

Freeranger Eggs

Quality Assurance for Free Range Egg Production

Three separate pillars for sustainable free range egg production:

Land Sustainability

Animal Welfare

Human Health

Appropriate landuse, good land management, .

LAND SUSTAINABILITY

Ground cover should be sufficient to prevent loss of topsoil and protect biota.

Ground cover can include grasses and reeds (e.g. native and exotic pasture grasses), forbs and herbs (e.g. purslane, bracken), small shrubs (e.g. acacia) or crops.

Direct runoff from chook paddocks into waterways or drainage lines – not permitted.

This type of high nutrient runoff leads to eutrophication of the waterways and water bodies exacerbating the incidence of, e.g. blue green algae.

These waterways and drainage lines should be protected by fencing and riparian plantings.

In steep country swales or small weirs can be constructed to slow and disperse the runoff.

Healthy vegetation and biota

This is subjective and obviously varies with each operation. Quadrats to assess variety and number of species can be undertaken if necessary.

Chemical Control of internal and external parasites

Cross grazing should be used as a preferred method of breaking parasite cycles. This also provides synergies as the chooks scratch and spread manure thus fertilising and conditioning the soil. They also eat the blowfly larva thus reducing the incidence of blowflies and therefore the necessity of chemical eradication.

Chemical Control of unwanted plants

Chemical control should be a method of last resort and only in cases of extreme infestations.

There are other options including grubbing out, specific species grazing and slashing.

Many agricultural weeds are in fact beneficial to poultry and soil biota.

Waste management policy

Evidence of recycling of packaging, energy use reduction, use of composting e.g. dead chooks.

Renewable energy

ANIMAL WELFARE

Notifiable Diseases. A working knowledge of these must shown and of the procedure to be employed if such disease is suspected.

As defined from time to time by Federal and State Government

Population – not more than 1500 per ha on the land utilised for egg production.

(The title size is irrelevant to the density calculation.)

Strip grazing is permitted, e.g. following a dairy herd as long as the hens are housed in portable sheds which clearly track the herd on its regular rotational basis. Overall acreage over time.

Bird mutilation NOT PERMITTED,

This includes such practices as beak trimming, toe trimming, devoicing, flight restrictions etc

Protection from elements

wind, sun, rain

This can include sheds, windbreaks either built or natural,

Protection from predators – eagles, foxes, people

This can include cover apart from sheds, either natural e.g. Kangaroo Apple or built e.g. roost sheds, covered trailers etc. Biosecurity system.

Provision of supplementary feed - GM, same species feed, colouring, antibiotics

Provision of water - potable

Shed Density not to exceed 1000 birds.

Night Roosts – sufficient to allow 15cm per bird.

Nest Boxes – sufficient

Moult inducement – not practiced

Chemical control of parasites. Only to be used if on veterinary advice it is deemed necessary to use chemicals to control internal or external parasites.

Withholding periods to be strictly observed.

A log kept of chemical use.

Off Label use expressly prohibited.

Sufficient ground cover to enable chooks to graze and reduce the risk of mud in winter and dust in summer.

Culling: Cervical dislocation is the preferred method.

Disposal of Dead Birds

Composting, incinerating, burying, pitting

HUMAN HEALTH

OH & S procedures in place and understood

HACCP

Regular collection several times a day into a controlled temperature storage area as quickly as practicable. This is obviously more important in the hotter months.

**Temperature control - storage (under 20°C, preferably 12° - 15°)
delivery – if deliveries take more than 2 hours the
form of temperature control needs to be demonstrated**

Candling – to Shell Egg Code standard

Eggs must not exceed 14 days from date of lay when sold.

Chemical Usage. To be avoided.

Preference is for diatomaceous earth, cider vinegar, garlic, wormwood.

No off label use is permissible.

If chemical use is unavoidable, withholding period must be strictly observed.

Antibiotics – only to be used under strict veterinary supervision.

Withholding period must be strictly observed.

Yolk Colouring Agents. These additives are not necessary on a free range farm, but if a farm chooses to add them to the feed this must be disclosed. It must be declared on labelling and in any advertising undertaken e.g. website, pamphlets.

Same Species Feed. In this case chicken, either meat or fat is **Not Permitted**.

If meat products are used they must be heat treated according to ASS Supplier must provide a written guarantee **for each delivery** that any meat content is not derived from poultry.

Sufficient ground cover to provide basic nutrition and carotenoids. This ensures the hen's main diet is naturally derived from the property.

Crops can also be included as ground cover and the same provisos regarding chemicals apply.

Feed storage area must be clean, dry and protected from vermin.

Food Poisoning

Evidence of working knowledge of procedure to be undertaken if such an event should occur.

DOCUMENTATION

Relevant **Documents as background** to the audit:

Model Code of Accepted Farming Practice for the Welfare of Poultry (Revision Number 4)
Shell Egg Code
ISO 14001 etc
OH&S

Documents to be sighted as part of the audit:

Local Government Certificate of Registration for Food Premises
Vaccination Certificates for Pullets (if over 100 birds are kept)
Planning Permit if applicable
Egg Sales/Production Record
Food Safety Program

**introduction to the Freeranger Eggs
Quality Assurance & Food Safety Plan**