

Dating of Egg Cartons

Egg processors typically print dates commonly called "Code Dates" on cartons for purposes of rotating stock or controlling inventory. ***Use of code dates is optional for small scale producers in Hawaii; however, if they are used, certain rules must be followed.***



Expiration Date (30 days) vs. Use by Date (45 days) on egg cartons:
Qualifying prefixes such as:

- EXP
- Expiration date
- Sell by
- Not to be sold after date on end of carton
- Purchase by
- Last sale date on end of carton or other similar language denotes stock rotation

The dates associated with these prefixes *must be printed in month/day format* and are to be calculated from the date the eggs are originally packed into the container and ***may not exceed 30 days*** including the day of pack.

Qualifying prefixes such as:

- Use before
- Use by
- Best before
- Best by
- Best if used by or other similar language generally indicates the maximum time frame for expected quality when stored under ideal conditions.

The dates associated with these prefixes are to be calculated from the date the eggs are packed into the container and ***may not exceed 45 days*** including the day of pack.

Source: USDA AMS Shell Egg Graders Handbook
USDA FSIS Shell Eggs from Farm to Table