

Australian egg consumers safer than ever as industry adopts new traceability tools



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A project designed to further the adoption of traceability in the Australian egg industry has concluded, providing Australian egg farmers with a raft of new tools to trace the path of eggs across their farms.

Traceability improves food safety outcomes, enabling farmers to quickly identify the sources of egg quality, safety or hen health issues and take steps to rectify the issue. Increased visibility on these issues ensures a safer and more reliable egg supply chain.

The project has been supported by a Commonwealth grant designed to improve traceability across the Australian egg industry.

“Traceability is no longer a ‘nice-to-have’,” Rowan McMonnies, Managing Director, Australian Eggs said.

“Government’s are prioritising it, consumers are expect it and those businesses that focus on it are the ones that gain the most.”

Headlining the project’s activities is the development of EggTrace, a free, digital tool which democratizes traceability, ensuring that all egg farmers have access to the tools and technology required to trace eggs from lay to dispatch.

A comprehensive traceability manual has also been developed and made available to all egg farmers in Australia. The manual outlines best practice for tracking eggs and provides advice and guidance to support the design of reliable traceability systema for egg farms of any size.

These tools are available to farmers via the newly created Australian Eggs Traceability Hub, a one-stop site for traceability resources.

Australian egg farmers agree that traceability is mission-critical for the egg industry.

Pure Foods Eggs distributes 4 million eggs annually and CEO Kate Daley says egg traceability is one of the most important mechanisms to keep Australian egg consumers safe.

According to Ms Daley, an investment in traceability is an investment in the health, safety and loyalty of customers.

"All egg farmers must maintain a state of readiness to trace and recall our products if needed to minimise potential harm to consumers," Ms Daley said.

"Having excellent food safety processes leads to customer loyalty and growth because these systems lead to consistency and quality of products going out to customers."

Danyel Cucinotta from LT's Eggs in Victoria agrees having recently upgraded her traceability system to an app-based program similar to EggTrace.

"Our traceability system makes sure we're always working to the best of our ability, when problems arise, we can immediately execute a step-by-step procedure to investigate.

"If there is a food safety concern, we are able to make a quick search through our app and assess the problem, match codes and compare our data to the problem at hand," said Ms Cucinotta.

Rowan McMonnies said that traceability will continue to be an focus for Australian Eggs.

"Although this specific project has concluded, we see it as only the beginning for industry-led traceability.

"We will continue to provide extension services to Australian egg farms looking to adopt new traceability protocols and through consultation with industry we will continue to evolve EggTrace to ensure it has the highest level of utility for the industry," he said.

Access to EggTrace and the Australian Eggs Traceability Manual is available to all egg farmers for free via the Australian Eggs Traceability Hub: www.australianeggs.org.au/for-farmers/traceability

The hub also contains access to a suite of supporting materials to encourage adoption of traceability including a factsheets, videos and case studies.

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