

Establishment Inspection Report	FEI:	3008880605
Hickman's Egg Ranch, Inc.	EI Start:	04/21/2011
Arlington, AZ 85322-8120	EI End:	04/21/2011

**SUMMARY**

This was the initial inspection of a large shell-egg production farm (Arlington South). 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. The Arlington North facility was also inspected the same week, with the report found under FEI 3008880596.

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. That report is found under FEI 3004335862.

The firm was in operation at the time of the inspection. Copies of the firm's SE program and other records were obtained during the Arlington North inspection. 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 Egg Ranch, Inc.
Location:	32425 W. Salome Hwy., Arlington, AZ 85322-8120
Phone:	623-872-2384
FAX:	623-286-1382
Mailing address:	6515 S. Jackrabbit Trail, Buckeye, AZ 85326-8167
Dates of inspection:	4/21/2011
Days in the facility:	1
Participants:	John A. Daubenspeck, Investigator

**HISTORY, INTERSTATE COMMERCE, JURISDICTION**

Hickman's has been in the business of raising laying hens for shell-egg production since 1944. In addition to the Arlington farms North and South, there is also one in Maricopa, Arizona. All buildings are registered under **b3** the Shell-Egg Regulations.

The Arlington facility has an egg-packing and liquid-egg processing plant 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.

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Approximately (b) (4) % of all products made here are sold within Arizona. The remaining are sold to (b) (4), (b) (4), and (b) (4). Neither Ms. Yeatts nor Mr. Pineda knew the annual volume of sales in dollars, but said that daily, they produce about (b) (4) dozen eggs.

Arlington South has (b) (4) hen houses with approximately (b) (4) birds total (Exhibit 1). Of these, (b) (4) are high-rise houses with manure-pits. The others are manure-belted houses. There are approximately (b) (4) to (b) (4) hens per house (Exhibit 2).

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

Hickman's is certified by Safe Quality Food (SQF), United Egg Produces (UEP), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Plant # P2000.

## **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. He oversees all operations pertaining to production at Hickman's farms.

Mr. David Pineda, Compliance Coordinator, and Dr. (b) (6 & b7c) Resident Veterinarian, were present at the Arlington North inspection, but not at this one (Arlington South).

All Hickman's employees are trained 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 (SE) Prevention and Monitoring Program and Bio-Security Policy. It is the same as that in the Arlington North report, and due to length, has not been copied to this report. It contains the required elements under 21 CFR 118:

- 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
  - 40 to 45 weeks of age;
- cleaning and disinfection; daily barn inspections;
- pest control;
- refrigeration of eggs and temperature control.

Ms. Yeatts said that she obtains supplies for the environmental swabbing from (b) (4) (b) (4), (b) (4), (b) (4). Samples are analyzed by (b) (4) (b) (4), (b) (4). I reviewed several test reports. None were positive for Salmonella enteritidis (Group D).

Ms. Yeatts provided me with copies of Arlington South water tests (Exhibit 3). They were negative for E. coli and Coliforms. She also provided a fly-Index log sheet (Exhibit 4) and a recall plan for Arlington South (Exhibit 5). They have not had any recalls at this plant, she said.

I asked Ms. Yeatts about the adjoining facility that repacks eggs coming from the conveyor belts from these houses. She provided me with a copy of *A day in the life of an egg at Hickman's* (Exhibit 6). Eggs are washed, rinsed, sanitized, sorted, packed, coded, and stored in refrigeration at or below 45° F. until ready for shipping.

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.

For more information about the SE plan, environmental testing procedures, water, feed, and pest-control, please see Arlington North report. 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.

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## 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 12 hen houses (belted) and about <sup>(b) (4)</sup> million birds. They are registered with the FDA under <sup>(b) (4)</sup> **b3** the 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. SE testing, biosecurity, pest-control, record-keeping, and disinfection procedures are also described in the SE plan.

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

Hickman's also pack the eggs at an adjoining facility (attached to the egg-conveyor belt), USDA plant # 2000. Eggs are washed, rinsed, and sanitized using <sup>(b) (4)</sup> **(b) (4)** to help destroy coliforms and Salmonella.

There is also a USDA egg-breaking plant adjoining the egg-packing 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.

## 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.

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### EXHIBITS COLLECTED

1. Fact sheet
2. Hen house data sheet
3. Water tests
4. Fly-index sheet
5. Recall procedure
6. *A day in the life of an egg* fact sheet

### ATTACHMENTS

FDA-482, Notice of Inspection

  
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John A. Daubenspeck, Investigator