

Rotten Eggs: The Decade-Long Journey to the Egg Rule

1986

After an outbreak sickens 3,000, CDC identifies eggs as a source of SE food poisoning.

1987

USDA decides not to establish a mandatory SE control program.

1989

FDA and USDA simultaneously develop competing SE control programs.

1991

- USDA begins control program targeted only at flocks that have been identified as the cause of human illness through tracebacks.
- Congress passes law requiring egg refrigeration; USDA never enforces it.

1992

USDA, Pennsylvania government, and industry begin voluntary pilot program.

1995

• Congress cuts funding for successful pilot program and for traceback program, at egg industry request.

1996

 After watching an increasing incidence of SE in eggs, the Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) and FDA initiated a risk assessment to assess the interventions needed to reduce the risk of illnesses from SE

1997

• CSPI petitions to require egg producers to implement on-farm process control programs. The approach supported by CSPI's petition was also recommended in the first SE risk assessment.

1998

- FSIS and FDA publish Risk Assessment, providing further support for the need for onfarm controls to reduce SE in hens.
- FSIS and FDA issue a joint advanced notice of proposed rulemaking.

1999

 President Bill Clinton announces as part of a Presidential radio address the need for egg safety regulation, and indicates that FDA will take the lead on the issue.



1999 - 2004

 Progress stalls as FDA and FSIS continue internal debate over which agency has jurisdiction.

2004

- FDA publishes a proposed rule.
- FSIS publishes a second Risk Assessment documenting the need for regulatory action.

2005 - 2008

• FDA extends its comment period on the 2004 proposed rule through 2005. Thereafter, the rule languishes, and is not sent to OMB for review until 2008.

2008

• FDA withdraws the proposed rule from OMB, citing the need to address comments received during interagency review.

2009

Final rule released containing strong provisions improving egg safety, including requiring
egg producers to have and implement written SE prevention plans; only buy pullets that
are SE-monitored; use a program for rodent and pest control; conduct environmental
testing of the poultry house for SE at specified intervals; and conduct egg testing for SE
if any environmental test is positive.

2010

- Rule implemented for facilities with greater than 50,000 laying hens on July 9, 2010.
- On August 13, 2010 FDA announces largest egg recall in history, with over 300 millions eggs recalled for Salmonella enteriditis. The accompanying outbreak sickens almost 300 people and counting.