



NIMAN RANCH CAGE-FREE EGG PROTOCOLS

Niman Ranch's mission is to produce the finest tasting proteins in the world by adhering to a strict code of traditional husbandry principles. We have registered the following claims with the USDA:

- All-Natural
- No Antibiotics – Ever
- No Added Hormones – Ever
- All Vegetarian Feeds
- Humanely Raised on Environmentally Sustainable Ranches

I. Source Verification and Franchisee Requirements:

A representative of Niman Ranch will have a personal relationship with every supplier of cage-free eggs to the Niman Ranch cage-free egg program and our protocols must be followed through all aspects of egg production.

All Franchisees must operate in accordance with accepted USDA, FDA and state requirements and regulations.

II. Husbandry: Flocks producing Niman Ranch eggs should be stocked and managed in accordance with acceptable welfare standards.

a. Breeding:

- All approved layers will be descendants of Rhode Island Red Hens or Bovan Brown Breeds.
- Laying hens are selected for their ability to produce consistently sized, shaped and colored eggs.

b. Housing :

- Niman Ranch follows the guidelines required under the Humane Farm Animal Care and American Humane Certified programs. Cage-Free hens must be provided a minimum of 1.5 sq ft of floor space per hen or 1.2 sq ft if perches are provided and 1.0 sq ft for aviaries and where 50% of birds are able to access perches with 6" linear space per hen.

- Ventilation, feeding and watering systems should function effectively and should be regularly inspected and undergo preventive maintenance in accordance with industry practice and manufacturer's recommendations.
- Adequate ventilation should be provided to flocks to restrict atmospheric ammonia levels to less than 25 ppm. Ventilation should maintain litter moisture to below an average of 25% measured over 5 randomly-selected locations.

- III. Antibiotic Use:** Administration of antibiotic or other therapeutic drug in either feed or water will disqualify any flock from production of eggs to be marketed under the Niman Ranch brand.
- IV. Responsible farming practices:** Niman Ranch expects certified farmers to uphold environmentally safe and approved manner that adheres to all county, state and federal standards. This includes, but is not limited to manure management practices, stocking densities, and disposal of mortality.
- V. Feeds: Diets for Niman Ranch flocks must comply with the following restrictions (Niman Ranch will conduct random tests on feed samples to detect the presence of prohibited ingredients).**
- a. Feed should be formulated by a qualified nutritionist in accordance with the specifications suggested by the primary breeder of the strain housed.
 - b. Exclusion of all animal-source ingredients including grease, tallow, fish and aquaculture meals, and by-product meals including but not limited to poultry and feather meal, blood meal, carcass meal, meat and bone meal, bone meal.
 - c. Exclusion of recycled vegetable products, bakery waste, by-products of human food preparation and rejected batches of food products.
 - d. Exclusion of antibiotics and any non-approved additive including but not limited to copper sulfate.
 - e. Exclusion of cottonseed meal and derivatives. Natural components of cottonseed including gossypol result in discoloration of yolks (olive mottling) and albumen (pink discoloration).
 - f. Canola meal is not permitted in brown layer diets, since it can cause abnormal egg flavor.
 - g. Biotene®10 must be incorporated in diets at a level of 0.5% for flocks consuming over a range of 18-24 lbs/100 hens/day. This product contains all necessary vitamin and mineral micronutrients obviating additional supplements. Biotene®10 formulations incorporating chlorine chloride and approved enzyme supplements are available only from ADM.
 - h. Chlorine chloride supplements (70% active ingredient) should not be used in excess of 5 lbs./ton in diets for brown-egg layer flocks.
 - i. Stabilized canola oil must be provided at an inclusion rate of 2.5% of diets (Annex 4.2). Crude super-degummed or refined oil can be used. Low-linolenic, partially hydrogenated and acidulated soapstock oils are not acceptable.
 - j. For brown-egg flocks, diets should contain a maximum of 2.5% canola oil.

As an alternative, the diet may include a minimum of 1 % supplementary oil comprising a mixture of 25% edible grade canola oil and 75% edible grade soybean oil. In addition, the alternative diet must include not more than 2.5% whole flaxseed. When feeding flaxseed, supplementary granite grit should be provided to flocks. Addition of 50 lbs of 118" granite grit to one ton of the first delivery of NR feed should be sufficient to facilitate digestion. Ground flaxseed should not be used, as this ingredient is subject to oxidation and may result in abnormal flavor of eggs. Flaxseed inhibits absorption of iodine and inclusion at levels over 5% will reduce iodine levels of eggs to below the Niman Ranch specification. Standards for oils are denoted in Annex 4.2.

- k. Conventional levels of calcium (not less than 3.5%) and available phosphorus (not less than 0.4% without phytase or equivalent enzyme) should be included to optimize shell strength according to the recommendations of a qualified nutritionist
- l. Ingredients supplying calcium (Limestone or oyster shell) should be included in both coarse and fine-ground form.
- m. Ingredients originating in countries other than the U.S. or Canada may not be incorporated in diets fed to hens producing Niman Ranch cage-free eggs without a waiver relating to country of origin, quantity, nutrient specifications and analyses.
- n. Representative 1 lb. samples of feed, labeled as to date, type, and plant of origin, must be submitted to Niman Ranch on a monthly basis.

NO DRUG OR ADDITIVE, OTHER THAN A GENERALLY REGARDED AS SAFE (GRAS) PRODUCT, WHICH IS UNAPPROVED BY NIMAN RANCH SHALL BE PRESENT IN FEED MILL UNLESS SECURED IN A LOCKED STOREROOM OR IF NOT APPROVED BY THE FDA, SHALL BE PRESENT IN ANY PLANT OR MILL SUPPLYING FLOCKS PRODUCING NIMAN RANCH PRODUCT.

IV. Vaccinations:

- a. All pullets destined for Niman Ranch production must be vaccinated successively at least three times to protect against *Salmonella* Enteritidis, by administering a USDA- licensed live attenuated/mutant *Salmonella* Typhimurium vaccine. Vaccines must be administered according to manufacturer's recommendations at the hatchery.
- b. All cage-free (non-confined) pullets placed should receive a USDA- licensed inactivated oil emulsion *Salmonella* Enteritidis vaccine two weeks prior to or at the time of transfer to the laying facility.

V. Production: It is absolutely necessary to positively identify Niman Ranch product through the entire sequence of storage, processing and distribution and to ensure segregation from generic eggs. Inventory must be managed in accordance with a first-in, first-out rotation.

- a. All plants processing NR eggs must be under USDA-AMS inspection and comply with NR and USDA regulations governing the physical plant and

equipment, in addition to compliance with quality, safety and grading standards. Plants not approved or monitored by the USDA are disqualified from packing products under the NR Brand. Effective December 31, 2009, all plants packing any NR product should be in the process of SQF 2000 level 2 certification. Level 3 certification should be in the process by June 30, 2010.

- b.** Niman Ranch eggs must be collected daily and clean eggs must be farm-packed on clean fiber trays. Racks or pallets used to transport Niman Ranch eggs must be differentiated (color coded, bar-coded or otherwise labeled in a readily distinguishable way) from pallets used to store and move generic eggs. All racks holding Niman Ranch eggs should be identified by flock of origin and date of production using a color-coded or otherwise easily identifiable label to maintain accurate trace-back to farm of origin.
- c.** Special precautions will be taken to segregate eggs from flocks producing Niman Ranch eggs from generic eggs. This can be accomplished by scheduling the sequence of operation of collecting belts and packing for in-line operations. Barriers in the inline conveyors can also be used to separate generic eggs from Niman Ranch eggs.
- d.** Eggs shall be removed from houses at least once per 24 hours. This requires operation of egg belts and cross-conveyors on a daily basis. With off-line production, eggs shall be transferred to a cooler daily, operated at a temperature not to exceed 60°F and at a humidity ranging from 60% to 75% RH. Egg storage must be in compliance with the strictest requirements set by state or federal guidelines. Eggs should be transported to a packing plant at intervals not exceeding seven days and preferably less than four days, especially during the summer.