



# UK egg industry and Brexit - challenges and opportunities

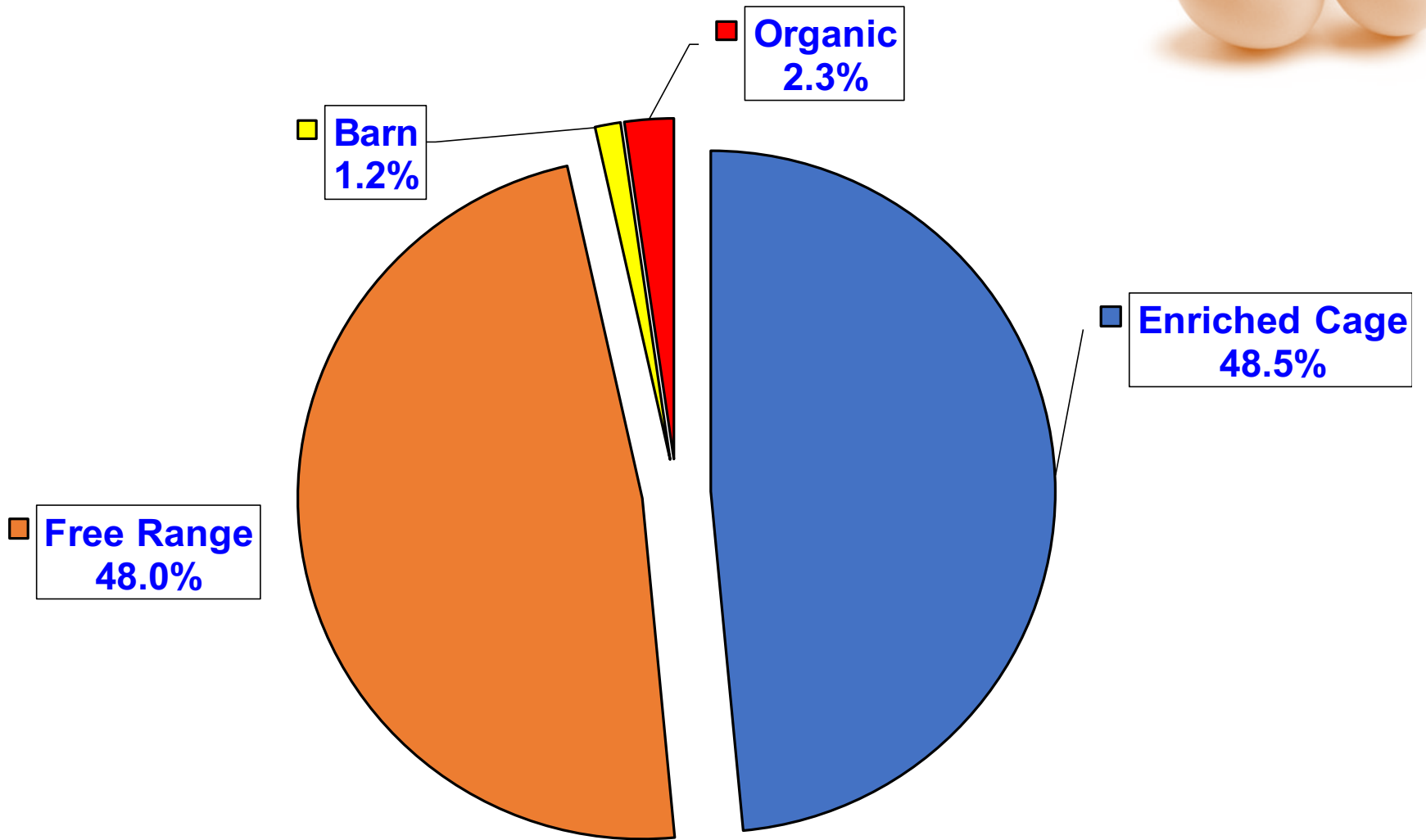
Presentation to EPIC  
30<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Mark Williams  
Chief Executive



**British Egg Industry Council**

# UK Market Split - Volume (Jan - Jun 2017)



Source: Defra



**British Egg Industry Council**

# Brexit - key areas



- Continued access to labour
  - International trade
  - Legislation
- ..... others



# Labour - the Challenges

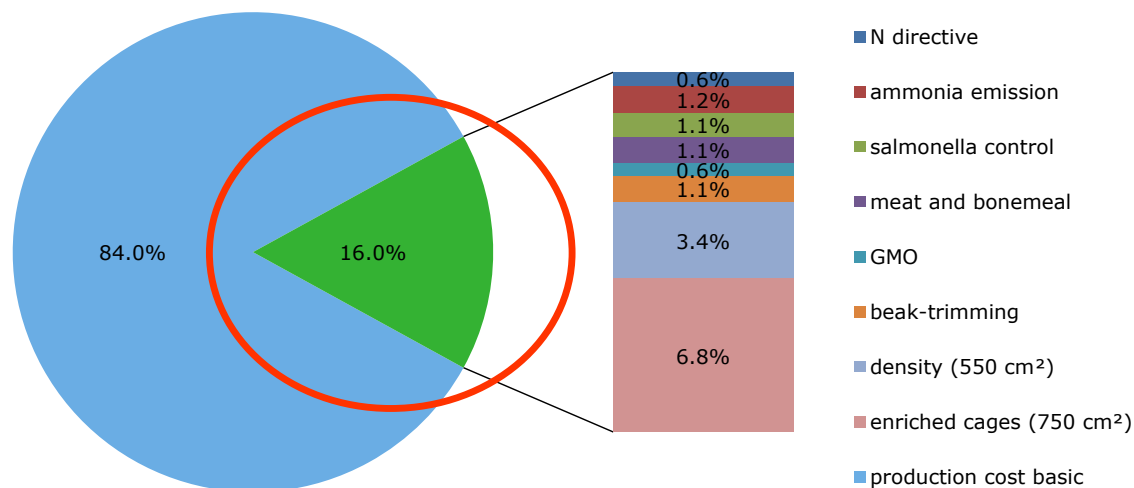


- Approx. 55-60% of workers in egg packing centres are EU migrants
- 35-40% of workers on farms are EU migrants
- UK unemployment is 4.3% (August 2017)
- Many companies struggling to retain staff due to:
  - Competition from other sectors
  - Living wage
  - Going home - Sterling, some "no longer feeling welcome"
  - Even agencies report 'tap being turned off'
- Need to retain existing staff and attract new





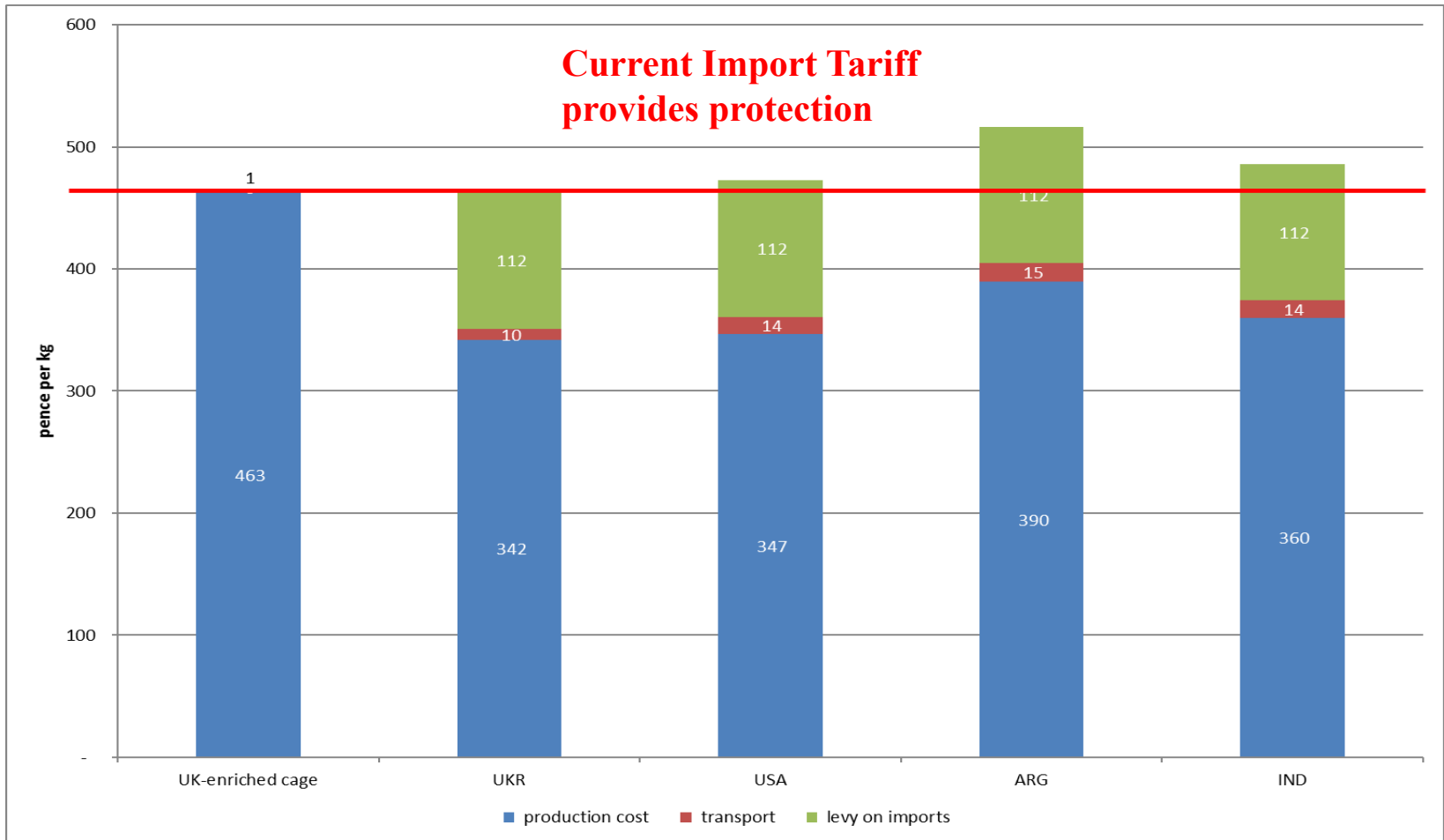
# Trade - the Challenges



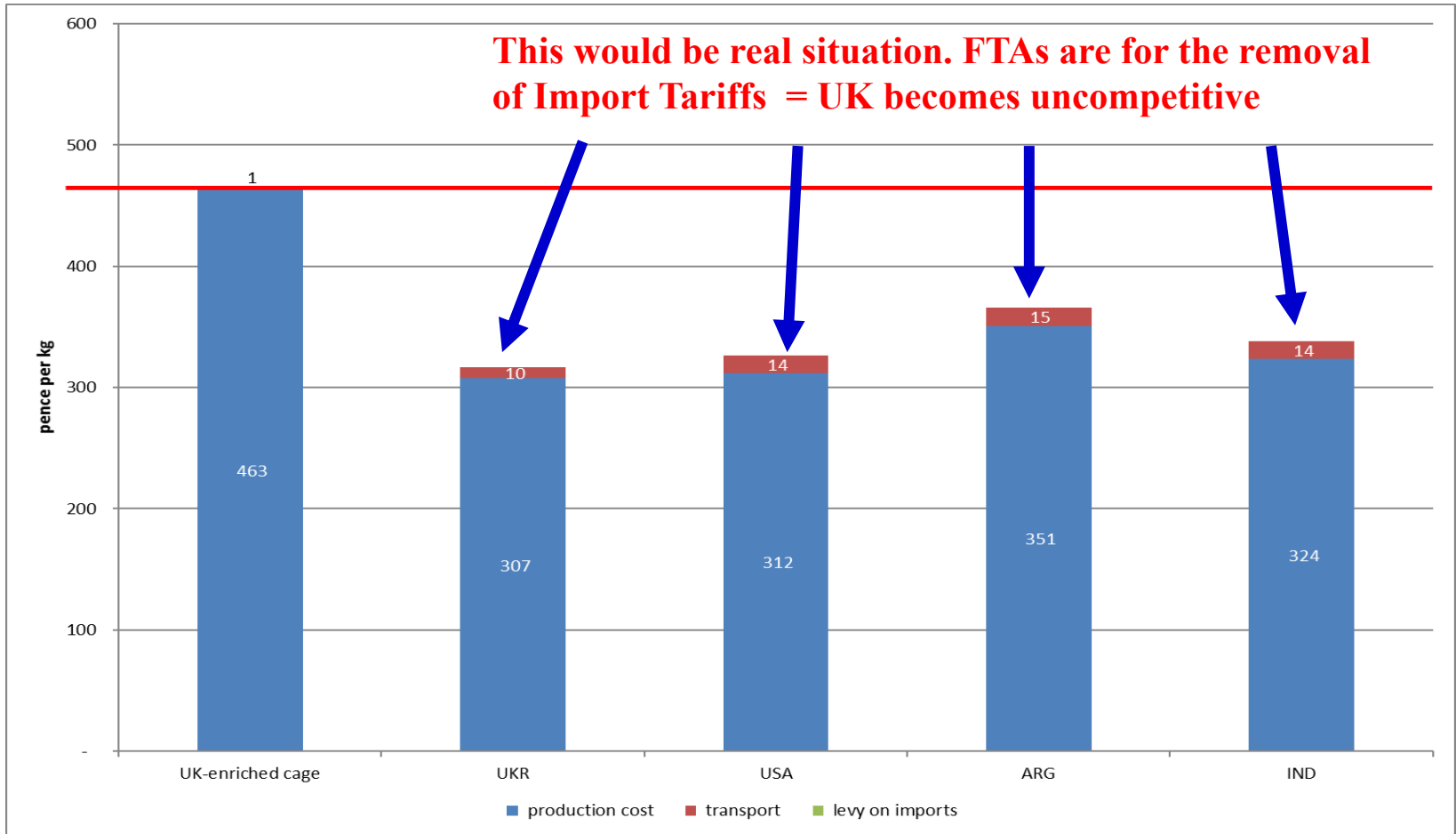
- 16% of cost of producing a kg eggs due to legislation
- Watch out for govt pursuing 'cheap food' policy
- Must not allow imports of eggs / egg products produced to lower standards



*Offer price of whole egg powder (colony eggs) in Birmingham from the UK (red horizontal line) and non-EU countries in p/kg*



# Offer price of whole egg powder (colony eggs) in Birmingham and non-EU countries in p/kg (worst case scenario)





# The Opportunities



... Everyone has to eat ...



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# Labour - the Opportunities



- Businesses actively promoting career opportunities to UK workers
  - farm, packing, managerial
- Lion Training Passport launched
- Govt's role ....
  - allow businesses access to labour from outside UK, year round



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Fipronil  
(EU)

# Reassuring consumers



**LOOK FOR THE  
BRITISH LION**

Eggs stamped with the Lion Quality mark are guaranteed to be 100% British and adhere to the highest food safety standards.

[eggrecipes.co.uk](http://eggrecipes.co.uk)

**ALL OUR FRESH  
EGGS ARE  
BRITISH  
LION QUALITY**

**LOOK FOR  
THE LION**

**ALL OUR FRESH  
EGGS ARE  
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**LOOK FOR  
THE LION**

**Opportunity for  
British Lion Egg  
Products**

**ALL OUR FRESH EGGS ARE  
BRITISH LION QUALITY**

**LOOK FOR  
THE LION**



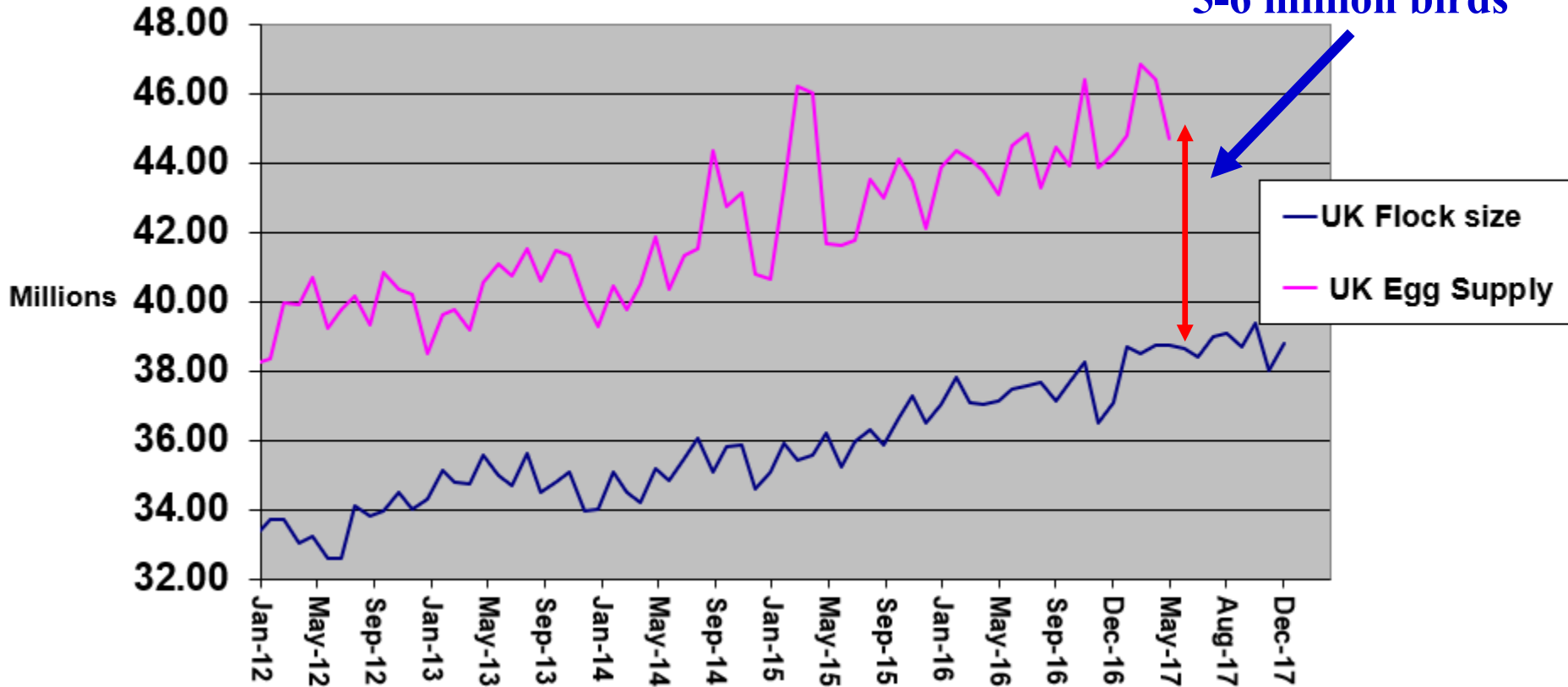
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# Expanding our industry



UK Flock Size & Total UK Egg Supply

Opportunity for 5-6 million birds







New FSA advice for vulnerable groups



# National newspapers

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# THE

# TIMES



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INSIDE TIMES2



## Climbdown in Catalonia

World, page 32

## It's safe to eat soft-boiled eggs again, pregnant women told

Ben Webster Environment Editor

Pregnant women, children and the elderly can safely eat runny or raw eggs carrying a British Lion mark, according to official guidance that ends three decades of health fears.

The new policy from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) reverses guidance introduced after a scare over salmonella in 1988 and follows a steep fall in the level of salmonella in hens and the number of human infections. Salmonella bacteria can cause food poisoning, which is particularly risky for vulnerable people including pregnant women.

More than 30,000 people a year were infected during the late 1980s and early 1990s, with contaminated eggs among the main sources. Edwina Currie was

forced to resign as health minister in 1988 after saying on television that "most of the egg production in this country, sadly, is now affected with salmonella". It set off a collapse in egg sales and she later admitted she should have said "much" instead of "most".

The decision to change the advice is based on the recommendation of a group set up by the advisory committee on the microbiological safety of food. Its report, published in July last year, said the risks were very low for eggs produced according to food safety controls applied by the British Lion code of practice, launched in 1988. More than 90 per cent of UK eggs are produced under this scheme and have the lion symbol on shells and boxes.

The requirements of the scheme include vaccinating hens, enhanced testing for salmonella, improved farm hygiene, effective rodent control, independent auditing and keeping eggs cool in transit from farm to shop.

The change in advice applies only to Lion eggs and the FSA said that other UK eggs, as well as imported eggs and those from other bird species, should be consumed as usual.

Continued on page 4, col 4

NEWS

## Rules are softened on runny eggs

Pregnant women have been told it is safe to eat runny eggs, for the first time since the Eighties salmonella scandal. The Food Standards Agency relaxed its guidance on uncooked eggs, so eggs marked with the British Lion are safe to be soft-boiled or even eaten raw.

Page 2



It's over easy again

The world has turned sunny-side up again because expectant mothers and others in tender health have been told by the Food Standards Agency (an often nannishy body) that it is quite safe to eat lightly cooked, even raw, eggs as long as they are British, such as the ones with a little lion stamped on them. Ever since Edwina Currie correctly pointed out in 1988 that most egg production was affected by salmonella, runny yolks and mayonnaise have been on the forbidden list. Now pregnant women, old people and infants can sit down to a lightly boiled teatime egg with soldiers, happy in the knowledge that the risk has dwindled, thanks to vaccinated and generally well-turned-out chickens. Nor are eggs any longer blamed for harmful cholesterol. So once more the paradox is true: you can't beat an egg.

# Runny eggs safe for pregnant women

By Sarah Knappott SCIENCE EDITOR

PREGNANT women and the elderly can enjoy the simple pleasure of dipping toast soldiers into a runny yolk for the first time in 30 years, after the Food Standards Agency today relaxed its rules on uncooked eggs.

Since the Eighties salmonella scandal, vulnerable groups have been advised to hard-boil their eggs for fear of food poisoning.

But yesterday, the FSA confirmed that eggs marked with the British Lion are safe to be soft-boiled – or even eaten raw – following a year-long risk assessment by The Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of

Food. The turnaround follows two decades of vaccination programmes and improved hygiene in farms which has virtually wiped out salmonella in British eggs.

"This is a real success story for the UK egg industry," said Andrew Jorel, chairman of the British Egg Industry Council, which runs the British Lion scheme.

"We know that the previous advice has deterred many women from eating eggs when pregnant, and from giving them to their babies, as well as deterring older people the pleasure and nutritional benefits of a 'dippy egg' and home-made mousses and mayonnaise. The advice is particularly good

news for these groups and will also enable our homes to eat many traditional egg dishes back on their menus."

Britons eat around 12 billion eggs each year, the majority of which are produced in the UK.

However egg sales slumped by a half in 1988 after Edwina Currie, then a junior health minister, claimed most were infected with salmonella, a comment which led to her resignation.

In an effort to win back public confidence, and improve quality, the British Lion Code of Practice was introduced in 1988. It requires hens to be vaccinated, increased hygiene controls, salmonella testing, best-before dates on the egg shell as well as on the box, and

independent auditing. 90 per cent of British eggs now hold the lion mark. Heather Hancock, chairman of the food standards agency, said: "It's good news that now even vulnerable groups can safely eat UK eggs without needing to hard-boil them, so long as they bear the British Lion mark."

"The major reduction in the risk of salmonella in Lion eggs is testament to the work carried out by egg producers."

Eggs are contain many key nutrients including high quality protein, vitamin D, selenium, iodine, choline and omega-3 fatty acids.

Dr Juliet Gray, a registered nutritionist, said: "The new advice is very

welcome news. These nutrients are particularly important for many vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, babies and elderly people a several of them are not found in most other foods."

Prof Paul Wigley, professor of avian infection and immunity at the University of Liverpool, said: "The FSA decision is a reflection on the success of egg producers in all but eliminate salmonella from the UK flock."

"Since the introduction of vaccination in 1988 the levels of salmonella have declined. The poultry industry frequently criticised but we should recognise a success story for our farmers."

In 1988 Edwina Currie, then a

## Shoppers told eggs are safe at last

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the guardian

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## May dodges question on Brexit vote

Runny eggs back on the menu

Weinstein denies three separate rape allegations

PM refuses to say if she would choose to leave EU if fresh referendum held

Heather Hancock, chairwoman of the FSA, said: "The FSA has thoroughly reviewed the scientific evidence about the safety of these eggs, and we're confident that we can now change our advice to consumers."

Paul Wigley, professor of avian infection and immunity at the University of Liverpool, said that vaccination and high standards of hygiene and biosecurity were key to the change of advice, adding: "The poultry industry is frequently criticised but we should recognise a success story for our farmers."

The FSA said the new advice did not apply to those people who were "severely immunocompromised".

## Thirty years on, runny eggs are declared safe

Advice finally revised after 1980s salmonella crisis

Watchdog says risk has dramatically reduced

Rebecca Smithers

Conservative junior health minister, said "most" egg production in Britain was infected with salmonella. Her comments sparked a public outcry and two weeks later she was forced to resign.

Egg sales in the UK plummeted by 60%, leading to the slaughter of 4 million hens. The British Egg Industry Council called her remarks "factually incorrect and highly irresponsible", saying that the risk of an egg being infected with salmonella was less than 200m to one. But by early 1988 the link between eggs and salmonella poisoning was proved beyond doubt. Ten years later the egg industry launched the British Lion code to shore up consumer confidence.

The major reduction in the risk of salmonella in UK eggs has been "dramatically reduced" in recent years, and the risks were now "very low" for those that carried the British Lion mark. More than 90% of UK eggs are produced under this scheme, recognisable by a familiar red stamp on the egg.

Previous advice had been that vulnerable groups should not eat raw or lightly cooked eggs – or dishes containing them such as homemade mousses and mayonnaise – because eggs could contain salmonella bacteria, which can cause food poisoning and in the most serious cases of infection can lead to death.

Fears over salmonella peaked in the late 1980s when 2 million chickens were slaughtered in a programme where hens were told to avoid undercooked eggs.

In 1988 Edwina Currie, then a

The proportion of UK eggs which carry the British Lion mark. Eggs produced under this scheme have a very low risk of salmonella, say safety experts

90%

Edwina Currie, then a junior health minister, said in 1988 that most egg production in Britain was infected with salmonella. Photograph: Bath/Express/Getty

# Reality check



- UK Financial services sector contributed £71.4bn in tax in 2015
- Accounted for 11.5% of the UK's total tax receipts
- Agriculture contributed around £24 billion of tax revenues in 2015
- So who is going to come first?



Don't  
Flap...



'Brexit - Standing on  
our own two feet'

.... We already do  
this and will continue  
to



**British Egg Industry Council**