

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 hens and eggs are guaranteed British.

The Lion scheme is the only Industry Control Programme approved to take official samples to be tested for salmonella on behalf of the Government.

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.

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



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.

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 audit each year must be accompanied by a BEIC packer subscriber. Every Lion site is also independently audited by the accredited monitoring agency, including random unannounced audits, every 18 months. There is also an annual unannounced audit of each British Lion packing station. Any critical non-conformance results in immediate suspension from the Lion scheme, pending appropriate remedial action and there are also 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, receive training commensurate with all aspects of their duties including hygiene, bird welfare and vaccination against salmonella. Training is being formalised through a Lion Training Passport.



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. Egg testing is not a legal requirement, but at least 20 eggs per quarter must be tested from each Lion farm supplying a Lion packing centre. The BEIC also uses Isotope testing on a random selection of eggs every month to indicate egg origin and production system.

'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.

Labelling of cage-produced eggs

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.

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; thorough 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

Higher animal welfare requirements than required by law, closely aligned with the RSPCA welfare standards (applied through RSPCA Assured) for barn and free range hens.



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 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 – also allows consumers to trace British Lion eggs back to the farm from the code on their eggs.

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 and laying flocks
- 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 Quality 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.



June 2017

British Egg Industry Council, 89 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6HR
Tel: 0207 608 3760