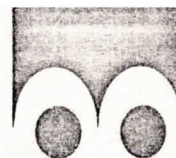


EGG FARMERS OF VICTORIA

The Victorian Egg Marketing Board trading as Egg Farmers of Victoria



CIRCULAR NO. 57/87

24th JUNE 1987

TO: ALL PRODUCERS

SHELL THICKNESS STANDARDS

As announced in the 5 Year Plan, a Shell Thickness Standard would be introduced in the continuing endeavour to upgrade the Shell Egg Quality Standards. The introduction of this standard will in the long term ensure a better return to producers as the requirement will mean less loss due to breakage attributable to poor shell and an improved sale of eggs as the consumer gains more confidence in the retail package.

The Board has asked the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to develop workshops on improving shell quality as there are a considerable number of ways in which management can affect shell quality. As genetics do play a small part in shell quality, producers should be sure that the breed of bird they purchase is genetically developed to obtain the best possible shell quality.

The Board's Quality Department has conducted extensive tests over several years on shell thickness. We have developed a machine to measure shell thickness on a "production" basis using the Specific Gravity method. Most producers have had their shell thickness readings advised to them since February of this year.

A minimum shell thickness of 0.325 mm (as determined by S.G.) has been determined by the Board. The tests mentioned above indicate that this thickness would affect less than 3% of the graded eggs as presently packed. Improved flock management procedures have the potential to reduce this percentage even further.

The new Shell Thickness Standard will be introduced from 1st July 1987 as previously advised in Circular No. 77/86. Producers will be advised of their Shell Thickness readings. 'A' Class premium payments will not be affected by below minimum shell thicknesses until 1st January 1988. This in effect, means that Producers have had almost 3 years notice of the introduction of this quality standard.

The attachment to this circular details the procedural methods of sampling for the Shell Thickness Standard.

EGG FARMERS OF VICTORIA

R. KEEDLE

Administration Manager

SHELL QUALITY TESTING PROCEDURE

1. Initial samples will be taken from 63 gram eggs from all Producers claiming 'A' class premium.
2. Selection of sample eggs will be made in conjunction with routine quality samplings. Results of all tests will be advised to producers at the same time as yolk colour readings.
3. Sample size will be 10 eggs. If this sample achieves average shell thickness of 0.325 mm no further sample will be taken - produce passes shell quality requirement.
4. If sample of 10 is less than 0.325 mm average, the producer will be notified and flock identification established on an age basis to enable further larger samples to be taken of a specific flock.
5. If extensive testing of a specific flock shows a continuing problem, such flock's production will be required to be segregated and will be ineligible for 'A' class premium payments until the problem is corrected or flock disposed of.
6. Production from flocks classified as ineligible for 'A' class premium must be consigned to a Board Floor as 1st quality 'B' class eggs.