



**E G G S C E L L E N T**

# EGG FACTS



**HEALTHY BIRDS**  
**HEALTHY FARMS** **HEALTHY EGGS**  
**HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**



**Egg** Farmers  
of Alberta

## EGG FARMERS OF ALBERTA

**FACT:** Egg Farmers of Alberta (EFA) is a farmer-supported not-for-profit organization that has been managing the provincial egg industry and representing the province's egg farming families since 1968.

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** EFA's vision is: Healthy Food, Healthy Farms, Healthy Families. EFA's mission is: Cultivating a sustainable egg industry together with farmers, consumers, and other stakeholders.



## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** EFA and the province's egg farmers are proud supporters of Food Banks Alberta and Breakfast Club of Canada.



## ALBERTA EGG INDUSTRY

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** In Alberta there are more than 170 egg farming families who raise over 2.5 million egg laying hens, who produce more than 65 million dozen eggs every year!

**TRUE-OR-FALSE:** Egg farmers sell their eggs directly to restaurants and grocery stores.

**FALSE:** Most egg farmers sell their eggs to a grading station, where the eggs are washed, inspected, graded, weighed, and packaged. The graders – Burnbrae Farms and Sparks Eggs in Alberta – then sell eggs to grocery stores, restaurants, and food service providers.

**MYTH:** Only eggs sold at farmers markets are fresh and provided by local egg farmers.

**TRUTH:** Egg farming families from across Alberta are proud to provide their fellow Albertans with fresh, affordable, nutritious, locally produced eggs. In Alberta, most eggs arrive on grocery store shelves within 7 days from when they were laid.

## AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** EFA is a member of the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP), which has helped educate more than 600,000 grade-4 students across Alberta about local food and agriculture. CAP is supported by both the Minister of Education and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** EFA is a long-time supporter of the Poultry Research Centre at the University of Alberta, which is a world-renowned facility for research, development and learning.



# HEALTHY EGGS

## EGGS FOR BABIES

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** The newest guidelines from Health Canada now recommend introducing whole eggs (yolks and whites) starting at six months of age, or as soon as your child starts eating solids.

**MYTH:** Eating eggs too early might cause an egg allergy. **TRUTH:** Experts no longer recommend delaying the introduction of common allergens to twelve months. In fact, research shows that introducing whole eggs early can actually help to lower your baby's chance of developing an egg allergy.



## EGG NUTRITION

**FACT:** Each large egg contains 6 grams of protein and 14 important nutrients like vitamins A, D, E, folate, iron and zinc. Eggs are considered to be a complete protein because they contain all 9 essential amino acids.

**MYTH:** Eggs are high in cholesterol, and you should limit how many you eat. **TRUTH:** Decades of research have confirmed that dietary cholesterol (the cholesterol in food) does not affect blood cholesterol or increase heart disease risk. Eggs can be included every day as part of a healthy, balanced diet.



## EGG ALLERGIES

**FACT:** An egg allergy is rare in adults and most often seen in children from 2 to 7 years of age. Studies show that most children tend to outgrow an egg allergy within a few years. An egg allergy is caused by a protein in eggs which triggers an abnormal reaction to the immune system.

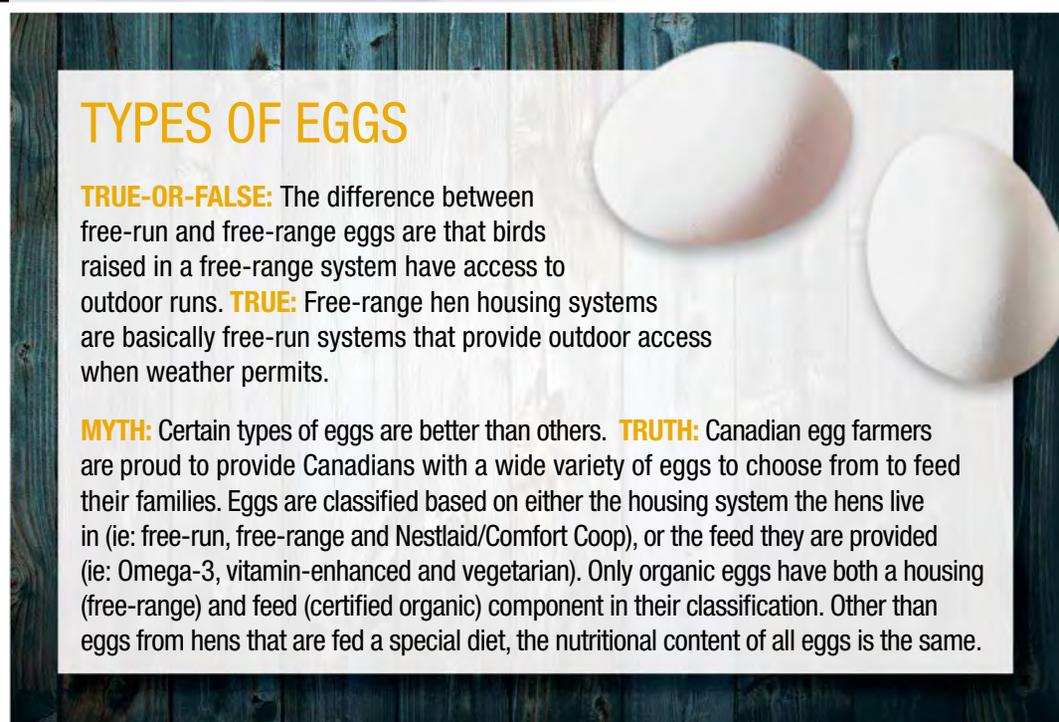
**DID-YOU-KNOW:** Eggs have two allergenic components – the yolk and the white. An allergic reaction can vary from mild to severe, depending on the person and the amount of egg consumed.



## TYPES OF EGGS

**TRUE-OR-FALSE:** The difference between free-run and free-range eggs are that birds raised in a free-range system have access to outdoor runs. **TRUE:** Free-range hen housing systems are basically free-run systems that provide outdoor access when weather permits.

**MYTH:** Certain types of eggs are better than others. **TRUTH:** Canadian egg farmers are proud to provide Canadians with a wide variety of eggs to choose from to feed their families. Eggs are classified based on either the housing system the hens live in (ie: free-run, free-range and Nestlaid/Comfort Coop), or the feed they are provided (ie: Omega-3, vitamin-enhanced and vegetarian). Only organic eggs have both a housing (free-range) and feed (certified organic) component in their classification. Other than eggs from hens that are fed a special diet, the nutritional content of all eggs is the same.

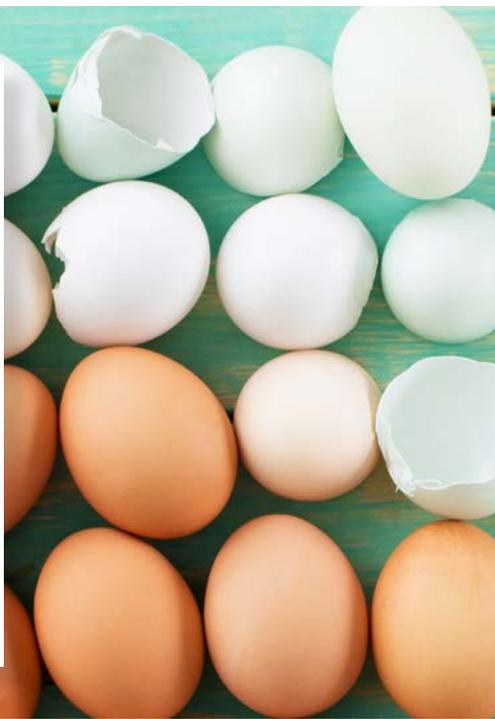


# HEALTHY EGGS

## WHITE EGGS VS BROWN EGGS

**TRUE-OR-FALSE:** There's a big difference between white eggs and brown eggs.

**FALSE:** Aside from the color of the eggshell, there is little difference between brown and white eggs. Generally speaking, white shell eggs come from hens with white feathers, while brown shell eggs come from hens with brown feathers. Nutritionally, white and brown eggs are identical, unless the feed has been enhanced for specialty eggs such as Omega-3.



## HORMONES AND STEROIDS

**MYTH:** Some eggs might contain added hormones and/or steroids.

**FACT:** In Canada, you can trust that eggs are always free of added hormones and steroids. They are illegal in Canada and are not used in the Canadian egg industry.

## FOOD SAFETY

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** Registered Canadian egg farmers follow a mandatory and comprehensive on-farm food safety program called Start Clean – Stay Clean™. Farms are inspected by trained field inspectors and audited regularly.

**MYTH:** Eggs should be stored on the counter.  
**TRUTH:** Eggs should be stored in their original carton, in the main body of the fridge to ensure a cooler, consistent temperature. Since the egg's natural protective coating is removed while being washed at the grading station, storing them in the fridge is the only way to ensure they stay fresh until the 'best before' date on the carton.



## ANTIBIOTICS

**TRUE-OR-FALSE:** There is cause for concern about the use of antibiotics in laying hens. **FALSE:** Antibiotics are not routinely administered to laying hens because they are not required, and the Canadian egg industry has banned the use of Category-1 antibiotics. If there is a need to treat a specific illness in a flock, antibiotics may be prescribed by a poultry veterinarian or used by a feed nutritionist. Eggs from those hens cannot be sold until after the withdrawal period.



# HEALTHY BIRDS



## ANIMAL CARE

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** Registered Canadian egg farmers follow the mandatory and comprehensive Animal Care Program, which is based on the recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens.

**MYTH:** Eggs come from hens raised on factory farms where there isn't even a farmer in the barn. **FACT:** There are more than 170 family egg farms in Alberta, who care for a flock of about 15,000 laying hens on average. Egg farmers walk through their barns to check on their hens several times a day and are dedicated to providing them the highest quality care possible.



## HEN FEED

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** Egg farmers work with nutrition specialists to ensure their hens eat a balanced and nutritious diet of grains, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals, which is vital for maintaining the hen's health and also plays an important role in the quality of eggs produced.

**TRUE-OR-FALSE:** Farmers regularly add hormones or steroids to the feed. **FALSE:** Hormones and steroids are illegal in Canada, and are not used in the egg industry.

**MYTH:** Laying hens are often fed animal by-products. **FACT:** Laying hens are fed a nutritious, well-balanced diet that contains grains, proteins, vitamins and minerals – all the things that hens need to stay healthy. The feed often contains either plant-based proteins or CFIA-certified meat meal, because hens require high quality protein.



## HEN HOUSING

**MYTH:** Cage-free is the only good way to house laying hens. **FACT:** A variety of housing systems, including conventional, enriched, free-run and free-range, provide laying hens with a clean environment, unlimited access to fresh water and nutritious feed. Alternative housing systems allow hens to express a wide range of natural behaviors.

**MYTH:** Most egg laying hens are housed in battery cages.

**FACT:** The Canadian egg industry is in the process of transitioning away from conventional housing. About 1/3 of Alberta production has already shifted to alternative housing. In the future, all eggs will come from hens raised in other hen housing systems including enriched, free-run and free-range.

**TRUE-OR-FALSE:** The only real difference between free-run and free-range housing is that birds raised in free-range systems have access to outdoor runs. **TRUE:** Free-range hen housing systems are basically free-run systems that provide outdoor access when weather permits. Both systems are free-run when the birds are indoors, which allows the birds to roam free within the barn, while providing enrichments such as perches and nest boxes throughout the barn.



# HEALTHY FARMS



## ENVIRONMENT

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** Alberta was the first province to introduce an on-farm environmental program, when the Producer Environmental Egg Program (PEEP) was launched in 2014. PEEP is focused on key impact areas such as energy use, water consumption and manure management.



## SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

**MYTH:** Supply management causes Canadians to pay more for eggs.

**TRUTH:** With supply management, Canadian farmers work together to match domestic egg production to meet consumer demands, in terms of both the total number of eggs and the different types of eggs. This helps ensure a constant supply of fresh, local eggs and egg products is available throughout Alberta and across Canada, while farmers earn a fair return.

**MYTH:** Supply management sets the price Canadians pay for their eggs.

**TRUTH:** The supply management system only sets the price that farmers receive from the grading station, which is based on the average cost of production, along with a fair market return for their products. Supply management plays no role in the price negotiated between the grading station and the grocery stores. Grocery stores are also free to charge whatever price they want for the eggs on their shelves.



## NEW ENTRANT PROGRAM

**FACT:** Egg Farmers of Alberta launched the provincial New Entrant Program in 2012. Since then, more than 20 new egg farming families have been welcomed into the Alberta egg industry.



## JOB CREATION

**DID-YOU-KNOW:** Alberta egg farms are responsible for creating over 700 jobs, while the provincial egg industry is directly/indirectly responsible for creating over 1,700 jobs.





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