

FOOD news & notes

Finding An Egg You Can't Beat

(NAPSA)—Which comes first, the welfare of chickens or the quality of their eggs? In the minds of American farmers, both are equally important.

One reason is that the egg industry recently unveiled new guidelines that set high standards for animal care, bringing sweeping changes to how eggs are produced in America. Eggs from farms adhering to these new standards will be packaged in cartons bearing a new animal care certified logo. Most major grocery chains in the U.S. have agreed to carry eggs from certified farms.

The logo features a checkmark in a semicircle with the words "Animal Care Certified." It will appear on the exterior of egg cartons, either on the top or along the sides.

Proponents of the plan say the logo is an easy way for consumers to show their support for animal care. "People need only look for the logo, and if they don't see it, they can tell their grocers they want eggs from certified animal care farms," said Ken Klippen, vice president of the United Egg Producers (UEP), the national egg industry co-op that developed the guidelines.

The new guidelines place top priority on the comfort, health and safety of the chickens, giving them more space, higher stan-



For The Birds—New industry guidelines have helped ensure egg-laying chickens are well cared for and their eggs are of high quality.

dards for air and water quality, and better-trained handlers. Participating farms will be audited yearly to ensure the new standards are being consistently met.

The guidelines were developed by a scientific advisory committee commissioned in 1999 to review the treatment of egg-producing hens. The committee included representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Humane Association, and top scientists and academics.

The guidelines have been endorsed by the Food Marketing Institute, the trade association for grocery stores, and the National Council of Chain Restaurants. For more information, call (202) 842-2345 ext. 313 or ask an area grocer.