

Australian Eggs shores up food security with new technology



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Australian Eggs has today announced the launch of EggTrace, a new tool designed to help egg farmers trace eggs back from point of purchase to the date and location that the eggs were laid.

The development of EggTrace was part of a Commonwealth grant project to drive improved food safety and security across the agriculture sector. By creating full visibility on the path an egg takes from lay to despatch, egg farmers now have the ability to more easily and efficiently identify any quality or health issues affecting eggs, ensuring a safer and more reliable egg supply chain.

In a recent survey of 5,981 Australians, 66.5% of respondents indicated that they were concerned about Australia's food security.

Australian Eggs Managing Director, Rowan McMonnies, said improved traceability coverage will make the egg industry more resilient and improve Australia's food security.

"Australians consume about 17.3 million eggs a day, so if the quality or safety of our eggs is under threat, it would have major implications to our national food supply," Mr McMonnies said.

"EggTrace is a browser-based tool that works by providing farmers with the insights they need to isolate, neutralise and rectify any issue on-farm before it causes significant food supply issues, and is linked to the production type and best before date.

"As the global trend towards transparency and traceability in the food chain accelerates, traceability has become even more important in ensuring that we have the trust and confidence of Australians."

Australians care where their eggs come from, a fact reflected in the survey which showed most Australians (69.1%) prefer to buy eggs from retailers that require eggs to be traceable back to the farm. A significant majority (86.8%) agree that traceability is important in ensuring food safety.

Whilst most large egg producers already have robust traceability systems in place, for some smaller producers there has previously been knowledge, technical or financial barriers in place which has meant that traceability has not extended beyond the mandatory stamping of eggs.

“Australian Eggs is breaking down the remaining barriers to broader traceability coverage by putting resources in the hands of farmers to help them trace the movements of their eggs,” Mr McMonnies said.

Dr Tamsyn Murray, CEO of Josh’s Rainbow Eggs said traceability is one of the most critical components of her business.

The producer, who supplies eggs to Woolworths and Coles stores says that her traceability system helps her sleep at night.

“As egg producers we are responsible for every egg we sell. Each egg must be the best possible egg - nutritious, tasty and safe,” Dr Murray said.

“Our traceability system allows us to immediately rectify any issues with egg production and ensures that we are only providing the best eggs to our customers.”

In addition to the new software tool, Australian Eggs has also developed a suite of resources for Egg Farmers, including a traceability manual, factsheets and more, which are available at www.australianeggs.org.au/for-farmers/traceability

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