

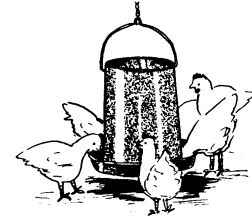


The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

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BACKYARD FLOCK TIP . . .

MARKETING EGGS FROM THE BACKYARD FLOCK

For many people, having a backyard egg laying flock is enjoyable simply from the satisfaction of raising a few birds and providing a few eggs for the table. Often backyard flocks begin as a child's 4-H project, teaching the child basic needs and responsibility on how to care for animals. Caring for and learning animal husbandry skills are important aspects of the project and the benefit of fresh eggs for the family is also a plus.

While most individuals do not eat fresh eggs everyday, a laying hen will produce an egg nearly everyday, often producing more than the family can reasonably consume. As often happens, the 4-H egg project expands to more production than can be consumed by the family, leading naturally to the thought that perhaps the extra eggs could be sold.

If you want to sell your excess eggs, a few factors need to be considered.

1. Eggs sold at the farm for direct-to-consumer marketing typically are not produced or sold under a license nor are the eggs inspected and therefore fall under the "buyer beware" category. This is not to say that the farm-fresh eggs are bad or less wholesome, it's that they just haven't gone through the cleaning and inspection process as those found within retail markets. Producers who sell eggs on their own farm are exempt from state and federal inspection and candling laws. However, from a food safety and buyer confidence standpoint, following the candling, grading, and cold storage practices that are required for retail egg sales is also recommended for farm-sold eggs.

2. In order to sell eggs through a farmers' market or flea market, one must first apply for and obtain a license from the Georgia Department of Agriculture and must follow posted "local operating rules" for the market. The eggs must also have been candled by someone who is officially licensed as an egg candler as provided by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Egg candling training can be obtained from the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Contact the district office nearest you to schedule a training opportunity.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating.
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3. Some 4-Hers may think they have an opportunity to sell their eggs to a local country store. However, eggs cannot be sold to or from any store that sells to the public unless the eggs and the facility from which they were processed meet state and federal inspection standards and the seller has a Georgia Department of Agriculture permit to do so. Roadside markets located on state or federal highways that cater to transient rather than neighborhood trade also fall under this inspection requirement.

With the many people who enjoy and appreciate the taste of farm-fresh eggs, 4Hers and others with backyard egg operations may find ample opportunities to market their eggs for fun and profit, when done so within the appropriate guidelines and regulations to ensure consumer safety and product wholesomeness.

Information regarding the State of Georgia laws and supporting regulations regarding eggs and poultry processing can be found at the Georgia Department of Agriculture website:
http://agr.georgia.gov/00/article/0,2086,38902732_0_40971469,00.html

A handbook about shell eggs, candling and grading criteria is available on the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) web site:
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateA&navID=CommodityAreas&leftNav=CommodityAreas&page=PYHomepage&description=Poultry%20and%20Eggs&acct=poultry>



Casey Ritz
Extension Poultry Scientist

Extension County Coordinator/Agent

“Your local County Extension Agent is a source of more information on this subject.”