



# NEWS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **MDA Advises Consumers: Eggs for Sale in Maryland are NOT Part of Recall *Check Codes on Cartons of Shell Eggs and Follow Normal Food Safety Practices***

**ANNAPOLIS, MD (Aug. 25, 2010)** – The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and local health departments, is working to ensure eggs that are part of the nationwide recall are not being sold in Maryland. Consumers should check the codes on cartons of eggs in the shell to verify they are not from plants involved in the nationwide recall of shell eggs implicated in outbreaks of *Salmonella enteritidis*. None of the plants in the recall are registered to pack eggs for sale in Maryland and to date, MDA inspectors have not found eggs from the affected plants in Maryland.

Information previously released by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) includes the brand names and plant numbers. Many of the brand names are packaged by multiple egg producers and not all eggs labeled with that brand are involved in the nationwide recall. Affected plant numbers are P1026, P1942, P1946, P1413, P1720, P1663 and P1860. This information can be found stamped on the end of the egg carton. Maryland consumers who find any of these plant numbers on packages of eggs should destroy or return the eggs for a refund.

When purchasing eggs, consumers should only select those that are clean, uncracked and refrigerated. The carton must be labeled with grade, size, safe handling statement, net contents, packer's registration number, lot number and the name and address of the packer or distributor. When handling eggs, consumers should refrigerate shell eggs at all times; discard cracked or dirty eggs; wash hands, cooking utensils and food preparation surfaces with soap and water after contact with raw eggs; cook eggs until both the white and the yolk are firm; avoid eating raw or undercooked eggs; and refrigerate unused or leftover egg containing foods promptly.

All producers who are packaging eggs for sale in Maryland must register with the Maryland Department of Agriculture annually and label eggs sold in Maryland with their plant number. None of the plants that are part of the recall are registered to pack eggs for sale in Maryland. To ensure that eggs from these non-registered plants have not inadvertently been shipped to Maryland, MDA has stepped up inspection activities. To date, MDA inspectors have not found eggs from the affected plants in Maryland.

As part of the registration process, producers must supply flock information to verify the chickens originated from hatcheries that are monitored for *Salmonella enteritidis* sanitation through the National Poultry Improvement Plan. A complete list of producers and distributors, including their plant number, registered to pack eggs for Maryland can be found on MDA's website at [www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/egglawreg\\_1st.pdf](http://www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/egglawreg_1st.pdf).

MDA routinely inspects wholesalers, retailers, restaurants and other food service locations to verify eggs being sold or used in Maryland meet registration and other food safety requirements. The eggs are inspected to ensure they are clean and the shell is unbroken both of which can be risk factors for egg contamination by bacteria such as *Salmonella*. All sellers of eggs in Maryland, including small producers selling at farmers' markets, farm stands, etc. are required to follow MDA's regulations for egg safety.

Many of the eggs sold in Maryland come from producers who participate in the Maryland Egg Quality Assurance Program that was started in 1992 or similar programs in surrounding states. These programs include production standards to minimize the risk of *Salmonella enteritidis* in eggs. The FDA's new mandatory program is modeled after these standards. The combination of MDA's inspection program and the egg quality assurance programs has resulted in a significant decrease in egg related *Salmonella enteritidis* outbreaks in Maryland since the early 1990s.

Consumers who have questions about whether the eggs they are purchasing are involved in the recall may call the MDA Food Quality Assurance Program at 410-841-5769. For more information about Maryland's Egg Inspection and Egg Quality Assurance Programs, visit [www.mda.state.md.us/licenses\\_permits/food/index.php](http://www.mda.state.md.us/licenses_permits/food/index.php)

Food safety information and details about the current recall are available at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

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