



REGISTRATION OF ESTABLISHMENTS (LAYING HENS) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2003

The Legislation

Commission Directive 2002/4/EC requires all laying hen establishments (production sites) under the scope of Council Directive 1999/74/EC (on the welfare of laying hens) to be registered and allocated a distinguishing number. This has been introduced in Northern Ireland through the Registration of Establishments (Laying Hens) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003. Similar legislation has been made in England, Scotland, and Wales. This legislation does not apply to establishments with fewer than 350 Laying Hens or Breeding Hens.

If you have more than one site (normally a site constitutes a farm in a single location) a separate application for each site will be required. If you need help with the completion of the form(s), please contact the Department's Egg Marketing Inspectorate at the address given below.

The Distinguishing Number

The distinguishing number is comprised of a digit indicating the farming method (0-Organic, 1 – Free Range, 2-Barn, 3-Cages), the code of the Member State (UK) and a unique identification number which is preceded by **9-** for Northern Ireland producers. This number will be the medium for tracing eggs placed on the market for human consumption. This Department's Quality Assurance Branch is the Registrar. Egg Marketing Regulations require Class A eggs to be stamped with this code, which designates the producer's distinguishing number and identifies the farming method.

Establishments (production sites) with 350 or more Laying Hens

Owners of these establishments **must** complete the Application Form **EMR 2B – Registration Laying Hens Application**

- Producers have the **option** of stamping their eggs with additional character(s) in order to identify individual houses within a production site. If Producers or Egg Packers wish to avail of this option, the application form **EMR 2C - Registration Laying Hens House Codes Application** should also be completed.

Establishments with fewer than 350 Laying Hens or establishments with Breeding Hens - selling eggs as Class A or selling ungraded eggs at local markets

- These establishments do not have to be registered under the Registration of Establishments (Laying Hens) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003. However, from 1 January 2004, it has been compulsory to stamp all Class A eggs with a code designating the producer's distinguishing number and identifying the farming method. Also, any producer with more than 50 hens selling eggs at a local market must register with the Department as even ungraded eggs sold in this way must be stamped with a distinguishing number
- It is therefore important that producers with fewer than 350 hens, or producers with breeding hens, who wish to market their eggs as Class A, or ungraded at a market, should complete the application form **EMR 2D - Egg Marketing Producer Register Application** in order to be included in a supplementary register and obtain a distinguishing number.

Establishments with Laying Hens but not selling eggs either as Class A or ungraded at a local market

- Producers selling their own ungraded eggs, direct to the consumer, via farm gate sales or door to door will be exempt from egg stamping arrangements but still need to register (complete application form EMR 2B) if they have flocks of 350 or more laying hens.

For further information or advice please contact:

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