

2024 4-H EGG-cellent Egg Contest Planning Guide



This contest is for 4-H members with a flock of chickens that are currently laying eggs. If you are not enrolled in 4-H online, contact your county agent to get enrolled. Participants may submit up to 2 sets of 6 eggs (half dozen) in different categories, which will be judged for uniformity, exterior and interior quality. Participants will also complete supplemental project components based on their age which is part of their final score. Failure to submit eggs and complete the supplemental section will make youth ineligible to receive a t-shirt or compete for prizes.

How to Enter and Requirements:

Register at go.ncsu.edu/2024eggcontest

Youth must participate in the two **MANDATORY Zoom sessions on August 6th and 22nd** (or watch recording and inform agent). Youth must complete supplemental project components and submit on-line by **September 18th**. Eggs must be submitted by **September 18th or before to your Extension Office**.

**** No refunds for not completing the project.****



SAVE THE DATES

- August 2nd - Registration Deadline
- August 6th at 6 pm - Initial Training Zoom
- August 22nd at 6 pm - EGG-citing, In-Depth Egg training Zoom
- September 18th by 5 pm or before - Egg Submission Deadline to your county Extension Office. Supplemental sections must be submitted on this day too. Check with your office for exact deadline.
- October 3rd at 6 pm - Winners Announced on Zoom

****ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.****



Entry Guidelines:

The Egg-cellent Egg Contest assesses the ability of 4-H members to raise chickens that produce high-quality eggs. Participants submit up to 2 sets of 6 eggs (half dozen), which are judged for uniform appearance and consistent interior quality using the same testing measures applied in commercial poultry production. No Refunds.

Who Can Participate:


Any enrolled North Carolina 4-H member who has a flock of chickens that are currently laying eggs. The chickens may be from a 4-H Chick Chain, Poultry Project, or other program source.




Luke Dennis,
Montgomery
county with his
Easter Egger Hen

Entry Categories

1. Age categories (age as of January 1st):
 - Cloverbuds: ages 5-7
 - Junior : ages 8-10
 - Intermediate: ages 11-13
 - Senior: ages 14-18
2. Egg Categories - you can enter 2 sets of 6 eggs (half dozen), but they must be in different categories (ex. 1 half dozen brown extra large and 1 half dozen blue/green small).

 Eggshell color: White, Brown, or Blue/Green

 Egg size: PeeWee, Small, Medium, Large, Extra Large, and Jumbo. Size is determined by the weight of a half dozen eggs (any kitchen scale that shows weight in ounces can be used). The weights are shown in the chart to the right.

Entry Fee: \$15 per youth (can submit up to 2 sets of 6 eggs/half dozen in different categories).

Egg Submission Deadline:

Eggs may be hand delivered to your county Extension office by 5pm on September 18th or before. Each entry should include a score sheet labeled with your name, address, telephone number, the size of the eggs, and eggshell color. See training materials for more information.

Packing:

Eggs should be kept cool during transit. Pack the eggs in the egg carton provided surrounded with padding and an ice pack, and place them in a cooler. Eggs will be refrigerated until judging begins.

Prizes:

All youth who complete the project will receive a t-shirt. Cloverbuds will receive medals. Youth in age categories Junior, Intermediate, and Senior are eligible for prizes in their age and egg categories (1st place: \$15, 2nd: \$10, 3rd: \$5, and ribbons). Final prize categories will depend on sponsorships and number in each division. All other participants will receive a ribbon.

EGG SIZE CATEGORIES

Egg Size	Ounces per half dozen (6 eggs)
Peewee	7.5
Small	9
Medium	10.5
Large	12
Extra Large	13.5
Jumbo	15

Egg Judging

Judging is closed door. Results will be announced on Thursday, October 3rd at 6 pm on Zoom. Eggs will be examined for uniformity in shape, size, color, and cleanliness. Three eggs from each half dozen will be randomly selected and opened, and the Haugh unit measurement will be taken.

Tips to Help You Prepare

Selecting & Preparing High-Quality Eggs for Judging

Eggs should be uniform in size and eggshell color. Deviations in eggshell color will result in a deduction. Select eggs that are free from defects, such as stains, adhering material, fly specks, and cracks. If you know that one or two of your hens consistently lay eggs with meat or blood spots, candle those eggs to find the defects and remove them from the half dozen that you enter into the contest. Customers do not like to see blood or meat spots in their product, so these defects are considered downgrades.

Depending on the size of your flock, you may need to collect eggs for several days to get enough of uniform size to include in your half dozen. If this is the case, be sure to store your eggs in the refrigerator until they are ready to transport.

Avoid storing eggs in containers where they may become cracked (a bucket or egg basket, for example). You will be provided a plastic carton for your entry(ies).

The eggs you choose should be weighed as a half dozen and placed in the correct size category based on the weight. A simple kitchen scale will work.

Grading and Sizing

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides guidelines on the grading and sizing of eggs. Egg sizes are not dependent on the egg grade; rather, they are determined by the weight of the egg in ounces.



Egg grades are determined by both interior and exterior quality factors. To learn about these factors, refer to the National 4-H Avian Bowl Manual (Poultry Judging section) and the National 4-H Poultry Judging (Egg Judging Section). See the resources section for more information.

Maintaining Interior Egg Quality

Refrigerate your eggs as soon as possible after they have left the hen to maintain the highest possible quality. Proteins in the egg white deteriorate if exposed to room or high temperatures. An egg that is stored at room temperature ages as much in one day as an egg kept in the refrigerator for a week. This is why you should keep your eggs cool as they are transported to the contest.

Storage time also is important. If you have a large flock that will lay a dozen eggs or more daily, you likely will not need to store your eggs before delivering to the contest. If you have a smaller flock, however, you may need to collect eggs for several days to weeks to get enough of the same size and quality to use in your half dozen. Be sure to refrigerate your eggs while you are storing them.

Another factor that can affect the interior quality of the egg is the age of the hen. Older hens that are close to molt (annual dropping then regrowing of their feathers) lay eggs that are slightly different from those of young hens. The same is true of hens that are in their second, third, fourth, and older years of egg production. When a hen starts her laying period for the year, she tends to be “refreshed,” and she lays eggs with higher-quality protein. This is not a factor over which you have much control.

Lastly, the diet and genetics of the hen can influence the quality of the eggs that she lays. You cannot control the hen’s genetics, but you can control the quality of the diet that she receives. A hen that is fed a balanced diet designed for laying hens is going to lay higher-quality eggs than one that is fed a diet diluted too much with treats, greens, and grains. Remember to include supplements of oyster shell if your older flock starts to lay eggs that have very thin shells. It may be a sign that their bodies need a little more calcium than what is already provided in the balanced ration for laying hens.

A hen is considered a good producer if she lays high-quality eggs and does so consistently. That is a testament not only to her genetics but to your skills as a poultry flock owner.



Final Notes: All decisions by the judge are final. Direct criticism or interference with the judge or program officials before, during, or after the competitive event is prohibited. All officials shall be treated with courtesy, cooperation, and respect, and no person shall direct abusive or threatening conduct toward them. Potential disqualification from future events after review is possible. Any special considerations not covered in the rules will be decided by the Regional Egg-cellent Egg Project Committee.

The information on quality eggs and videos is used with permission from Alabama Cooperative Extension System from their Golden Egg Contest rules and guidelines.

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Factors Affecting Egg Size

Young hens tend to lay smaller eggs than do older hens. As a hen ages, she lays eggs with larger yolks and albumen (egg white), but with the same amount of shell. This means that the eggs get bigger, but the shells start to get thinner. It is a balancing act for egg companies to determine when a flock should be molted so that hens can be refreshed.

Resources

- National 4-H Avian Bowl Manual. \$15.00 plus shipping. Available through Clemson University at www.aces.edu/go/772
- National 4-H Poultry Judging. \$6.95. Available through the University of Nebraska–Lincoln at www.aces.edu/go/773.

