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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LEGISLATIVE COMMENT

DATE: January 16, 2020

BILL NUMBER: SB 9

SHORT TITLE: AGRICULTURE – MARYLAND EGG LAW - REVISIONS

MDA POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION:

This legislation would revise standards for the control of pathogens in shell eggs (a.k.a. table eggs) to be aligned with current federal law and better reflect best practices for reducing contamination. The legislation will also eliminate testing requirements that are duplicative and/or in conflict with federal law. SB 9 would also revise the Maryland Egg Law to include standards for quality, quantity, labeling and wholesomeness for shell eggs produced by poultry other than domesticated chickens.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Emergency regulations for the control of *Salmonella enteritidis* were implemented in 1989 to protect public health based on the Secretary of Agriculture's authority to control the spread of poultry diseases. Since 1989, research has been conducted on best practices to monitor for and control *Salmonella enteritidis* contamination of shell eggs as a public health concern rather than a poultry disease.

The federal Egg Safety Rule (2010) incorporates best practices for monitoring and controlling *Salmonella enteritidis* contamination of shell eggs. The monitoring and testing provisions included in the federal regulations conflict with the current Maryland regulations, which require table egg producers to conduct similar but duplicative testing to be compliant with both Maryland and federal law. The revisions to the Maryland Egg Law will align state laws and regulations with federal law by incorporating science-based best practices and eliminating duplicative testing for the egg industry.

The Maryland Egg Law currently regulates eggs of the domesticated chicken only. Increased demand for shell eggs from other types of poultry has created a need to establish standards of quality, wholesomeness, labeling and quantity to facilitate the sale of these eggs and protect public health. This legislation would revise the Maryland Egg Law and allow the Secretary of Agriculture to adopt regulations that will require compliance with these standards and allow producer/packers of table eggs from poultry other than chickens to be recognized as an approved source by the Maryland Department of Health.

If you have additional questions, please contact Cassie Shirk, Director of Legislation and Governmental Affairs, at cassie.shirk@maryland.gov or 410-841-5886.