

Establishment Inspection Report	FEI:	3008880596
Hickman's Family Farms	EI Start:	04/19/2011
Arlington, AZ 85322-8167	EI End:	04/19/2011

## SUMMARY

This was the initial inspection of a large shell egg production farm (Arlington North). It was conducted under the FY-11 LOS-DO work plan (DFPG 11-04, ORA 20111012601, FACTS 1258067). No Inspectional Observations (FDA-483) was issued.

This assignment states to conduct a *targeted* inspection of Hickman's, reviewing the firm's Salmonella enteritidis (SE) plan, environmental test records, and pest control. Targeted inspections do not include inspecting the egg-processing plant or collecting environmental samples. Part of the egg-processing plant was inspected 8/20/10 under another assignment, with no deficiencies noted.

The firm was in operation at the time of the inspection. Copies of the firm's SE program and other records were obtained for this report. No photographs or samples were collected. There were no refusals. Please address correspondence to Mr. Billy Hickman, Vice President, at 6515 S. Jackrabbit Trail, Buckeye, AZ 85326.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Inspected firm:	Hickman's Family Farms
Location:	32902 W. Ward Rd., Arlington, AZ 85322-8167
Phone:	623-872-2384
FAX:	623-386-1382
Mailing address:	6515 S. Jackrabbit Trail, Buckeye, AZ 85326-5641
Dates of inspection:	4/19/2011
Days in the facility:	1
Participants:	John A. Daubenspeck, Investigator

## HISTORY, INTERSTATE COMMERCE, JURISDICTION

Hickman's is in the business of producing shell eggs. In addition to the Arlington farms North and South, there is also one in Maricopa, Arizona. All buildings are registered under the (b) (3) Shell-Egg Regulations.

The Arlington facilities have egg-packing and liquid-egg processing plants as well, but these were not covered at the current inspection. They also have a chicken-manure-fertilizing operation, but it was not covered either. The manure is sold to (b) (4) (b) (4) or (b) (4), used largely for (b) (4).

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Approximately <sup>(b) (4)</sup>% of all products made here are sold within Arizona. The remaining are sold to <sup>(b) (4)</sup>, <sup>(b) (4)</sup>, and <sup>(b) (4)</sup>. Neither Ms. Yeatts nor Mr. Pineda knew the annual volume of sales in dollars, but said that they produce about <sup>(b) (4)</sup> dozen eggs per day. Arlington North has <sup>(b) (4)</sup> houses, with approximately <sup>(b) (4)</sup> birds (Exhibit 1).

- Main customers for Arlington North are <sup>(b) (4)</sup>.
- Arlington South sells to <sup>(b) (4)</sup>.
- The Maricopa farm sells to <sup>(b) (4)</sup> and <sup>(b) (4)</sup>.

Hickman's is certified by Safe Quality Food (SQF), United Egg Produces (UEP), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Plant # P2030 (Arlington North).

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

I presented my FDA credentials and a Notice of Inspection (FDA-482) to Ms. Shari Yeatts, Quality Assurance Technician. She was the most responsible person of the firm at the time of the inspection.

She is responsible for developing and implementing the SE plan and ensuring that workers maintain the required records. She accompanied me through the hen houses and provided copies of records for this report. Ms. Yeatts answers to Mr. Billy Hickman, Vice President, who was not there.

Mr. David Pineda, Compliance Coordinator, arrived a short time later and also accompanied us through the plant. He ensures the firm meets regulatory requirements and also does internal audits. He answers to Mr. Billy Hickman as well.

<sup>b6 & b7c</sup> is the Resident Veterinarian. He arrived a short time later and sat with us during the interview and records review. He is responsible for ensuring the health of all birds at the ranch.

Ms. Yeatts provided a list of managers of the firm (Exhibit 2). Mr. Billy Hickman is the most responsible person of Hickman's Family Farms, overseeing all operations.

## FIRM'S TRAINING PROGRAM

Hickman's trains their employees in good manufacturing practices, including sanitation, disease-control, record management, euthanasia, ethics, conduct, and safety.

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## OPERATIONS

Hickman's has developed a written Salmonella Enteritidis Prevention and Monitoring Program and Bio-Security Policy (Exhibit 3). It includes:

- obtaining chicks from flocks that meet USDA standards for disease prevention;
- procedures for swabbing the environment when chicks are 14 to 16 weeks of age and when they are 40 to 45 weeks of age;
- cleaning and disinfection; daily barn inspections;
- pest control;
- record-keeping; flock reports; employee training;
- refrigeration of eggs and temperature control.

Ms. Yeatts said that she obtains supplies for the environmental swabbing from (b) (4), (b) (4), (b) (4). Samples are analyzed by (b) (4), (b) (4). I reviewed several test reports.

None were positive for Salmonella enteritidis (Group D), although some were positive for Salmonella (Exhibit 4). (b) (4) wrote an explanation of this and handed it to me for clarification (Exhibit 5). He said that some forms of Salmonella are harmful and some are not. Salmonella enteritidis is the organism that can cause sickness, and they have not had any cases with this strain.

## WATER & FEED

Hickman's has its own water wells. Ms. Yeatts also provided copies of their water tests, which are checked for coliforms and E. coli. These are sent to (b) (4), in (b) (4). Ms. Yeatts said that they use (b) (4) as a water treatment to help control for pathogens (in the birds' drinking water) (Exhibit 6).

Dr. Bicknell said that the feed comes from (b) (4). They use about (b) (4) different formulas. The feed is usually (b) (4). He said that they do not usually use anti-biotics or hormones.

Ms. Yeatts showed me various computer records concerning age of birds, mortality, egg production per house, weight, pest control, equipment-disinfecting logs, foot-bath stations logs, refrigeration logs, calibration records, and other disease-control factors. I did not obtain any copies for this report. I obtained part of a sanitation report (Exhibit 7).

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#### PEST-CONTROL

Pest-control includes (b) (4). The firm has decided that (b) (4) flies is acceptable (Exhibit 9). If there are more than that, they use (b) (4). Pest-control materials are locked in a caged area. (b) (4) provides services (b) (4).

I did not see any rodents at this facility. I did see flies and numerous cobwebs. Ms. Yeatts said that the houses are cleaned before starting a new cycle of pullets.

#### FDA ATTACHMENT A QUESTIONNAIRE

This firm does not have a history with the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. There are no known reports of disease outbreaks from this farm. They said that they have never had an order of diversion.

They are certified by USDA (NPIP, National Poultry Improvement Program), SQF (Safe Quality Food), and UEP (United Egg Producers).

Eggs produced at this plant are for shell-egg production. This farm has (b) (4) hen houses (belted) and about (b) (4) million birds. They are registered with the FDA under the (b) (4) Egg Rule. This is a family-owned and family-run operation.

Houses are tested for Salmonella enteritidis when birds are 14 to 16 weeks old, and again when 40 to 45 weeks of age. The firm's SE plan describes the testing procedures in more detail. Biosecurity measures, pest-control, record-keeping, and disinfection procedures are also described in the SE plan.

Birds are euthanized (b) (4). They are not used for meat in human food or pet food. The birds are placed in the manure piles and decompose rapidly, (b) (4) said.

They also pack the eggs at this facility (attached to the egg-conveyor belt), plant # 2030. Eggs are washed, rinsed, and sanitized using (b) (4) to help destroy coliforms and Salmonella.

The USDA inspects the firm's breaking plant, where there is a 5-log reduction in pathogens. Hickman's does follow the FDA's Shell-Egg Regulations, biosecurity, pullet-rearing, pest-control, cleaning and disinfection, sampling of environmental conditions, and refrigeration requirements.

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## GENERAL DISCUSSION WITH MANAGEMENT

Mr. Pineda said that they had some complaints regarding sickness, but none were confirmed by doctors' reports. He said that the complaints came after the nation-wide media reports of issues with eggs. They have a recall plan in place, should there ever be one (Exhibit 8).

## EXHIBITS COLLECTED

1. Fact sheet
2. Organizational structure
3. SE Plan
4. Environmental test results 2/7/11
5. Salmonella information sheet from [REDACTED] b6 & b7c
6. (b) (4) fact sheet
7. Cleaning log
8. Recall plan
9. Fly index log

## ATTACHMENTS

FDA-482, Notice of Inspection

  
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John A. Daubenspeck, Investigator