive tract (left) and a rudimentary (right) tract.

The ovary, about the size of an almond, produces hormones that cause puberty (sexual maturity) and female characteristics such as plumage colors and feminine body type. Ovarian hormones also control the cyclical production of eggs.

The ovary consists of large mass of tissue that contains immature and yolks in varying stages of development. The number of eggs to be laid is determined by the number of follicles. The follicle contains an ovum (the gamete cell and undeveloped yolk) surrounded by a vascular membrane.

When a pullet has reached maturity, the yolks grow by adding nutrients (duplasm). Typically, one yolk reaches its maximum size each day. The follicular membrane thins and ruptures, allowing the yolk and the gamete cell to drop into the oviduct.

The chicken’s oviduct is about 30 inches long. It contains the infundibulum, magnum, isthmus, uterus, and vagina.

The yolk is drawn into the oviduct by the infundibulum (funnel). The yolk begins to spiral in the magnum. The egg white (albumen) is secreted and spun onto the yolk. This spinning action produces the chalazas, tightly wound strands of egg white that assist in holding the yolk in the center of the egg.

If fertilization is to occur, sperm that are stored (up to three weeks after mating) in folds of the magnum (called “sperm nests”) mobilize toward the germ cell on the yolk as it passes by. If the female germ cell and the sperm cell merge, cellular division will occur at a rapid rate over the next 24 hours in the hen. The germinal disc stops developing after the egg is laid (as the temperature drops) until incubation begins again later.

The thin and thick egg white (albumen) will be added in 1-2 hours. The yolk surrounded by egg white enters into the Isthmus where the shell membrane is added over the next 2 hours.

The egg now enters the uterus (shell gland) where the calcium shell is added over the next 20-22 hours. If the egg is brown, the pigment melanin is added about a half hour before the egg is laid.

The egg passes through the vagina and is expelled by the cloaca through the vent to the outside. It is interesting to note that the egg flips in the cloaca, so that the blunt end of the egg is deposited first. As the egg cools down to room temperature, the contents of the egg condense, allowing the shell membrane to pull away from the shell on the blunt end of the egg, creating the air cell.

Abnormalities That May Occur During Egg Production

Sometimes a small blood vessel in the follicular membrane hemorrhages as the yolk is ovulated. This drop of blood will be incorporated into the contents of the egg. This abnormality is called a “blood spot.” If a small piece of membrane breaks free at the time the yolk is ovulated, the egg is formed with a “meat spot” inside. If a piece of membrane drops into the oviduct, separate from the egg, a very tiny egg will be formed.

In the event that two or more yolks are ovulated at the same time, a “double yolk” egg will be formed. If these eggs are fertile and are incubated, two chicks will develop but are typically unable to hatch because the chick cannot engineer hatching with “twins” in the shell.

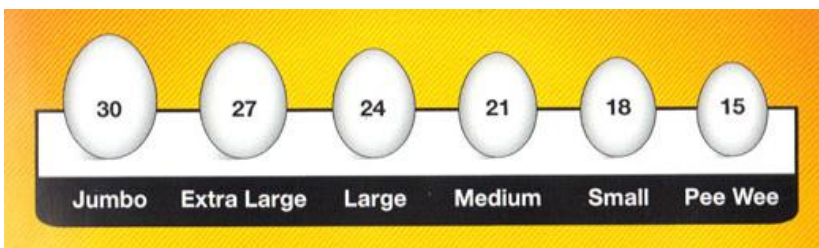
If two yolks are ovulated about two hours apart, two separate eggs will be produced but ridges and irregularities of the shell will be formed as the eggs bump into each other in the uterus.

As hens mature, shell deformities such as calcium deposits and thin spots will be produced. If an egg is cracked while in the uterus, the hen will “patch” the egg with additional calcium.

Pure Ameraucana or Araucana chicken eggs are blue through the entire shell, inside and out. Olive green eggs are crossbreeds of blue and brown. The pigment is added just to the outside of the shell.

Size of Eggs

The U.S.D.A. has established standard sizes of egg. Baking recipes are precise and require a specific amount of ingredients. Therefore, the standard large egg is 24 ounces per dozen or 2 ounces per egg. Pullets start production by laying Small and Pee Wee eggs, while older hens will lay Extra Large and Jumbos.

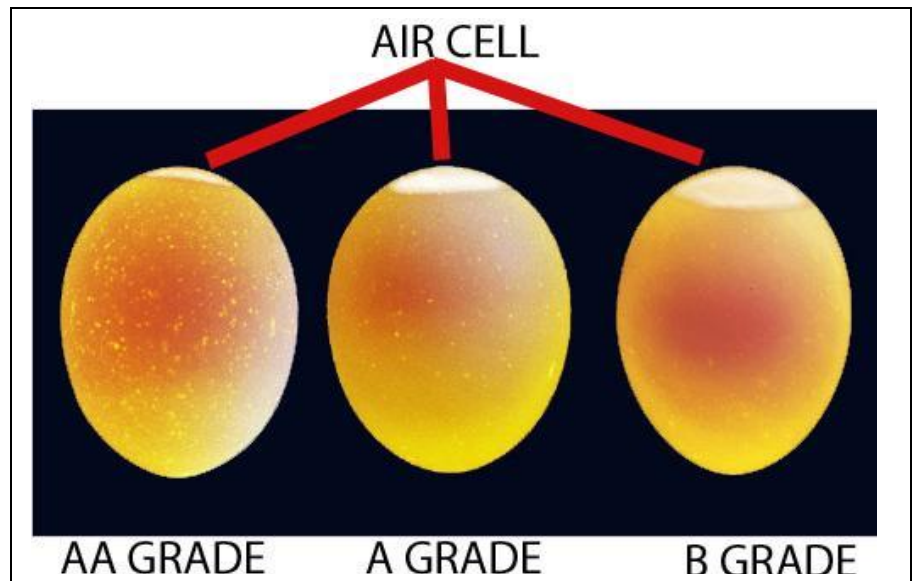


Quality Grades of Eggs

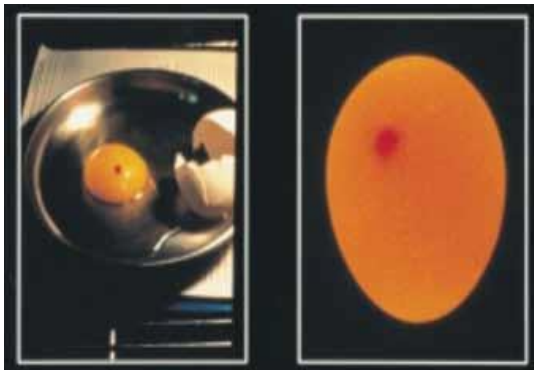
Eggs are evaluated for their interior and exterior quality. The U.S.D.A. interior quality grades of eggs are Grade AA, A, B and loss or no grade. The exterior quality grades of eggs are Grade A, B and loss or no grade.

Interior grades of eggs are for the most part an evaluation of the freshness of the egg or factors that would make the egg inedible. An egg is the highest grade when it is first laid. From that point on, it can only go down in quality grade. In other words, the hen produces a quality egg; it is our job to keep it that way!

The interior quality of an egg is determined by candling, the process of shining a light through the egg. The size of the air cell is one of the factors that determine egg quality. As an egg ages, water evaporates through the shell pores. The older an egg is the more time for water to leave the egg and make the air cell larger. The warmer the egg is kept, the faster evaporation occurs and the faster the thick egg white degrades to watery thin egg white. The amount of thin egg white is observed by how pronounced the yolk is seen by candling.



Fresh eggs have strong rounded yolks. But as an egg ages, the vitelline (yolk) membrane breaks down and the yolk becomes flattened and “out of round.” These yolks are elongated and “fill the shell” when candled. These eggs will grade U.S.D.A. B.



Blood spots or meat spots are observed as dark red or brown spots while candling. These eggs are objectionable to consumers and are automatically graded “Loss.”

Poultry producers keep eggs cool and in a humidity controlled environment to prevent loss of quality.

Unless eggs are graded by candling, they should be marketed as “Nest Run” or “Farm Fresh” alerting the consumer of variations in quality.

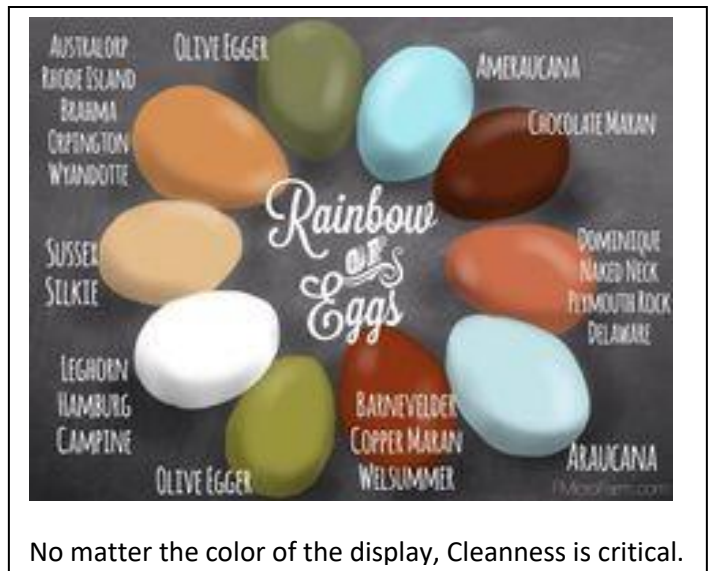
County fair egg displays are evaluated on exterior quality, though some shows will candle them or break out a sample of each dozen. U.S.D.A. exterior quality grades are AA/A, B or NG (Non-Gradable).

Factors that determine exterior quality are: Soundness, Cleanness, Shape, Texture, Thickness and Color Uniformity. Placings are cumulative of the factors, but can never grade higher than the lowest factor.

Soundness A dozen eggs that have no broken eggs will score AA/A Quality. Any broken egg in a dozen will score NG. Broken eggs include checks (hairline crack, membrane intact), Dented Check (cracked and indented, membrane intact), Leaker (cracked, membrane broken, leaking). Consumers check eggs in the store for soundness. If a cracked egg is found they will reject the dozen of eggs.

As important to the consumer as soundness is **Cleanness**. Not only will a customer refuse to buy a dozen eggs that has a dirty egg in it, but will probably be hesitant to buy eggs ever again! Factors of cleanness include 1) Clean 2) Stained or 3) Adhering Dirt.

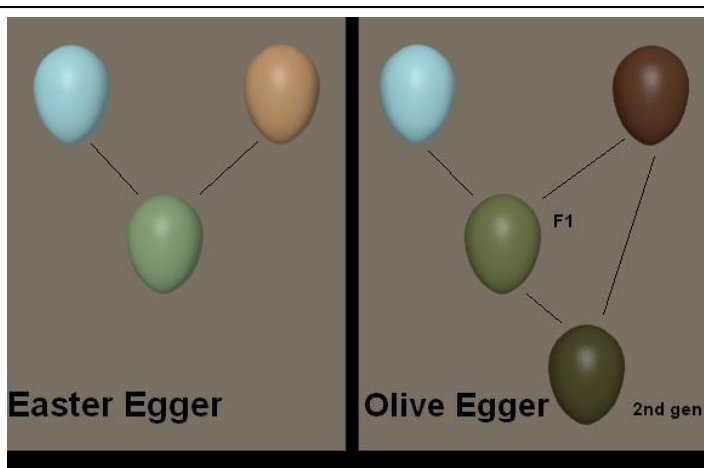
A display of eggs that is perfectly clean is AA/A quality. If a carton of eggs has an egg that has a slight stain, amounting to a localized stain of less than 1/32 of the shell or 1/16 of the shell with scattered stain it is a B quality egg. Any carton of eggs that has an egg with more than a slight stain is NG quality. If an egg has Adhering Dirt or Foreign Material it is NG quality. A dirty egg has blood, yolk, albumen, or fecal matter sticking to the surface of the shell.



Shape is typically less pronounced than other factors since abnormal shaped eggs are easily discarded. Eggs that have the correct “egg shape” are graded AA/A. If they are decidedly misshapen (irregular or unusual in shape) they will grade B quality. It is important to note that egg shell shape abnormalities associated with ridges, calcium deposits, or rough surfaces and bulges caused by body checks, thin spots, or cracked shells should not be designated as “decidedly misshapen.” These eggs are evaluated in their respective category rather than shape.

The shell of an egg may be 1) sound and strong in **Texture** or 2) faulty in soundness/strength, possessing rough areas of calcium deposits, body checks, or pronounced ridges. Displays of eggs that contain no defects in texture are AA/A quality. An egg that is weaker in soundness/strength than normal are B quality. **IMPORTANT:** an egg designated as decidedly misshapen, calcium deposits, body check, pronounced ridges, pronounced thin spots, check, dented check or leaker **IS ALSO** to be designated as faulty soundness/strength.

A few scattered calcium deposits decrease the appearance of an egg but are not considered a Texture concern. If the calcium deposits are so large that, when broken off the egg and it effects the soundness of the egg, the egg should be graded B for quality. “Body Checks” occur when the egg is cracked inside the hen but is repaired before being laid. Body checks are graded B quality because it detracts from the overall appearance of the egg. However, it should not be double down-graded for any other factor such as thin spot or misshapen. Pronounced ridges decrease shell soundness/strength and detract from the appearance of the egg. Pronounced ridges are a B quality factor.



Only pure Araucana or Ameraucana hens produce true blue eggs. Green shades are the result of cross breeding. These hens are called Easter or Olive Eggers!

Thickness of the shell may be 1) uniform or 2) may contain pronounced thin spots that contribute to the breakage of the egg. If eggs in a display have no defects they will receive an AA/A quality grade. But if an egg has definite thin spots, it will be graded B quality.

The general appearance of a dozen eggs is not a grade factor but **Color Uniformity** is essential for show winning eggs. Particularly important in brown or colored (blue) eggs, however white eggs may also exhibit variations from cream to bleached white colors. Dark brown Welsummer or Marans eggs are pleasant to the eye, but uniformity over-rides the color variant. Eggs collected from the same hen will typically demonstrate the most color uniformity.



Each individual egg is evaluated according to the Factors: Soundness, Cleanness, Shape, Texture, Thickness and Color Uniformity. A dozen of eggs cannot grade higher than the lowest individual egg in the carton. However the placings in the class are determined by the number of grade B or NG eggs that are in each dozen. Each of these cartons have 12 AA/A individual eggs and would place at the top of their class.

Showing eggs at the county fair is fun and challenging! It takes diligence to select the most uniform and defect-free dozen of eggs for your display. You may sort through all of the fresh eggs that you have available in order to get the best display. Your efforts will be rewarded with the pride that you have in your birds. You may also use your prizes as “bragging rights” when marketing your eggs to others!

Note: Because eggs may contain the Salmonella Pullorum Typhoid bacteria and are a primary means of transferring the disease, your egg display should include NPIP or other Flock Testing certification when entered at the fair.

Creative Egg Displays

For thousands of years, people have been decorating eggs. People are fascinated with the “miracle of life” contained within the egg. The delicate structure of the egg makes it a challenging media to be creative with. Basic colored Easter Eggs or delicately decorated Pysanky Eggs demonstrate creativity and beauty.

Creative egg displays are as unique and creative as the individuals who produce them. Some competitions have very specific requirements for the number of eggs or the theme for the display.



Simple coloring make wonderful displays!



Professional and amateur artists create beautiful Ukrainian Pysanky Eggs.

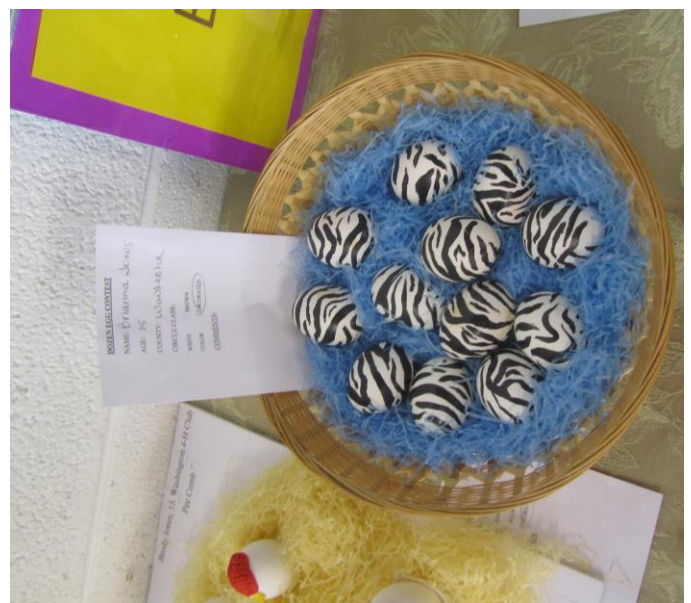
The criterion for judging the eggs will be determined by the show officials. However 1) Creativity 2) Neatness and 3) Development of the theme are major factors in any art display.

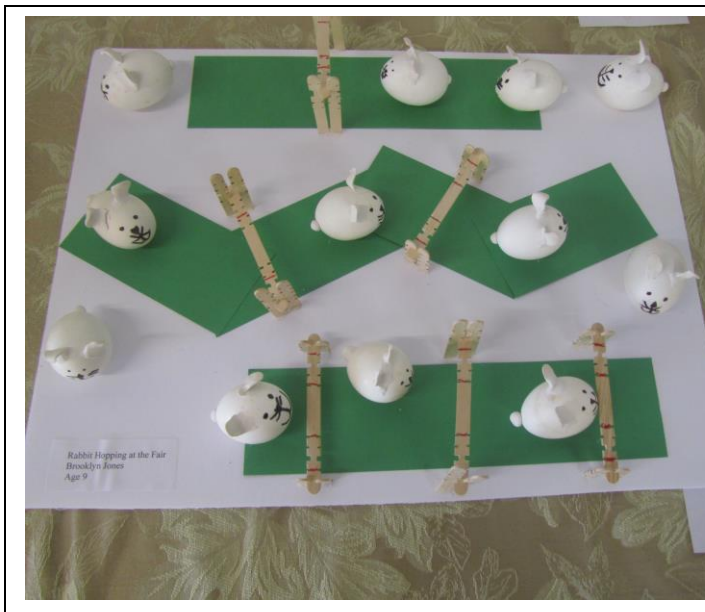
Some county fairs admit creative egg projects from non-poultry project members. These exhibitors will learn from the poultry project members and may ultimately become poultry enthusiasts.

Egg displays are sometimes housed in the foods or arts buildings at the fair. It is wonderful to have “cross-campus” mixing of projects. But appropriate displays in the poultry barn will focus on the bird and the achievements of the poultry project member!

The main emphasis on a project like this should be FUN! By completing a creative egg display, you will achieve self-satisfaction and have a rewarding experience that will compliment your poultry project.

Egg Displays 2015 Wisconsin Junior Poultry Association Show





Written by David R. Laatsch, Retired Ag Ed Teacher Beaver Dam, WI High School and Interim Dodge County UW- Extension Agricultural Educator, B.S Poultry Science '76 M.S. Agriculture Education '85 U.W. Madison. In the 1960's, when I was a 4-H poultry project member, the Jefferson County University hosted the Annual Egg and Poultry Show for juniors and adults. This outreach program of the University included the various competitions, but also provided the public with educational programs that made us aware of the vast Poultry Industry.