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FAQs

How much room do the hens have to roam?

A happy egg farm is a minimum of 5 acres for a flock of 16,000 hens. (This works out to be the size of four football fields or 14 square feet per bird, which is nearly 7 times larger than most standards)

What does a happy egg Free Range farm look like?

A happy egg Free Range farm is an expansive five acres of pasture (or the equivalent size of four football fields) for a flock of 16,000 birds.

Our hens are happy because they engage in natural behaviors with daily access to:

- Outdoor pasture with established or newly planted trees from 10am thru dusk (average of 8-9 hours per day)
- Wooden perching towers (play kits) and sand pits for dust bathing on the range
- Pecking toys inside the barn, plus nest boxes so our hens can select their nesting box for laying eggs
- Clean water and an all-natural specially formulated diet of corn and soy, enhanced with vitamins

How do you ensure happy egg farms are working at your standards?

We select the right farmers to be with our “Girls” everyday...we prefer family farms where the hens receive more care and attention.

We inspect our farms on a regular basis to ensure the best welfare of the hens in addition to quarterly audits. In the rare case of an issue, we will work with the farmer to correct the issue. If our performance standards aren't met, they cannot remain in our program.

Why are all the happy egg farms in Central USA?

We really are looking for the best places to raise hens. For us that means a climate suited to hens going outdoors every day. States like Arkansas and Missouri have large open pastures with lots of trees and grass...pretty ideal for hens.



In addition, the farms are close to grain fields, helping to keep our carbon footprint low.

Where do the hens lay their eggs?

Our hens lay their eggs in the morning in a nesting box of their choosing and then the eggs roll onto a conveyor belt. The belt moves the eggs to the end of the barn where they are collected and placed onto trays.

What breed are “the Girls?”

Our girls are from a range of breeds that always lay brown eggs. Our first flocks are Bovan Browns, a hybrid known for its egg-laying ability and easy going temperament.

Why is there so much confusion in the marketplace about how eggs are raised?

It’s all a bit confusing...so you do have to check the cartons closely as the rules regarding images and wording on egg cartons is not fully established. Here are some definitions to help out:

- **CAGED:** Between 90-95 percent of eggs in the U.S. come from hens that live their entire lives in battery cages with around 8.5 inches by 8.5 inches of space per hen – for a bird with a 30 inch wingspan. That’s smaller than standard printer paper!
- **CAGE-FREE:** Over one-third of Americans incorrectly think “cage-free” means hens spend most of their time outdoors on pasture. Though a cage-free hen does not live in a wire cage, it does live its entire life within the confines of a barn, with little to no exposure to the outdoors.
- **FREE-RANGE:** Standards are developing but still unregulated. HFAC's Certified Humane® "Free Range" requirement is 2 square feet per bird. The hens must be outdoors, weather permitting, for at least 6 hours per day. Unfortunately, some cage-free producers still use the label although their hens roam indoors, capitalizing on the lack of labeling regulations.
- **ORGANIC:** Organic eggs come from hens that are given organic feed – that is feed without GMOs or pesticides per the USDA standards. Use of the term “organic” refers only to the feed provided to the hens, not the lifestyle. Unless the carton says otherwise, chances are the eggs come from caged hens.
- At the happy egg co. our hens are housed in barns overnight and are free to roam outdoors every day. Each day at 10am they are let out on 5 acres of lush green pasture, where they spend their days flapping, perching, foraging and dust-bathing in natural sunlight. At dusk, they are brought back into the barn where they remain safely overnight. We offer our hens an expansive 14 square feet per bird, far exceeding any current requirements for use of the term “Free Range.”

For more information, check out our bright and colorful carton. While you are at it, check out our website www.thehappyeggco.com for more information.



Why aren't you organic?

Our animal welfare standards go further than the current organic standards, which focus almost exclusively on a hen's feed and doesn't guarantee access to the outdoors. We care about providing great nutritious feed too, but our focus is on hens living higher welfare lives.

What is the hen's daily diet?

The hens are fed an all-natural specially formulated recipe of corn and soy mixed with vitamins and minerals for the best nutrition for healthy hens and great eggs. (The feed never has added meat, bone meal, hormones or antibiotics.)

- Did you know it takes 3 1/2 lbs. of feed to produce a dozen eggs?

Why isn't your feed GMO-free?

We serve our hens an all-natural specially formulated recipe of corn and soy mixed with vitamins and minerals that provide the best nutrition for healthy hens and great eggs. Currently, we do not have a secure, sustainable source of GMO-free grain or soy in the quality and quantity that we require. However, we are constantly reviewing our vendors as we look for the best to provide to our Girls.

I can see buying Free Range eggs for hard boiled or scrambled eggs, but not for baking when you can't see or taste the difference. Why should I buy free range then?

We believe that the welfare choice is about the hens and the eggs they produce, regardless of how they are eaten. But, as everyone knows, the best ingredients mean the best results and taste.

Aren't happy eggs too expensive for everyone?

Our eggs will always be a little more expensive than those from densely populated farm systems. It is more costly to have our high standards and raise smaller flocks of free range hens on expansive farm acreage.

However, eggs are a perfect source of protein for everyone, and still relatively inexpensive. We are happy to reside next to other types of eggs as we provide something different (and we believe, worth paying for). It is up to consumers to make their own choice.

What is the productive laying cycle of a hen? And what happens to the hens after they stop laying eggs?

The prime laying cycle of a hen is up to 76 weeks of age before the eggshell thins and the interior quality of the egg diminishes. At this point the eggs become unsuitable to put into cartons or sell.

When the hens no longer lay eggs with the quality and consistency needed to be a happy egg, the hens are humanely processed for meat for human consumption.



Should I be concerned about Salmonella with free range hens?

We adhere to the highest standards when it comes to food safety. First, we wet clean and disinfect the barn between flocks. Then, we only bring in chicks that are certified Salmonella-free stock and vaccinate them against salmonella also. Next, we pride ourselves on being vigilant and conducting even more rigorous testing than the FDA requires helping ensure that our flocks are always healthy and happy.

Why were some eggs difficult to peel after I tried to hard-boil them?

Eggs that are very fresh are extremely difficult to peel, near impossible if you want them to look pretty. As a tip, if you plan to boil eggs, try keeping them in the fridge for a week or two to age them beforehand.

Please explain the VIVA! footage regarding the happy egg co. in the UK.

Four years ago, Vegetarians International Voice For Animals (VIVA!) discovered an isolated incident on one of our farms in the UK that shocked and saddened us. We immediately took a number of steps to ensure nothing similar would happen again.

The farm in question was immediately suspended from production. This farm was never reinstated as a happy egg company farm. Over the last four years we've completely overhauled our own inspection process, introducing even stricter guidelines. In addition to our regular inspections by the leading independent animal welfare group RSPCA and the government agency DEFRA, we encourage and welcome unannounced site inspections.

Since the incident we have been recognized by the international animal welfare group, Compassion in World Farming through their 'Good Egg Awards' in both 2011 and 2012. We believe these awards are a testament to how much we care about looking after our hens and ensuring we're providing the best care and environment for them.



