

Lion code of practice summary



going to **extraordinary** lengths
to **protect your eggs**



The Code of Practice for Lion eggs is managed by the British Egg Industry Council (BEIC) and independently audited to the ISO 17065 standard. The Code of Practice includes more than 700 auditable criteria and sets stringent requirements throughout the production chain to ensure that British Lion eggs are produced to the highest standards of quality, freshness and food safety. All Lion Quality eggs are guaranteed British.

The Lion scheme is the only industry control programme approved to take official samples on behalf of the Government.

British Lion eggs are approved by the Food Standards Agency to be served runny, or even raw, to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, babies and elderly people.

breeding flock controls

Hygiene controls for Lion breeding flocks and hatcheries are more stringent than required by UK and EU legislation and include hygiene swabbing of hen houses; regular microbiological monitoring of parent flocks and hatcheries, with slaughter of any flocks positive for *Salmonella* Enteritidis or Typhimurium; and heat and/or acid treatment of feed.



pullet rearing farms/ *Salmonella* vaccination

All birds destined for British Lion egg-producing flocks are vaccinated against *Salmonella* Enteritidis and *Salmonella* Typhimurium* using licensed vaccines.

A full hygiene monitoring programme including hygiene swabbing must be completed by pullet rearers before birds are taken onto the farm. Rearing flocks are tested for *Salmonella* and all equipment and vehicles used for transporting pullets to the laying unit must be disinfected. Records of bird movement and *Salmonella* testing must be kept on a unique passport. There are also controls on wild birds and rodents and strict hygiene/biosecurity requirements.

strict controls on feed

Feed for British Lion hens must be produced to the Agricultural Industries Confederation's UFAS (Universal Feed Assurance Scheme) Code of Practice. Feed samples and records of deliveries and usage must be kept and measures taken to prevent on-farm contamination of feed. In addition to the UK legislative ban on ingredients derived from mammalian sources, avian ingredients are also prohibited from feed for Lion flocks. A number of other ingredients are also banned, including the colourant canthaxanthin, growth promoters and any raw materials likely to produce taint.

*ST vaccine not required for hens housed in colony cages if vet certifies it unnecessary.

laying farms

hygiene/ *Salmonella* control

The Code sets out detailed hygiene requirements additional to those required by UK and EU law, including additional sampling of the farm environment and housing; disinfection of farms between flocks; prevention of cross-infection; control of wild birds and rodents; and detailed record keeping. There are specific protocols for farms if *Salmonella* is detected in the hygiene testing programme.

animal welfare

The Code includes a number of animal welfare requirements which exceed those required by law. These include lower stocking densities on the range area for free range hens; increased nest box space and improved lighting in free range and barn houses; the banning of induced moulting, additional staff training procedures and procedures for the handling of end-of-lay hens. All Lion cage eggs come from hens kept in the new larger, enriched 'colony' cages.

veterinary health and welfare plan

All Lion laying farms have to be registered with a vet and have an up-to-date veterinary health and welfare plan.

time and temperature controls

British Lion eggs are subject to tighter controls on time and temperature than required by law. British Lion eggs must be stored below 20°C, in hygienic conditions on the farm; transported to the packing centre a minimum of twice a week; and kept at a constant temperature below 20°C.



on-farm marking

All British Lion eggs are marked on farm with the producer establishment number, which shows the system of production, country of origin and the farm where the eggs were laid. A website – www.lioneggfarms.co.uk – is also available to help consumers trace British Lion eggs back to the farm from the code on their eggs.

biosecurity

Stringent biosecurity is required to help protect against the spread of diseases such as avian influenza, including minimising contact between wild birds and poultry and avoiding any standing water on the range; and strict hygiene controls on farm, including footdips for staff and visitors, house-specific footwear, and specific higher biosecurity areas.

rodent control

Lion farms are required to operate an effective, documented rodent control system.

packing centres

controls on egg movement

All eggs must be accompanied by written documentation for proof of identity including date of lay, type of production and farm of origin.

If fibre keys trays are used, free range, barn, organic and caged eggs must be packed on different colour fibre trays for segregation purposes. If plastic keys trays are used, the accompanying documentation must be colour-coded.

packing centre hygiene

Written HACCP controls must be in place at Lion egg packing centres and traceability records must be kept at all times. Written cleaning schedules and rodent control procedures must be in place and strict hygiene and biosecurity observed. Effective crack and blood detection must be used in the grading of British Lion eggs.

egg testing

Packing centres must only handle eggs from approved Lion egg farms. At least 20 eggs per quarter must be tested from each Lion farm supplying a Lion packing centre. Egg testing is not a legal requirement. The BEIC also uses Isotope testing on a random selection of eggs every month.

'best before' date and Lion Quality mark on shell

The British Lion mark is stamped on all Lion eggs to show that they have been produced in accordance with a wide-reaching code of practice. In addition all Lion eggs carry a 'best before' date on the egg shell as well as the pack as a guarantee of freshness.

cool chain

Lion eggs must be kept between 5°C and 20°C. Retail customers must be advised that British Lion eggs should be stored at a constant temperature below 20°C, away from heat sources and sunlight, and sold in strict rotation.

ban on 'farm' descriptions on cage-produced eggs packs

Printing on British Lion egg boxes containing cage-produced eggs must not describe the eggs as 'farm eggs' or depict hens roaming free or farmyard/ countryside scenes.





registration and traceability

To guarantee traceability, all breeding farms, hatcheries, rearing and laying farms, feed mills and packing centres involved in the production of British Lion eggs must be approved and registered by BEIC, which maintains a 'live' database of all Lion premises. All British Lion pullet rearing and laying flocks must be accompanied by a unique passport certificate and all British Lion egg movement has to be fully traceable.

All Lion sites have to keep full records for two years of all monitoring and testing procedures, including audits.

independent auditing

The Lion Code of Practice is the only UK egg-specific scheme accredited to the ISO 17065 international auditing standard.

All British Lion registered premises are inspected and approved by an independent monitoring agency. Each Lion site must carry out a self-audit every six months; one of these audits must be accompanied by a BEIC subscriber.

Every Lion site is also independently audited every 18 months (hatcheries every 12 months). In addition, random unannounced audits are conducted on all sites, on an ad hoc basis. Packing stations receive an additional unannounced audit every 12 months.

Any critical non-conformance results in immediate suspension from the Lion scheme, pending appropriate remedial action. There are financial penalties for critical non-conformances at packing centres. Lesser non-conformances have to be corrected within 28 days.

business operation

All Lion premises must develop their own environmental policy, especially in regard to manure disposal, disposal of dead birds, wastage and environmental impact on the community.

All Lion scheme members are required to demonstrate contingency planning in the event of a crisis. Staff, including those employed by contractors, must be given additional training in hygiene, bird welfare and vaccination.

extraordinary lengths

The Lion Code of Practice standards are higher than current UK and EU legislation, including:

- Guaranteed British hens and eggs
- Unique passport system
- Eggs marked on farm with producer code
- Additional hygiene testing requirements for breeding, pullet rearing, laying flocks and packing centres
- Strict controls on feed
- *Salmonella* vaccination of laying flocks
- Regular egg testing
- Time and temperature controls throughout production chain
- Controls on egg packs
- Best-before date and Lion mark on egg shell
- Higher animal welfare standards including additional ranging space for free range birds
- Independent auditing to ISO 17065 standard

Method of production

- 0 = Organic
- 1 = Free Range
- 2 = Barn
- 3 = Caged



Lion Trade Mark

The Lion Quality mark is a registered Trade Mark and can only be used by subscribers to the British Egg Industry Council who comply with the Lion Code of Practice and who have signed a licence agreement. Guidelines controlling the use of the Lion Trade Mark on egg packs and other materials are available from the British Egg Industry Council. A complementary Code of Practice for the Production of Lion Egg Products for egg processors wishing to produce Lion egg products requires registration and approval of Lion egg processing sites; the exclusive use of Lion shell eggs in Lion egg products; higher standards of egg processing; improved hygiene controls; traceability of finished product; and independent auditing.

approved by the Food Standards Agency

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