

# FACT SHEET 6

## FROM FARM TO TABLE



### THE HISTORY OF THE HEN

Eggs were used as a staple food as far back as 3000 BC. The modern hen is a descendant of the Red Jungle Fowl which was first found in the jungles of South East Asia. Since then hens have spread all around the world. In Australia hens arrived with the first settlers and became an important source of food.



Red Jungle Fowl

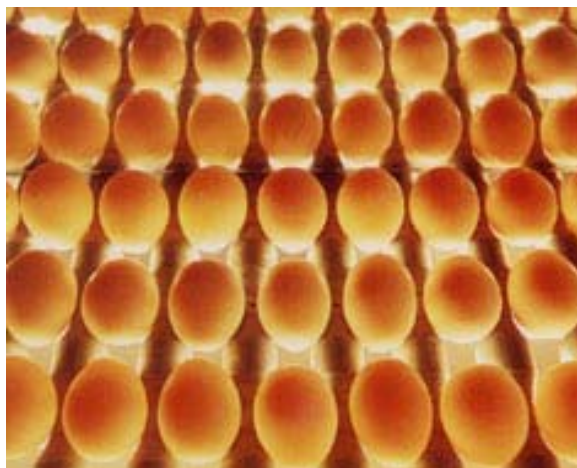
### FROM FARM TO TABLE

15-20 years ago eggs were produced from small backyard flocks. Today egg farms are large commercial enterprises.

On the farm, eggs are collected each day and placed in large cool rooms to keep them fresh. These eggs are then graded and packed before being taken to a shop or supermarket. Grading and packing are done either on the farm or at a central grading floor.

Prior to grading and to ensure that consumers receive first quality eggs, quality tests are carried out. Samples from each batch of eggs are tested for freshness, yolk colour, height of egg white, and shell thickness. Only eggs which meet a satisfactory standard are sold to retail stores.

Eggs are then graded. A large suction arm lifts the eggs onto a conveyor belt and they are washed to remove any organic matter. The eggs then travel over bright lights so that any cracked or misshapen eggs can be removed. This process is called candling.



Candling

# FACT SHEET 6 (cont.)



## FROM FARM TO TABLE

### OILING OF EGGS

To assist in maintaining the quality of eggs a coating of oil is applied. Although on its own this is not as effective as refrigeration, it does slow down the loss of quality of the egg and if the eggs are then stored in a cool place you should obtain about three weeks of high quality life in most parts of Australia (in the tropical regions you may only get about two weeks). Research has shown that if oiling is to have maximum benefit it should be carried out on the day the egg is laid. Therefore oil is sprayed on eggs at Sunny Queen grading floors (organic eggs excluded).

One of the following oils may be used but other commercial mineral oils may be suitable:

- Paraffin oil
- Ampol technical white oil No.3
- Caltex White Oil Pharma 15



This is applied with a pressure spray (similar to that used to mist plants) so that the egg is completely covered with a fine film of oil. The eggs are then put in clean cartons and stored until required. Once again only clean, sound eggs should be used. The cartons are stamped with a best before date and stored at less than 15°C in large cool rooms, awaiting despatch within a few days to retail outlets.

### EGG PRODUCTS

During the grading process any odd sized, cracked or misshaped eggs are removed for processing. These eggs are removed from their shells and used for making products such as liquid whole egg or separated yolks and whites which may be packed separately for use in different food products. The whole egg can be sold as liquid, frozen or dried egg. These products are used mainly by bakeries and catering companies who need large quantities of eggs for making biscuits, cakes and cake mixes.