

Production and Marketing of Hatching Eggs and Chicks

1. Introduction

The main European Community regulations on the production and marketing of hatching eggs and chicks are Council Regulation 1234/07 and Commission Regulation 617/08.

The European Communities Act applies these regulations to the United Kingdom and provides powers for secondary UK legislation on the enforcement of the regulations. This secondary legislation is contained in the Northern Ireland Eggs and Chicks Regulations.

The requirements of these regulations in no way affect veterinary or licensing requirements which may be in force in the United Kingdom or in other countries.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the regulations is to establish common standards for marketing and transporting hatching eggs and chicks throughout the Community and to enable the Commission to obtain information about chick placings for forecasts of future supplies of hatching eggs and poultry.

3. Scope

Hatcheries with a setting capacity of 1,000 eggs or more and breeding establishments with 100 or more breeding birds are required to register with the Department and to comply with the regulations detailed in this leaflet. Establishments with a lower setting capacity or with fewer breeding birds are not required to comply with the regulations but may do so if they wish.

The regulations apply to the production and marketing of hatching eggs, and of poultry chicks not exceeding 185g in weight, of the following species: Domestic fowl, turkeys, ducks, chicks, geese and guinea fowl.

For the purpose of these regulations chicks are classified into the following categories:

Commercial chicks of the following types:

table chicks - chicks intended to be fattened and slaughtered before reaching sexual maturity

egg production chicks - chicks intended to be raised for the production of eggs for consumption

dual purpose chicks - chicks intended either for laying or for the table

Note: It is understood that chicks of the type above are relatively unknown in the United Kingdom domestic fowl sector but they still exist in other Member States.

Parent stock chicks - chicks intended to become parent stock

Grandparent chicks - all chicks except commercial or parent stock chicks

4. Types of Establishments

Three types of establishments which may exist separately or in combination are:

- 1. Primary or Pedigree Breeding establishment.** These establishments are often known as “Grandparent” Breeder establishments - producing hatching eggs for production of selected strain or other breeding stock.
- 2. Multiplying breeding establishment.** These establishments are often known as “Parent” Breeder establishments - producing hatching eggs intended for commercial chick production..
- 3. Hatchery** - incubating hatching eggs and supplying chicks for any purpose

5. Registration

Establishments are required to register with the Department, and individual establishments belonging to the same business must be separately registered.

Each establishment will be given an EC registration number which will indicate the country, region, number and type of unit, eg: UK-9-100-3 where:

Country = UK

Region = 9 (Northern Ireland)

Establishment Number = 100

Type of establishment = 3 (Hatchery)

A combined Pedigree (Grandparent) breeding establishment (code number 1) and hatchery (code number 3) would have 1/3 as the code for type of establishment. Code 2 indicates a multiplying (Parent) establishment.

6. Incubated Eggs

Eggs which have been withdrawn from incubators (“clears”) are considered as industrial eggs and as such cannot be used in food for human consumption or for use in the food industry but must be disposed of in accordance with Animal By-products Regulations.

7. Marking of Hatching Eggs

The individual marking of hatching eggs may be carried out at the producer establishment which should print its EC registration number on the eggs. The letters and figures shall be indicated in indelible black ink and be at least 2mm high and 1 mm wide.

Alternatively, hatching eggs may be marked with any abstract black mark, except for a spot, providing that it is indelible, clearly visible and at least 10mm square in area and marking is carried out prior to insertion of eggs into incubator. This alternative method of marking may be carried out either at a producer establishment or at a hatchery.

Only eggs for hatching marked in accordance with the methods described above may be transported or traded between Member States.

8. Labelling of Boxes and Containers

All boxes and containers used to move eggs intended for incubation must be marked with the producer establishment's EC registration number. It should be noted that this applies to palletainers and setter trays as well as to closed packs.

9. Packaging

Hatching Eggs

Packages of hatching eggs must be clean and must contain exclusively eggs of the same species, category and type of poultry, coming from the same registered establishment and bear the words "eggs for hatching".

Chicks

No conditions are specified for the type of packaging to be used for transporting chicks but they must contain chicks of the same species, category and type of poultry, produced by the same hatchery. The packages must bear the EC registration number of the hatchery which produced them.

10. Documentation

Each consignment of hatching eggs and chicks leaving a registered establishment must be accompanied by a document written in at least one Community language, showing at least the following details:

- the name and address of the establishment;
- its EC registration number;
- the number of eggs or chicks sent, classified by species, category and type of poultry;
- date of despatch; and
- the name and address of the consignee.

11. Exports to Non-Member States

Packages of hatching eggs or chicks intended for export to non-Member States may bear any indications required by those countries, provided that they are not likely to be confused with indications prescribed above, nor with those laid down in the Community's regulations including Marketing Standards for table eggs.

12. Imports from Non-Member States

Hatching Eggs

Hatching eggs may be imported from non-Member States provided that the country of origin and the word "hatching" appear on the egg in at least one of the Community's languages.

The information must be clear and legible, written in indelible black ink in characters at least 3mm high. Packages of hatching eggs must contain exclusively eggs of the same species, category and type of poultry, coming from the same sender in the same country of origin. The following particulars must also be shown on the package:

- those shown on the eggs;
- the species of poultry from which the eggs come;
- the name and address of the sender.

Chicks

Chicks imported from non-Member States must be packed according to species, category and type, and the package must bear the following information:

- species of chicks;
- country of origin;
- the name and address of the sender.

The information to be marked on packaging must be in indelible black ink, in letters or figures at least 20 mm high, 10 mm wide and 1 mm thick.

Documentation

Hatching eggs or chicks imported from non-Member States must be accompanied by a document similar to that described in paragraph 10 above, except that the establishment's EC registration number must be replaced by the country of origin.

13. Records and Statistical Returns

Each hatchery is required to keep one or more registers where the following particulars shall be entered by species, category and type of poultry (separate entries will be required for each batch):

- the date the eggs were placed in incubation;
- *the number of eggs placed in incubation;
- the EC registration number of the producer establishment from which the eggs came;
- the date the eggs hatched;
- the number of chicks hatched;
- *the number of hatched chicks intended for actual use;
- the number of eggs withdrawn from the incubator; and
- the identity of the buyer of any incubated eggs.

In addition, each month, all hatcheries must send certain details (denoted with *) to the Department's Policy and Economics Division.

14. Administration and Enforcement

These regulations will be enforced in Northern Ireland by the Department's Egg Marketing Inspectorate, who will be responsible for ensuring that the regulations are being complied with.

If you wish to register an establishment, please contact the Department at the address below and you will be sent an application form (EMR10)

**Egg Marketing Inspectorate, DAERA, Agri-food Inspection Branch, Room 1018,
Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB.
Tel: 02890524687 E-mail: afib.admin@daera-ni.gov.uk**

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