

Shell Egg Labeling guidelines for product bearing the USDA grademark.



MANDATORY LABELING REQUIREMENTS

- Applicable State regulations should be considered before submitting labels to AMS for approval.
- FDA regulations: The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA); the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (FPLA); and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) promulgated under these acts. (see 21 CFR)
- USDA / AMS regulations and policy instructions: 7 CFR Part 56, Shell Egg Index

USDA Grademark (Shield) must be located on the Principal Display Panel (PDP) or the Information Panel



Abbreviations:

- Abbreviations to any mandatory labeling requirements (USDA or FDA) are not allowed *except as noted below*.

Principal Display Panel (PDP): FDA - 21 CFR 101.1, 21 CFR 101.2, 21 CFR 101.3, 21 CFR 101.4, 21 CFR 101.5, 21 CFR 101.9, and 21 CFR 101.105

- The term principal display panel means the part of a label that is most likely to be displayed, presented, shown, or examined under customary conditions of display for retail sale.
- The principal display panel shall be large enough to accommodate all the mandatory label information required to be placed on the container with clarity and conspicuousness and without obscuring design, vignettes, or crowding.
- The Producer, Distributor, or Carton Manufacturer must declare the PDP or alternate PDP's prior to issuance of a USDA approval number.

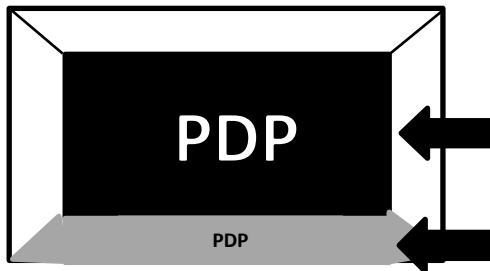
PDP = Top View, only.



Back Hinge

Front Lip

PDP = Top View and Front Lip (Alternate Display Panels)



Back Hinge

Front Lip

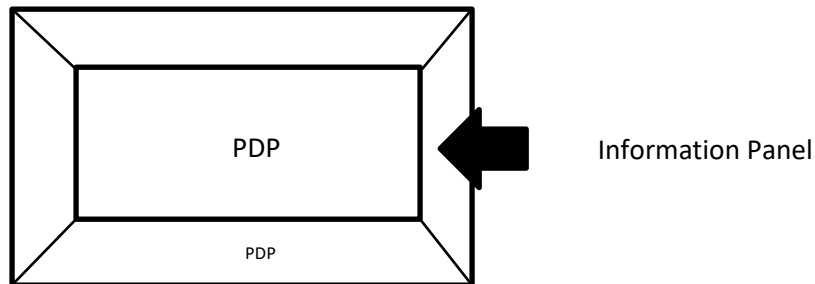
- If the Top View and Front Lip are selected as the PDP's, all required mandatory information must be placed on both panels (Top View and Front Lip).

- **Overwrapped, Sleeved, or Case Containers:** All mandatory labeling information must be placed on the top panel or information panel. **No mandatory labeling requirements may be placed on the bottom panel.**

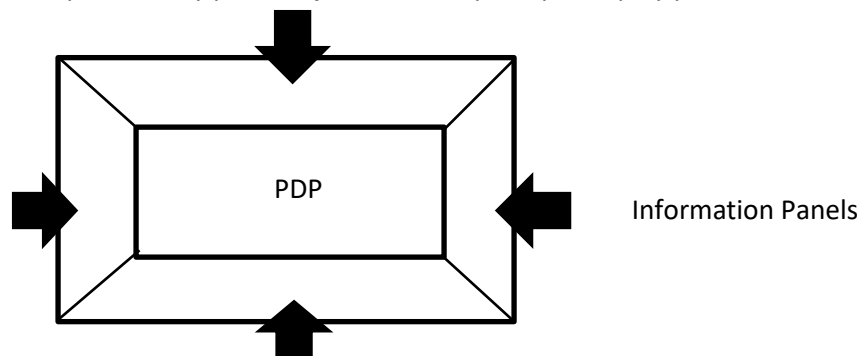


Information Panel: FDA - 21 CFR 101.4

- The information panel as it applies to packaged food means that part of the label immediately contiguous and to the right of the principal display panel (PDP) as observed by an individual facing the principal display panel.
- If the Top View and/or the Front Lip are selected as the PDP, the information panel would consist of the panel immediately contiguous and to the right of the selected PDP's.



- If the top of the container is the principal display panel (PDP) and the package has no alternate principal display panel(s), the information panel is any panel adjacent to the principal display panel.

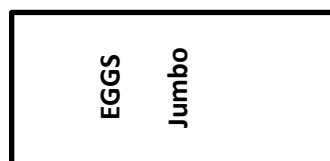


The Statement of Identity (EGGS): FDA - 21 CFR 101.3(a) and 21 CFR 101.105(a) AMS - [7 CFR 56.36](#)

- The Statement of Identity (EGGS) must appear on the PDP.
- The Statement of Identity (EGGS) must be in bold print and be at least ½ the type size of the largest print on the Principal Display Panel (PDP).
- The Statement of Identity (EGGS) must be parallel to the base of the container (carton opening) or the label.
- The egg size designation (Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, and/or Small) must be parallel to the base of the container (carton opening) on product containing the USDA grademark.



Acceptable



Not Acceptable

< Back Hinge

< Front Lip

Grade: (AA or A) AMS – [7 CFR 56.36](#) Shell Egg Index, [L-1 Shell Egg Label Approval](#)

- If the USDA grademark (shield) is listed on the Principal Display Panel, the words “Grade AA or A” do not have to appear on the label, since the USDA grademark lists the Grade (AA or A) inside the grademark.



USDA Approval Number: AMS - Shell Egg Index, [L-1 Shell Egg Label Approval](#)

(a rectangular box with an applicable alpha-numeric approval number placed inside the box). The Approval Number will be assigned by the National Office and must be placed in a pre-determined location on the PDP or Informational panel.

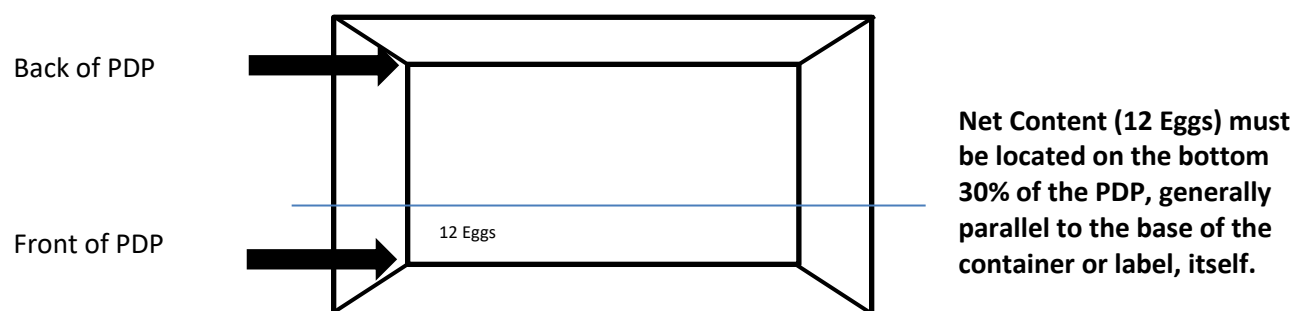
For example:

K-575

Declaration of Net Quantity of Content: FDA - 21 CFR 101.105(e); 21 CFR 101.105(f)

- The Net Content must be listed on the bottom 30% of the Principal Display Panel (PDP). The producer, distributor, or carton manufacturer must declare what the PDP consists of (Top View only or Top View and Front Lip).

PDP = Top View



- Net Content must be stated as: 6 Eggs, Half Dozen Eggs, 12 Eggs, One Dozen Eggs, 18 Eggs, One and Half Dozen Eggs, etc., as listed in 21 CFR Part 101.105 (f).
- **Minimum Type Size Of Net Content labeling requirement:** FDA - 21 CFR 101.105(h) and (i)
 - Split 6-Egg Carton: 1/8" (25 to 100 square inches)
 - 12-Egg or 18-Egg Carton: 3/16" (25 to 100 square inches)
 - 30-Egg or 36-Egg Carton: 1/4" (100 to 400 square inches)
- Letter heights pertain to upper case or capital letters. When upper and lower case or all lower case letters are used, it is the lower case “o” or its equivalent that shall meet the minimum standards.

Egg Size Designation: AMS - [7 CFR 56.36](#), Shell Egg Index, [L-1 Shell Egg Label Approval](#)

- (Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, Small, or Pee Wee)
- Must appear on the Principal Display Panel (PDP).
- Type size must be a minimum of 1/4".
- Egg sizes cannot be abbreviated (i.e. XL, Med, Lrg, etc.).
- The egg size designation must be parallel to the base of the container (carton opening) or the label.
- Listing of the egg size designation is not required by FDA. It is required by USDA/AMS grademarked product.

Legal Line AMS – [7 CFR 56.35](#), Shell Egg Index, [L-1 Shell Egg Label Approval](#)

- (Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code)
- The street address may be omitted if the location is listed in a local directory. If not, the address must appear in the legal line.
- Type size must be at least a minimum of 1/16".
- Packed by – Individual Processing Facility legal line listed on the label may only be used at the identified facility.
- Packed For/Distributed By/Manufactured By – Corporate name legal line may be used for any facility that packs, distributes, or manufactures product for the corporation listed on the legal line.
- The Legal Line must be placed on the principal display panel (PDP) or information panel.

- No abbreviations of the legal line are allowed (i.e. Dist. By, Distrib By, Pkd By, Manf By).

Safe Handling Instructions: [FDA website](#)

- Safe Handling Instructions must be listed on the PDP, Information Panel, or In-Lid
- If located on the In-Lid, the statement “*Keep Refrigerated*” or words of similar meaning must be listed on the PDP or information panel (verify State requirements).
- Type size must be at least a minimum of 1/16”.
- The Safe Handling Instructions statement must be set off in a box by use of hairlines.

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

- “**SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS**” must be all caps and in bold type. The remaining statement should consist of regular font (non-bold type, non-all caps).
- The Safe Handling Statement does not need to be left justified; however, the statement content must be exactly as listed in the above listed example.
- Some states require “*Keep Refrigerated at 45 F or less*” or words of similar meaning to be placed on the label. Check for individual State requirements regarding specific verbiage.

Nutrition Fact Panel (NFP) Formats: 21 CFR 101.9(d) 21 CFR 101.9(d)(1)(i) 21 CFR 101.9(j)(13)(ii)(D)

- See <http://www.eggnutritioncenter.org/egg-facts/nutrition-facts-panels/> for correct formats.

VOLUNTARY (OPTIONAL) LABELING REQUIREMENTS / Claims

- Mandatory labeling requirements take priority over voluntary labeling requirements.
- It is strongly recommended that applicable State requirements be verified before submitting labels to AMS for approval.

Net Weight: FDA - 21 CFR 101.105(g)

- State laws may apply.
- Correct format to use: *24 oz. (1 lb. 8 oz.) 681 g.*
- The surrounding space around the net weight claim must be free of print or graphics equal to the height of the net weight type size.

Foreign Language: FDA - 21 CFR 101.15(c)(2)

- If a label contains any representation in a foreign language, all words, statements, and other information required by or under authority of the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic (FDCA) act to appear on the label shall appear thereon in the foreign language.

Sell By / Best By / Use By: Optional, unless required by State. If used, see Shell Egg Graders [Handbook](#), Section 5:

- EXP, Expiration date, Sell By, Not to be sold after date on end of carton, Purchase By, Last sale date on end of carton or other words of similar meaning, can use 30 days, which includes the day of pack.
- Use Before, Use By, Best Before, Best By, Best if Used By or other words of similar meaning, can use 45 days, which includes the day of pack.

Farm Fresh: Optional. FDA - 21 179.26, 101.95(a)(c)

Brown Eggs: The color of the egg (brown) is not required on the label.

Kosher: Must meet requirements in the Shell Egg Graders [Handbook](#), Section 09

Local or Locally Produced: Definition of the term, “Local” can be found in the [2008 Farm Bill](#), Section 6015.

- Shell eggs must originate from a source flock(s) located less than 400 miles from the processing facility or within the state in which the eggs originated from and were processed in.

Vegetarian Fed/Feed Claims: See section [L-1 Shell Egg Label Approval](#) in the Shell Egg Index

- Producer must maintain documentation that no animal byproducts were used to feed the source flock(s).

Antibiotic Claims: See section [L-1 Shell Egg Label Approval](#) in the Shell Egg Index

- No antibiotics may be administered in the laying hen’s diet or through injections.
- The producer/packer/distributor must provide documentation validating such claims.

National Organic Program (NOP): USDA – 7 CFR 205 Organic standards and Shell Egg Graders [Handbook](#), Section 9

- To utilize the NOP logo, the facility and flock must be NOP certified by an accredited certifying agent.

- Producer **and** processors must maintain NOP certified documentation and provide the documentation to a USDA Representative, upon request.
- The certifying agent must be listed underneath the legal line located on the label format.
- An approved label format does not have to display the NOP logo (optional).

Organic Claims:

- An operation can sell, label, or represent their product as “organic” without becoming NOP certified **if** the operation’s gross income from the organic sales totals \$5,000 or less annually [7 CFR § 205.101.(a)(1)].
- Exempt operations still need to comply with the organic production and handling requirements in the regulations, including the requirement to maintain records sufficient to prove that their products were produced organically and to verify production amounts.

Foreign Language:

- If a label contains any representation in a foreign language, all words, statements, and other information required by or under authority of the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic (FDCA) act to appear on the label shall appear thereon in the foreign language.

PRODUCTION PRACTICES

- Shell egg labels making animal husbandry claims must meet the following definitions and be verified by USDA personnel at time of certification. See Shell Egg Graders [Handbook](#), Section 9

Cage-Free:

Eggs packed in [USDA grademarked](#) consumer packages labeled as cage free are laid by hens that are able to roam vertically and horizontally in indoor houses, and have access to fresh food and water. Cage-free systems vary from farm-to-farm, and can include multi-tier aviaries. They must allow hens to exhibit natural behaviors and include enrichments such as scratch areas, perches and nests. Hens must have access to litter, protection from predators and be able to move in a barn in a manner that promotes bird welfare.

Free-Range:

Eggs packed in [USDA grademarked](#) consumer packages labeled as free range must be produced by hens that are able to roam vertically and horizontally in indoor houses, and have access to fresh food and water, and continuous access to outdoors during their laying cycle. The outdoor area may be fenced and/or covered with netting-like material. Housing systems vary from farm-to-farm, and can include multi-tier aviaries. They must allow hens to exhibit natural behaviors and include enrichments such as scratch areas, perches and nests. Hens must have access to litter, protection from predators and be able to move in the barn in a manner that promotes bird welfare.

INDIVIDUAL STATE PROGRAMS

- USDA/AMS does not maintain a list of individual State requirements and is not responsible for providing or approving individual State requirements when reviewing label submissions for AMS approval.
- State regulations should be considered before submitting labels for AMS approval.

Arizona Grown: Shell eggs packed under this logo must originate from and be processed in the state of Arizona.

Hawaii:

- Product that originates from the American mainland must state: “*MAINLAND*” in all caps on the PDP in a minimum type size of 3/16”.
- Shell protection (Egg Oiling) is optional. However, if the label states “*Shell Protected,*” the eggs must be oiled.
- Eggs must be stamped “*US*” if from the mainland.

Puerto Rico:

- Eggs must be stamped with “*US*” on the large end of each individual egg, if from the mainland.
- No Disease Free Statements are required for U.S. Territories.

California: [\(CA SEFS Compliant\)](#)

- Product containing the CA SEFS Compliant or California Shell Egg Food Safety Compliant statement must be at least ¼” in type size.
- The statement can appear on the PDP or can be ink jet printed on the end of the carton.

Colorado Proud: [Program details](#)

- Used to promote food and agricultural products that are grown, raised, or processed in Colorado. Egg cartons bearing the logo must contain eggs that are laid by hens in Colorado.

PRE-PRINTED SHIPPING CASE LABELS

- Producer/Packers/Distributors have the option to use pre-printed, USDA stamp logos (Grademark, Export, or Contract Compliance) on case end labels in lieu of physically stamping the cases with the USDA stamp. The items listed below are required on the sample label submitted for AMS approval.
- State laws may also apply.

Label Format Requirements: AMS - Shell Egg Index, [L-1 Shell Egg Label Approval](#)

- **The Statement of Identity** (EGGS)
- **The Declaration of Net Quantity** (15 dozen)
- **Legal Line** (Distributed By, Packed By, or Manufactured By)
- **Safe Handling Instructions**
- **Nutrition Facts Panel (if not on the primary package)**
- **USDA Grademark** - The grade designation (Extra Large, Large, etc.) does not need to appear on the PDP if the USDA Grademark appears on the PDP. If the grade designation (Extra Large, Large, etc.) is listed, it must be a minimum of ¼- inch type size.
- **USDA Approval Number** (K-123, L-021, etc.) – Preferably located near the USDA stamp impression.
- **Egg Size Designation** (Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, Small) – 1/4-inch type size.

Open Skids (900 or 1080-Dozen):

- Since Open Skids often times do not contain packaging material; labeling requirements must be listed on the label (see Label Format Requirements directly above) and/or contain all of the information on the invoices or bills of lading.