

Which came first?

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG



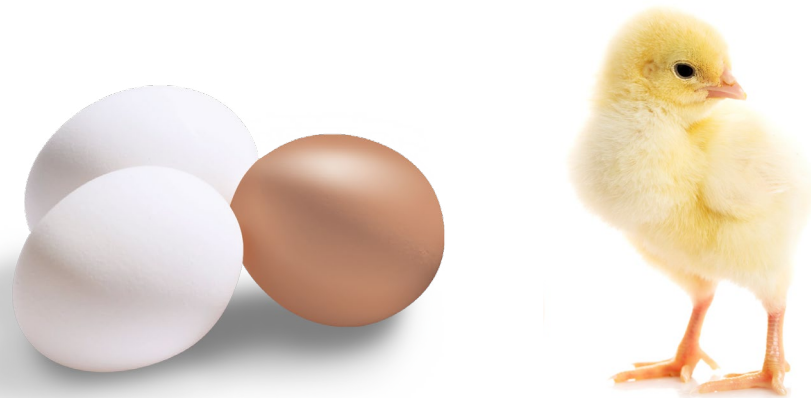
*For Manitoba Egg Farmers,
the egg's journey begins
with a chicken*



Hatching a new beginning



In Manitoba there are two commercial hatcheries where eggs from breeding flocks hatch into baby chicks. The young chicks move to a pullet barn for the next 19 weeks where they grow into mature laying hens.



BROWN OR WHITE... BOTH ARE RIGHT

The colour of the egg shell is determined by the breed of the hen. Most white-feathered hens lay white eggs, while brown-feathered hens lay brown eggs. It is important to note however, it is the colour of the hen's ear lobe that determines the colour of the egg shell. If a hen has white pigment in her ear lobe she will lay a white egg, if she has brown pigment in her ear lobe she will lay a brown egg. So, even a white-feathered hen can lay a brown egg.



The most common breed of hen in Canada is the White Leghorn

LOCAL FARMS, LOCAL EGGS



In Manitoba, 170 egg and pullet farmers are the primary caregivers of 2.4 million laying hens who lay 64 million dozen eggs each year.

Hens are housed in a variety of different housing systems, and each regulated egg farmer adheres to strict standards in food safety and animal care.

In Manitoba we tend to have extreme weather conditions in both summer and winter, so it is vitally important to protect the hens from intense heat as well as frigid cold.

HEN HOUSING HISTORY



In the post-war era of the 1950's, a boom in the Canadian population caused an increase in the demand for eggs. In order to meet the growing need, farmers moved hens indoors into conventional cages. Indoor housing protected hens from natural predators and small group settings enabled even the most timid birds to have access to fresh food and water. The health and welfare of the birds improved and the egg industry kept up with the demands from the marketplace. In addition, food safety was maximized in conventional cages because the eggs were separated from the hen's manure.

Keeping up with change



Over the years egg farmers have invested thousands of research dollars into the health and well-being of laying hens. Poultry researchers determined hens like to express natural behaviours like perching and laying eggs in private nesting areas. As a result, farmers are moving from traditional conventional cages to alternative systems like enriched housing which are endorsed by poultry specialists and veterinarians all over the world.

Enriched housing provides the hens with more room to move around and is equipped with furnishings like perches and curtained nesting areas. Enriched housing combines the food safety benefits of conventional cages with the welfare benefits of cage-free housing.

How we house our hens



In Manitoba, hens are housed in a variety of different ways. Each housing system is designed to provide the hens with a clean environment to lay their eggs, access to nutritious food and fresh water, and ensure they are safe from predators.

Conventional



Conventional housing provides the hens with small group settings and enables each of the birds to access fresh food and water.

Free-Run in a Barn



Free-run housing in a barn gives the hens access to the entire barn floor area. Hens are able to perch, scratch and lay their eggs in nesting boxes.

Enriched



Enriched housing enables the hens to express natural behaviours like perching and laying their eggs in private nesting areas.

Free-Run with Outdoor Access



The hens have access to the outdoors and outdoor vegetation; weather permitting. Hens are able to perch, scratch, nest, dust bathe, and forage.

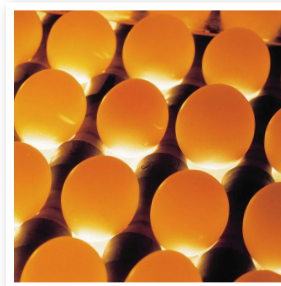
THE EGGS YOU BUY IN MANITOBA GROCERY STORES ARE PRODUCED RIGHT HERE IN OUR PROVINCE



On the farm, egg farmers collect the eggs each day and store them in a cooling room. Refrigerated trucks pick up the eggs once or twice a week and transport them to the grading station. In Manitoba, there are two large commercial grading stations.



At the grading station, eggs are washed and checked for quality. The outer shells and interior of the eggs are examined through a process called candling. Then the eggs are sorted, weighed, packaged and stored under refrigeration before going to grocery stores and restaurants.



GRADE

Grade A eggs have a firm yolk, a thick white, a small air cell, and no visible cracks in the shell. Only the best eggs are marked Grade A.

A stylized illustration of a cracked egg. The egg is white with a bright yellow yolk in the center. The background is a solid blue color with a large, white, stylized letter 'A' behind the egg.

Eggs, the more you break them the better they work



Not all eggs in Manitoba are sold to the table market. About 40% of the eggs we produce in our province go to the breaking plant where they are processed into liquid or powder and then shipped to restaurants, bakeries and food manufacturers all over the world. A breaking machine gently removes the shells from the eggs before they are further processed.



Processed eggs are used in many food products like cake mixes, mayonnaise and even shampoo and pet foods.

Even the egg shells don't go to waste. The shells are ground up and used in animal feed because of their high-quality calcium.

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SO MANY CHOICES

There are many different kinds of eggs available in Manitoba grocery stores, from regular Grade A white eggs to nutritionally enhanced eggs like vitamin E, omega-3 and organic. Eggs from a variety of housing systems are also available at the egg case.

The choice is yours!



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Eggs are a natural source of high-quality protein and have 14 vitamins and minerals.



Next time you crack open a carton of eggs, remember there are 170 farm families in Manitoba who work hard to provide you with fresh, high-quality eggs.



WE'RE EGG FARMERS
WE LOVE WHAT WE DO®

