



Egg Stamping Guide

Guide to Australian laws, regulations and standards for egg producers

As at
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Subject to change

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Contents

General Disclaimer	4
Summary of Stamping Requirements.....	5
Egg Stamping is Compulsory	6
Why Stamp Eggs?.....	7
Labelling of Packaging	7
Accreditation and Stamping - What is required?	8
National Stamping Requirements	8
Accreditation and Stamping Regulations	8
Stamping Options	11
Stamping vs Printing	11
What to do if the equipment fails	13
Sources of Information	14
Food Safety Authorities	15
Supplier Contacts	16

General Disclaimer

The contents of the Egg Stamping Guide are for general information only and apply to the stamping of fresh whole eggs. The contents are not intended as professional advice, and are not a substitute for professional advice. No person should rely upon the contents of this Guide as an assurance that their egg stamps comply with all legal requirements. Australian Eggs strongly advises egg businesses to seek independent legal advice in relation to their legal obligations.

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Summary of Stamping Requirements

Egg stamping is a compulsory requirement of all commercial hen egg producers in Australia. Every whole egg sold or supplied in Australia must have, on its shell, a unique identifying mark so that it can be traced back to the farm of origin.

Traceability is a key component of the egg industry's food safety management plan. It provides protection for consumers and producers alike, in allowing the rapid, unequivocal identification of the source of a problem during an incident involving eggs. Along with identification labelling on packaging, product and packaging integrity is controlled.

Each state and territory has laws and regulations relating to the accreditation of egg businesses and the stamping of eggs. These laws are linked to the requirements of the Food Standards Code: Standard 4.2.5 – Primary Production and Processing Standard for Eggs and Egg Products.

Many equipment suppliers can assist with the supply and installation of egg stamping and printing equipment. It is important to match the stamping equipment with the size of your enterprise, and with the grading and packing equipment you have on your property. There is a list of suppliers at the end of this document, but it is not an exhaustive list and you should make your own enquiries with your equipment suppliers.



Egg Stamping is Compulsory

In November 2012, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) endorsed the Food Standard Code: Standard 4.2.5 – Primary Production and Processing Standard for Eggs and Egg Products. This standard includes a requirement to mark every egg produced in Australia for sale with a unique identifier (stamp) in order to trace eggs back to the place of origin. Under the intergovernmental Food Regulation Agreement, each state and territory has agreed to implement the FSANZ Food Standards Code (FSC), and each state and territory has now incorporated these requirements into its relevant legislation.

As a result, egg stamping is now compulsory across all Australian states and territories to improve the traceability of eggs and raw egg products, back to the place of origin.

Egg stamping is a legal requirement for all egg producers in Australia no matter how big or small your business, or whether you sell or give away your eggs; you must place an indelible unique identification on each and every egg that is produced for human consumption (some state-specific exemptions apply).

FSANZ Standard 4.2.5

Traceability

- (1) Any egg producer must not sell eggs unless each individual egg is marked with the producers' unique identification.
- (2) An egg producer who supplies egg pulp must mark each package or container containing the pulp with the producers' unique identification.
- (3) Subclauses (1) and (2) do not apply to eggs or egg pulp sold or supplied to an egg processor (**the supplied product**) if that egg processor complies with clause 20 in respect of the supplied product.
- (4) In addition to subclauses (1) and (2), an egg producer must have a system to identify to whom eggs or egg pulp is sold or supplied.

Why Stamp Eggs?

Traceability is a key component of any food business's food safety strategy. The ability to trace eggs back to the farm of origin is important for a number of reasons.

1. It provides consumer confidence in the producer, when consumers recognise a producer's logo.
2. It provides protection for consumers if a food poisoning outbreak occurs, to isolate the source of the problem and to put corrective measures in place.
3. It speeds up the process of traceability, allowing producers to respond more quickly to problems before they get out of hand.
4. It isolates a problem to a single business, and protects producers who are not involved in a food poisoning outbreak or other problem.
5. It allows the detection of egg swapping by customers at point of sale.
6. It protects producers from mischievous claims, and allows proof of identity should eggs be sold in re-used egg cartons.

Labelling of Packaging

Traceability is provided by both the egg stamp and on egg packaging. The use of lot identification, farm details and a best-before date on egg cartons and outer cartons also ensures better traceability through the food chain. Matching egg stamp and carton identification labels provides product integrity protection for producers.

Accreditation and Stamping - What is required?

Each state and territory has unique regulations regarding accreditation requirements for your business as an egg producer. Contact your state or territory regulator for further information and clarification (see Sources of Information).

In Australia, every egg sold or supplied must be marked with a producer's unique identification mark, irrespective of whether or not you need accreditation, using a food-safe ink (minor exemptions are present in some states and territories for home producers). In some states and territories this identification mark must be registered and approved. The list of food safety authorities at the end of this guide provides information on the requirements of each state and territory.

It is not compulsory to stamp any other information on the egg apart from the unique identifier, but for better traceability, a date code, in the form of a 3-digit Julian date, or a batch number, can also be printed on the egg.

Raw egg products (pulp, etc.) must also have the container marked with the processor's unique identifier.

National Stamping Requirements

Eggs must be stamped prior to sale or supply (including being gifted) to a customer, no matter where the sale or supply takes place. However, eggs that are sold or supplied to a processor for grading or further processing do not need to be stamped at the farm but must still be stamped by the processor prior to sale or supply. This identification stamp must be unique to the farm of origin.

Some states and territories have exemptions for certain categories of small egg producers. Contact your state regulator for current requirements.

Interstate movement of eggs has no bearing on stamping requirements; eggs still have to be stamped prior to sale or supply.

Accreditation and Stamping Regulations

QUEENSLAND

An accreditation **is required** for the following activities:

- Producing eggs for supply.
- Handling other people's eggs.
- Washing, grading (including assessing for cracks) another person's eggs.

An accreditation **is not required** for the following activities:

- Keeping birds as pets, and not selling or supplying the eggs to anyone for consumption.
- Producing eggs for private consumption on the property on which they are produced.

There are no exemptions from egg stamping in Queensland, irrespective of your accreditation status.

NEW SOUTH WALES

'Small egg farms' are those that produce no more than 20 dozen (240) eggs for sale in any week.

Small egg farms do not need to apply for a New South Wales (NSW) Food Authority licence. However, you do need to notify the Food Authority of your business details and food activities.

'Egg producers' are businesses or farms that produce more than 20 dozen eggs for sale in any week.

Egg producers need to:

- Have a Food Authority licence.
- Prepare for and be regularly audited.

All eggs sold in NSW (unless exempt, see below) must be individually stamped with the producer's unique identifier, usually a number or code.

Eggs can be stamped at the farm where they are produced, or at a grading facility.

Exemption

An exemption from stamping applies to small egg farmers that produce less than 20 dozen (240) eggs a week and either:

- Sell those eggs direct from the farm gate; or
- Use those eggs for a fundraising activity where the eggs will be cooked.

VICTORIA

From September 2018, producers who have 50 or more chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quails, pigeons, pheasants, or partridges must have a Property Identification Code (PIC). Additionally, producers who have 10 or more emus or ostriches must have a PIC.

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) is using this scheme to allocate producers with their egg stamp code and to meet the requirement to notify DEDJTR.

Exemption

There is an exemption from the requirement to stamp eggs for producers with fewer than 50 hens and for duck and quail eggs. Producers with fewer than 50 egg producing birds (home producers):

- Must identify and control the food safety hazards associated with egg production. Some record keeping is also required.
- Need only notify DEDJTR if they want an egg stamp code.

Producers with 50 or more egg producing birds:

- Must have and follow a DEDJTR approved food safety management statement **OR** be part of an approved industry or commercial quality assurance (QA) program.
- Must have an approved egg stamp code.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Egg food safety is regulated under the Primary Produce (Food Safety Schemes) (Egg) Regulations 2012.

Egg producers must be accredited if they are involved in any of the following:

- Have more than 50 laying birds; or
- Produce and sell eggs to a food business such as a supermarket, café, hotel or bakery; or
- Produce and sell eggs to another egg producer; or
- Produce and sell eggs at a market (e.g. a farmers' market); or
- Produce and sell eggs by wholesale.

All egg producers requiring accreditation must comply with the egg food safety standard (Standard 4.2.5) and stamp eggs prior to sale or supply in South Australia.

TASMANIA

There is a mandatory accreditation requirement for commercial egg producers based on the volume of eggs produced. This production threshold is 20 dozen eggs in any week (and is the equivalent of keeping approximately 50 egg laying birds).

Commercial egg producers who are under the production threshold (producing less than 20 dozen eggs per week) will not be required to hold an accreditation or pay for annual food safety audits. However, such producers will be required to register with Biosecurity Tasmania and also comply with the Egg Primary Production and Processing (PPP) Standard, including stamping their eggs with a unique identification mark.

Egg producers above the threshold will require full accreditation and must have an approved food safety program that is independently audited at least once every 12 months. Accredited producers will also be required (as a condition of accreditation) to stamp eggs with their unique identifier in accordance with the Food Standards Code traceability provisions.

Exemption

Egg producers who do not come under either of the categories described above, i.e. non-commercial, "backyard" egg producers, who produce eggs on their property primarily for their own consumption, are fully exempt from the state's accreditation requirements. No stamping is required.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

As of April 2022, any person or entity who owns 50 or more poultry, or 10 or more emus and/or ostriches, is required to register with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) as a livestock owner. After registering, a Property Identification Code (PIC) is issued for the property where the poultry are kept. Poultry includes domestic chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, guinea fowls, quails, pigeons, pheasants and partridges. The requirement to register applies if you own 50 or more of these birds, in any combination. Poultry owners are encouraged to register if they have fewer birds, but it is not mandatory.

The Department of Health (Food Unit) manages a central register of unique identifiers. When applying for a new unique identifier, a producer must provide a copy of their food business certificate of registration, issued by the relevant local government under the Food Act 2008. Producers with existing unique identifiers are encouraged to apply to be listed on the central register. There are no exemptions from egg stamping in Western Australia.

Stamping Options

Stamping vs Printing

Eggs can be marked with either a manual or automated stamp, or printed on with inkjet printers using food grade ink.

Stamping

A small producer may find that a hand-held pre-inked stamp is sufficient for small numbers of eggs, although inkjet printers are available for relatively small-scale processing. Stamps can be either single or in sets of 2x3, 6, 12 or 30 stamps for manual application, depending on capacity and packaging arrangement. They can also be in-line and linked to an auto packer.

Stamping can be done either before or after the eggs have been graded and packed into cartons or flats. The stamp is usually applied to the top or large end of the egg due to convenience. The maximum size of the stamp that can be applied to the large end of the egg without distortion is approximately 15 mm in diameter. This limits the information that can be placed on the egg to a unique identifier (which is compulsory) and the Julian date or a promotional logo (optional). More information can be placed on the egg by hand stamping the side of the egg.

Printing

When using inkjet printers, the identifying mark is either printed on the large end of the egg (during packing), or on the side (during grading). Packing equipment must ensure that the large end of the egg is placed upwards, otherwise printing will be distorted. Multi-lane inkjet printers are available for use with packers.

By design, most egg grading equipment requires eggs to be printed on the side. Printing occurs after the eggs have been through the washer, candler, crack detector, UV light disinfection and weighers and prior to being placed in the packing lanes.

Most inkjet printers designed for printing on food packaging can be modified for use with eggs. However, a number of printers that are adapted for printing on eggs are available.

It is important that washed eggs are dried before printing as the egg surface must be dry to print on. Rinsing after washing must remove all detergent used during the washing process as any detergent left on the shell may cause blurring of the image. It is also important that the egg is cool at the time of stamping or printing, as ink can be sucked in through the shell pores and stain the albumen.

It is important that food grade ink is used for all printing on eggs. Specialist inks are available from suppliers particularly for this purpose. Ink costs and quality need to be considered when preparing to print a logo on an egg. Simplify the logo to get the best effect on the egg and ensure that it is easily read by the customer. Avoid using solid images as these will double the ink use.

Checklist — deciding on what type of equipment to buy

- How many eggs are produced, and packed or graded per day?
- What are future intentions in terms of egg production and likely market growth?
- What is the current grader capacity (eggs per hour) and will this be ample for the future?
- Is the equipment compatible with the grader and computer system?
- Can the printers be linked to the grading computer controller to allow the pre-weighed eggs to be stamped with the appropriate stamp?
- Will the printer's stamping capacity of eggs per hour match the egg packer/grader's line capacity?
- Where in the grading/packing line can the printer/s be placed?
- How many printers will be required — one for each egg transport track or line, or packing lane?
- Does a packaging or optional equipment lane have to be forgone to enable the printers to be fitted?
- What is the estimated cost of fitting stamping equipment to the farm packer or grader?
- What is the stamping equipment computer controller cost?
- What is the cost of ink, cartridges, cleaning fluid, software upgrades, other consumables and servicing?
- Are spare parts and consumables readily available in Australia?
- Will the ordering/delivery time for ink ensure that ink stocks required to be kept on farm are not out of date before use?
- Does the printer supplier have staff available in Australia for problem resolution and servicing?
- What does the image look like on eggs of various shapes and sizes? Ask to see it.

What to do if the equipment fails

Events involving equipment failure should be covered in your Food Safety Management System (FSMS) and you must initiate any corrective action as stated in your FSMS, and also notify your relevant state or territory food safety authority and customers. You will then be advised by your regulatory authority on an appropriate course of action.

Until the egg stamping equipment is repaired or replaced, a traceability system will be implemented to ensure that unstamped eggs can be recalled should a foodborne illness incident occur. The following records must be maintained for the sale of unstamped eggs:

- the name and address of the person or business to whom the eggs are sold,
- the lot identification (or the date of sale), and
- the quantity of eggs sold.



Sources of Information

- Primary Production and Processing Standard for Eggs and Egg Products. Standard 4.2.5 Food Standards Australia New Zealand. <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/primary-production-and-processing>
- Queensland: <https://www.safefood.qld.gov.au/food-business/want-sell-supply/#tab-egg>
- New South Wales: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/eggs>
- South Australia: http://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/food_safety/eggs
- Victoria: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/food-safety/food-safety-for-egg-producers>
- Tasmania: <http://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/product-integrity/food-safety/eggs>
- Western Australia: http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Standard-4,-d-,2,-d-,5-Primary-production-and-processing-standard-for-eggs-and-egg-product
- Review of Egg Stamping Implementation in NSW. NSW Department of Primary Industries Food Authority. 2017.



Food Safety Authorities

STATE	Regulator	Contact	Additional information	Egg stamping exemptions*
QLD	Safe Food Production Queensland	1800 300 815	Unique identifier must be registered with Safe Food Production Queensland	No exemptions
NSW	Department of Primary Industries – NSW Food Authority	1300 552 406 www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au	The Food Authority must be notified of, and approve, any new or alternative egg stamp design to ensure that it is unique	Less than 240 eggs per week (Less than 50 layers); <u>AND</u> ONLY sell directly from farm gate OR use for fundraising purposes where the eggs will be cooked
Vic	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR)	136 186	DEDJTR will allocate a stamp code to use	Less than 50 layers (Less than 240 eggs per week). Duck and quail eggs exempt
SA	Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)	(08) 8429 0837	PIRSA must be notified of any alternative egg stamp design to ensure that it is unique	No exemptions
Tas	Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania	(03) 6165 3091	Unique identifier must be approved by Biosecurity Tasmania	Less than 20 dozen eggs per week; <u>AND</u> ONLY supply eggs to work colleagues, friends, and family
WA	Department of Health	(08) 9388 4999 foodsafety@health.wa.gov.au	Unique identifier is encouraged to be registered with the Dept Health Food Unit	No exemptions
ACT	ACT Parliamentary Counsel	1300 552 406 www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au		No exemptions
NT	Department of Health	(08) 8999 2400		No exemptions

*“No exemptions” means that ALL eggs must be individually stamped.

Supplier Contacts

Ausgiant Marking Systems Pty Ltd (NSW, Australia)	Automated inkjet egg marking options	http://www.ausgiant.com.au
Bellsouth Pty Ltd (VIC, Australia)	Inkjet stampers and printers for lower capacity egg graders	http://www.bellsouth.com.au
Easyprint Australia (NSW, Australia)	Mini-jet printers	http://www.easy-print.com.au
Insignia (QLD, Australia)	Continuous inkjet printers and inks	http://www.insignia.com.au
Dunogan Farm Tech Pty Ltd (NSW, Australia)	Inkjet printers with Riva Selegg egg graders	http://dunoganfarmtech.com.au
Matthews Intelligent Identification (VIC, Australia)	Inkjet printers for coding and labelling	http://www.matthews.com.au
Modico Australia (NSW, Australia)	Single hand-held egg stamping option (Egg ^{id})	http://eggstamp.com.au
Egg Packaging Enterprises (United Kingdom)	Inkjet printers Single hand-held egg stamping option	http://egg-packaging-enterprises.co.uk
Fikser Stempelspecialist (The Netherlands)	Single and multiple hand held stamping options	http://www.fikser.nl
Nuovo Printing Systems (The Netherlands)	Inkjet: automatic egg stamping equipment Single hand held and automatic equipment options	http://www.nuovo.ch
Ovoconcept (France)	Single and multiple hand held stamping options Automatic egg stamping equipment: Inkjet and easy-print	http://www.ovoconcept.eu
Ovorerider (Italy)	Automated egg stamping equipment options	http://www.ovorerider.com
Prinzen (The Netherlands)	Automated egg stamping equipment options: Ovoprint (inkjet) and the Flex Egg Coder	https://www.prinzen.com/en
VISY Technology Systems (Australian company – state-based offices)	Continuous inkjet printers	https://www.visy.com.au/tech-systems-products-list/2014/9/4/hitachi-ink-jet-printers

EGG STAMPING

Requirements for egg producers

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (Standard 4.2.5) requires individual eggs and egg products to be marked with a “unique identifier”. To comply with this, all egg producers must stamp their eggs with a unique code.

The process is regulated by the states so producers must refer to the requirements of the state in which their eggs are packed. The table below applies to any farmer producing eggs to supply or sell for human consumption.



State	When egg stamping is compulsory	Website	Contact
WA	When producing eggs at any volume	https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Standard-4,-d,-2,-d,-5-Primary-production-and-processing-standard-for-eggs-and-egg-product	Environmental Health Directorate (08) 9222 2000
NSW and ACT	When producing 240 or more eggs per week. Numbers below this are only exempt when eggs are sold at farm gate OR for fundraising activity where the eggs will be cooked.	http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/eggs/egg-stamping	Food Authority Helpline 1300 552 406
SA	When owning 50 or more egg producing birds OR selling eggs at a market OR supplying a food business	http://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/food_safety/eggs#toc4	PIRSA Food Safety Program (08) 8429 0867
QLD	When producing eggs at any volume	https://www.safefood.qld.gov.au/food-business/want-sell-supply/#tab-egg	Safe Food QLD 1800 300 815
VIC	When owning 50 or more egg producing birds	https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/food-safety/food-safety-for-egg-producers	Info about the DEDJTR 136 186
TAS	When eggs are sold by egg producers to an egg business OR a food business OR at a market OR by way of wholesale	http://dpiw.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/product-integrity/food-safety/eggs/egg-food-safety-scheme	Food Safety Management Office (03) 6165 3777

► For more information contact Australian Eggs on
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