

Extension Notes
Personal Column for August 31, 2010
By Gary Hall, ISU Regional Extension Education Director

Recalling Egg Information

Everyone has heard about the Wright County Egg company (affiliated with DeCoster Farms) and located in Galt, Iowa, issuing a voluntary recall on August 13, 2010. But how does that impact you? Are your eggs safe to eat? These and other questions are going to be tackled today!

An investigation is trying to locate the presence of the bacteria *Salmonella*, specifically the strain *Salmonella Enteritidis* (SE). The recall affected 89 days of production – May 16, 2010, to August 13, 2010.

Pasteurized processed eggs (used by retail outlets for most menu items) are not affected. Pasteurization exposes eggs to high temperatures for a short period of time; thus serving as a kill step for bacteria.

What should you do? Don't panic and avoid all eggs – be a smart consumer. According to Catherine Strohbehn, Iowa State University Extension Specialist, you should make good egg selections. Check the date on the carton at the store; don't buy past the Sell By Date. Check that eggs are in refrigeration. Take a quick peek to ensure none of shells are cracked. If cartons are dirty, don't purchase them.

After purchasing the eggs go directly home from the grocery store. No clothes shopping or sidewalk sales for you. Shopping can be done after you get those eggs in the frig. Keep the eggs refrigerated and in the carton. Some refrigerator models have special egg holders on the door; this is not the best place to store eggs. The carton protects against any damage. Store in the primary refrigeration area, since this will keep the product at a stable temperature and cooler than in the door (temperatures fluctuate with opening/closing). Uncooked eggs kept refrigerated are safe to use for four weeks after purchase. Fully cooked eggs can be safely refrigerated for up to one week.

Cooking your eggs can help you avoid any bacteria problems. Eggs over easy or with runny yolks are not fully cooked. It is best to use a thermometer to check the internal temperature which should reach a *minimum* of 145° F. If you find someone who really wants to eat some undercooked eggs, make sure you feed them pasteurized fresh shell eggs which can be purchased at many grocery stores OR provide them with this article so they can be fully educated about their choice.

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