



British Egg Industry Council

21st December 2022

IMPORTANT

To: **Lion Registered Free Range Laying Farms, BEIC Subscribers,**
Cc NSF, BEIC Council, BEA, BEPA

Egg Marketing standards for free range eggs where hens' access to open air runs is restricted by government veterinary order – exceeding 16-week derogation period: On-farm printing

Please note – the action required in this circular relating to on-farm marking of the Producer Establishment Number applies to Lion registered **Free Range Laying Farms and **BEIC Subscribers (packers)** only.**

Background

As a result of an earlier requirement to house poultry flocks this autumn, it seems inevitable that the 16-week derogation period will be exceeded by February 2023.

As you are aware, there were differential 16-week clock starts due to the requirement to house coming into force in different parts of the country as follows:

- Regional housing order declared on 12th October 2022 in Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex
- England housing order declared on 7th November 2022
- Northern Ireland housing order declared on 28th November 2022
- Wales housing order declared on 2nd December 2022

Scotland remains the only part of GB that has not yet declared a housing order.

The BEIC labelling solution, agreed with the BRC and jointly presented to government during the last AI season will be used again in February 2023.

Due to operational difficulties posed by different 16-week clocks ticking, our labelling solution will come into force across the UK from 1st February 2023 (aligned with the end of the first 16-week period in parts of East Anglia).

This circular provides all Lion registered **Free Range Laying Farms** and **Subscribers (packers)** with the procedure to be followed to manage the

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transition from marking eggs as Free range to Barn as we approach and exceed the 16-week period.

(Where reference is made to Producer Establishment Number (PEN), this is: xUKxxxxx (England and Wales); xUKxxxSCO (Scotland); xUK9-xxx (Northern Ireland)).

Procedure

- From 00:01 hours on 25th January 2023, a temporary derogation to the Lion Code of Practice (version 7, as amended) will enter into force to remove the requirement to mark eggs on farm with the PEN.
(The only exception to this is where a pallet of eggs is not complete. In this case, you should complete the pallet on 25/26 January and then immediately stop on farm printing).
- All eggs collected from farm and delivered to a Lion registered Packing Centre from 25th January will be marked at the PC with the free range PEN.
- Continue to use existing pallet ID tickets until 1st February. However, start to mark 'Barn egg' on pallet ID from 1st February 2023. Simply write 'Barn eggs' onto existing tickets. Your packer will liaise with you about this.
- From 1st February 2023, ink-jet printers in Lion registered packing centres will be re-programmed to print the Barn PEN on the egg shell.
- From 1st February, all FR packs to be labelled with 'Barn eggs'.

Once the housing order is lifted and birds are given access to the range:

- Pallet ID tickets can revert to Free range, however, **do not** re-start on-farm marking of eggs with the PEN.
- Eggs will continue to be marked as Barn at the Packing Centre for 7 days after the housing order is lifted, to allow all egg laid prior to the lifting of the housing order to be graded.
- At the end of this period (date to be confirmed), on-farm marking of the free range PEN will recommence.

Questions and Answers

- Q. *Why is on-farm marking being temporarily moved to the packing centre?*
A. This is to avoid FR laying farms bearing the cost of having to purchase new print heads to print '2' on the egg shell (barn).
- Q. *Why do you refer to full pallets?*
A. This is to assist the packing centre operationally. We need to avoid the potential for eggs to be printed twice; on farm and in the PC, potentially with two different PEN codes, thereby risking APHA downgrading the batch, and potential consumer confusion.

- Q. *What does the free range Laying Farm (LF) need to amend on the pallet ID tickets?*
- A. The only action you need to take on Wednesday 25th January 2023 is to stop on-farm printing. It is important to point out that marking 'Barn egg' on pallet ID should not happen until Wednesday 1st February 2023. Therefore, carry on using existing pallet ID tickets until then. From 1st February simply write 'Barn eggs' onto existing tickets. Your packer will liaise with you about this.
- Q. *My farm is not in the parts of East Anglia where the requirement to house flocks came into force on 12th October. What happens in this case?*
- A. The BEIC labelling solution will apply to all FR eggs across the UK from 1st February 2023, therefore the procedure above applies.
- Q. *My FR flock was housed after the national housing order came into force, therefore it will not have exceeded the 16-week period by 1st February. Why does this apply to me?*
- A. We are aligning all FR flocks across the UK as set out above. This will assist the egg supply chain to continue to function effectively and prevent the potential for errors which could otherwise risk eggs being downgraded, as well as avoiding potential consumer confusion.