



Egg Farmers of Alberta represents over 170 egg farming families in our province, who are responsible for the care of more than 2.3 million laying hens in Alberta. Egg farmers check their flocks daily and are dedicated to providing the highest quality of care possible, regardless of the type of system they use to house their hens.



At Egg Farmers of Alberta, our vision is
Healthy Food, Healthy Farms, Healthy Families

To learn more about animal care and hen housing
in Alberta, and to look inside a real Alberta egg
barn, please visit www.eggs.ab.ca






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HEALTHY BIRDS

Caring for Laying Hens in Alberta



Egg laying hens are housed a variety of ways in Alberta and across Canada. Every housing system is designed to provide a clean environment, unlimited access to fresh food and water, and protection from predators. Additionally, every indoor housing system provides consistent temperature, humidity and lighting.

Alberta egg farmers are continuously seeking to improve the care and well-being of their hens. To ensure hens are treated humanely, the Canadian egg industry follows practices outlined in the mandatory national Animal Care Program that is based on the *Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets, Layers and Spent Fowl*. The Code was developed in consultation with veterinarians, animal scientists, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Egg farmers are audited annually against the Animal Care Program, by both industry inspectors and 3rd party auditors, to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring high quality animal welfare.

The Canadian egg industry is in the process of transitioning away from conventional housing. In the future, all eggs will come from hens raised in one of the other systems including enriched, free-run and free-range housing.



Conventional housing has been the egg industry standard for decades, providing hens with a small group setting that enables them to have equal access to fresh food and water. Eggs from hens raised in conventional housing are typically sold as standard white and brown eggs.



Enriched housing provides the same animal welfare and food safety benefits that conventional housing does, while giving the hens more space (both floor space and height) to move around. By providing hens with nest boxes, perches, scratch pads and dust baths, enriched housing enables the hens to express a wider array of natural behaviors. Eggs from hens raised in enriched housing are typically sold with names such as “Nestlaid” or “Comfort Coop”.



Free-run housing (barn or aviary) allows the hens to roam free inside the barn. Enrichments such as nest boxes, perches and scratch pads are provided throughout the barn, and the birds are able to forage and dust bathe on the barn floor, enabling them to express a wide array of natural behaviors. This picture shows a barn style system, while the picture on the back with a farmer walking through the barn shows an aviary style system. Free-run eggs are from hens raised in free-run housing.



Free-range housing is the same as free-run housing, while also providing the hens access to outdoor runs, when the weather permits. Free-range eggs are from hens raised in free-range housing.

