

WHAT ARE PASTURE-RAISED EGGS

AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

BY DELTA TAILS FARM

WWW.DELTATAILSFARM.COM



INTRODUCTION

Did you know- as you stand in front of the massive egg selection at the grocery store- the simple act of selecting eggs for your morning breakfast or culinary creations has far deeper significance and impact than just choosing eggs that “seem healthier” or “appear to be from a farm.”

Beyond the confines of the supermarket aisle, there exists a world of egg production that stretches from multi-billion dollar industrialized production to Pasture-Raised idealism; and everything in between.

This guide aims to inform and educate you on the different branches of egg production and industry wide terms that are regularly used on packaging to sway your buying choices.

We hope this guide ultimately helps you feel empowered and inspired to consciously make a shift from purchasing industrially produced eggs to locally sourced eggs- and to help you further understand the vital role locally grown and produced foods plays in our overall health, wellbeing and the world around us.

UNDERSTANDING EGG PRODUCTION

Within the United States, there are five types of egg production:

Industrial Caged Egg Production

These eggs are laid by hens living in cages with access to feed, water, and security. The cages are often housed in large warehouses or industrial facilities. For maximum egg laying efficiency, these hens spend 2-3 years laying in their cage until a decrease in their production.

Cage-Free Egg Production

These eggs are laid by hens in indoor floor operations with a **minimum of 1 square foot** of movement room per bird per United States poultry welfare regulations. These hens are not confined to cages, but their space is still limited in order to maximize production. These hens (as well as cages hens) are given a strictly controlled diet in order to maintain production rates and combat bio-infections.

Free-Range Egg Production

Eggs laid by hens with access to "Free-Range" are given a **minimum of 2 square feet per bird**. Depending on the operation these birds can be kept in an industrialized floor operation, in a barn, or in an and outdoor chicken enclosure, but all have access to outside where they can move around and perform natural chicken activities like scratching for food. These chickens are provided with a mixed diet of natural grasses and chicken feed.

Pasture-Raised Egg Production

Eggs laid by Pasture-Raised hens are provided a **minimum of 108 square feet** (yes you read that right) per bird! These hens are given ample room to move around, scratch, stretch, run, sun bath, and perform all natural chicken activities. These hens eat a varied diet of natural grasses, grubs, insects, fruits, grains, and more- and can also be given supplemental feeds when needed to ensure hen health. These hens are always outside, but are protected at night via hen houses and other production methods. Nearly all Pasture-Raised egg production in the United States comes from local farms, as opposed to industrial corporations.



WHAT ABOUT ORGANIC EGGS?

Whether an egg is labeled “organic” does not necessarily signify better animal welfare or wellbeing for the hen.

To qualify as organic, eggs must come from chickens that are fed only organic feed (i.e., feed that is free of animal by-products, synthetic fertilizers, pesticides or other chemical additives). Also these hens are not treated with antibiotics or other medications.

Organic eggs are laid from “Cage-Free, to Free-Range, to Pasture-Raised hens.

Although Pasture-Raised hens typically eat a naturally organic diet of grasses, bugs, insects, and more- they still need USDA approved certification to be labeled “Organic”

LET'S TALK MORE ABOUT PASTURE-RAISED

Pasture-Raised eggs are laid by hens who spend their days out in a pasture. They are provided safe nesting and sleeping areas, but are not forced to lay their eggs in a nesting box. At Delta Tails Farm, sometimes our hens will lay their eggs where they feel safe and secure- if that's out in natural grass, as opposed to a box- that's fine with us!

Due to the variety of food and nutritional substances these hens have regular access too, their eggs are most nutrient dense of any eggs available.

Often Pasture-Raised eggs will have much richer yolk color (in shades of golden and orange) and the is due to the flowers and beta-carotene in the foliage they eat.

This natural diet as well as fresh air keeps Pasture-Raised hens virtually "illness free". Therefore, not medications or antibiotics are needs in their diets like industrialized production.



ARE PASTURE-RAISED CHICKEN EGGS ACTUALLY HEALTHIER?

Compared to conventional and Cage-Free eggs, Pasture-Raised eggs contain...

2X More healthy
Omega-3 Fats!



2X More protein!

More Essential Vitamins!

3X more vitamin D

4X more vitamin E

7X more beta-carotene!



What about shell & yolk color?

Shell color has nothing to do with a "healthier egg". Shells are colored by the breed of the hen.

Firm golden yolks- a trait of Pasture-Raised eggs are due to the lush varied diet of green plants and bugs.





HOW IS PASTURE-RAISED BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

On a well-managed farm, Pasture-Raised hens play an important role in the farm bio-environment.

- By regularly scratching and pecking the hens help natural “till” the earth, allowing in oxygen and burying seeds for future plants to grow.
- Chicken manure- high in organic matter from their diet and nitrogen which- helps fertilize the soil from which healthier grasses will then grow.
- Pasture-Raised chickens are often used along side a symbiotic relationship with other farm production animals. For example, many farmers rotate chicken and cattle throughout their pastures. Chickens come in after cattle have been in a pasture. They scratch and peck at the cattle manure, eating the bugs from underneath and distribute the fertilizer. The chickens then add their nitrogen rich manure and then are rotated again to let the pasture or field grow.
- These practices are known as Restorative Farming practices.

WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD-CHAIN AS A WHOLE?

Purchasing locally grown, Pasture-Raised eggs allows consumers to buy eggs straight from the source.

This helps cut down on negative environmental emissions as eggs are not being transported by large trucks or house for weeks in warehouse refrigerators.

By purchasing locally grown, carefully considered Pasture-Raised eggs, you're not only showing an effort towards direct care of the hen, but you're also considering the wellbeing of the farmer.

By buying direct from a farmer, you're ensuring proceeds go back to the farmer and humane egg production- not back to corporations and investors.

And, like we said above- locally grown, Pasture-Raised eggs are the freshest and most vitamin dense eggs you can eat!





HOW CAN YOU BUY PASTURE-RAISED EGGS?

Delta Tails Farm is your number one source for local Pasture-Raised eggs in the Sacramento Delta area. We serve Rio Vista, West Sacramento, and everyone in between! Our subscription and home deliver service allows up to deliver the freshest Pasture-Raised Chicken and Duck eggs right to your door! Hand gathered just days before, we guarantee your eggs are always fresh!

[CLICK HERE](#)



Shop Eggs

From Our Farm to Your Table! Egg Prices...

By Name / Nov 16, 2022

And if you want to see how our hens are doing, just drive over to Ryer Island where you'll see all our hens happily pecking, scratching and restoring our Delta pastures!

If you'd like to try our eggs- click the image next to this text. We deliver every weekend!

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

If you would like to find out more about Pasture-Raised eggs and the United States egg production industries, you can read more by clicking these resources!



Article explains difference between pasture-raised and free-range eggs

Article Source: US News and World Report By Toby Amidor When it comes to eggs, market shelves are filled with terms like "cage-free" and "free-range." B...



The FoodPrint of Eggs

Learn more about the foodprint of egg production and its impact on environment, animals and people, as well as info about cage-free, organic and more.

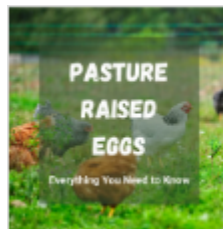


Decoding the Carton: How To Buy Clean & Humane Eggs

Source: [http://goop.com/decoding-the-carton-how-to-buy-clean-humane-eggs/...](http://goop.com/decoding-the-carton-how-to-buy-clean-humane-eggs/)



Certified Humane / Aug 23, 2016



Pasture Raised Eggs: Everything You Need to Know

Discover what pasture raised eggs are, where...
fedbythefarm.com

**United
Producers**

Facts & Stats

U.S. egg production and consumption continues to rise, as measured by the federal government and industry sources.



United Egg Producers