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Laying Houses

At a modern egg farm hens are kept in large laying houses, where the light and temperature are controlled and the hens are safe from predators. Inside the houses the hens are kept in cages. The hens get fed a balanced diet high in vitamins and minerals.



2

Laying & Collecting:

When a hen lays an egg it rolls down onto a conveyor belt with all the other eggs that carries them to the processing facility. Hundreds of eggs can be moving along the conveyor belt at any one time.



3

Cleaning:

First, the eggs are washed to remove dirt and debris, and then sanitized to remove bacteria from the shell. A light coating of mineral oil is sprayed on the egg to seal the tiny pores in the shell. This process slows down aging and prevents bacteria from entering the pores.



4

Candling & Grading:

The eggs are passed over a very strong light called candling. The strong light allows a worker called the Candler, to inspect the exterior and contents without cracking the shell. The Candler grades the eggs AA, A or B, based on the quality of the interior and exterior. Eggs that don't meet the guidelines are removed.



5

Sorting:

Next, a machine automatically sorts the eggs according to size.



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Sizing:

Eggs can be Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, Small or Pee wee. Generally, a hen lays larger eggs as she gets older. The breed of the hen also is a factor in egg size, along with nutrition, and environment.



7

Packing:

A special machine carefully places the eggs, small end down, in the cartons that protect them from breakage. The cartons are marked with the grade and size.



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Cooling:

After packing, the eggs are placed in a large refrigerated room where they are cooled to 45 degrees F to maintain quality and freshness.



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Shipping:

The eggs are shipped to grocery stores in refrigerated trucks. Typically, an egg reaches the grocery store shelf just 3 to 4 days after it was laid.



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Marketing:

To maintain freshness and quality, the grocery store keeps the eggs in a refrigerated display case where they are purchased by the consumer.

From Hatchery to Table