

Our chickens are pasture raised with a diet of both laying hen food, what they forage freely for in the pasture, and the occasional garden-raised vegetables. We have 30 chickens – 2 roosters and 28 hens – that have total freedom to range a fenced-in nearly 3 acre pasture from sun rise to sun set. Our eggs are collected every day then stored fresh in the refrigerator.

This paper was put together to help you fully understand the truth about the different forms of eggs, and to show the benefits for both humans and chickens of purchasing pasture-raised chicken eggs like ours.

THE TRUTH ABOUT EGGS

Most of the eggs currently sold in supermarkets are nutritionally inferior to eggs produced by hens raised on pasture. That's the conclusion we have reached following completion of the 2007 Mother Earth News egg testing project. These amazing results come from 14 flocks around the country that range freely on pasture or are housed in moveable pens that are rotated frequently to maximize access to fresh pasture and protect the birds from predators. We had six eggs from each of the 14 pastured flocks tested by an accredited laboratory in Portland, Ore.

Our testing has found that, compared to official U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrient data for commercial eggs, eggs from hens raised on pasture may contain:

- **1/3 less cholesterol**
- **1/4 less saturated fat**
- **2/3 more vitamin A**
- **2 times more omega-3 fatty acids**
- **3 times more vitamin E**
- **7 times more beta carotene**



Free-range/pastured eggs are likely to be more expensive because production costs are higher. As usual, you get what you pay for. If you buy the cheapest supermarket eggs, you are not only missing out on the valuable nutrients eggs should and can contain, you are also supporting an industrial production system that treats animals cruelly and makes more sustainable, small-scale egg production difficult.

(Read more: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/tests-reveal-healthier-eggs.aspx#ixzz2ctNVLotm>)

STORING EGGS

The very best way we've found to stash eggs away for long-term storage is in a sealed container at a temperature of 35° to 40°F. Their whites may become somewhat runny looking over a period of time, but even after seven months—the cackle berries stored in this manner smell good, taste good, have a good texture, and—in short—seem "almost fresh".

(Read more: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/fresh-eggs.aspx?PagelD=4#ixzz2ctguCDbQ>)

You've seen the egg cartons in the grocery store: "Cage Free!" and "Free Range!" And the newest one to hit the market "Vegetarian Raised!" Well, you might be surprised to learn that those terms do NOT even remotely mean what you think they mean

CAGE FREE:

This only means that the chickens were not in cages. They can still be confined in very close quarters inside a building where they are standing in their own muck and can barely move. They have little or no access to the outdoors.



FREE RANGE:



According to the USDA regulation, "free range" only means that the chickens were allowed "access" to the outside with no specifications as the quality or the duration of that outside exposure. So unfortunately, this term is mostly used where the chickens are crammed in large warehouses that has a small door on one end that opens to a few feet of outside dirt space. Most of the chickens never even know that door exists and couldn't get there even if

they wanted to.

VEGETARIAN FED:

This is a newer term that is appearing on egg cartons. People read it and think, "Wow. The chickens must be fed healthy vegetables and grains." Ummm... no. A chicken is a natural carnivore. It likes to eat bugs and insects. A "vegetarian raised" chicken was completely raised on industrialized feed and was never allowed outside. EVER.



PASTURE RAISED:

YES! THIS is the term to go for.

Although it does not have any current regulations, it is being used by sustainable farmers to mean chickens raised in the outdoors in the pasture. Pastured raised eggs are what we think they are. This is what you want to buy if you are shopping for eggs.

(Read more: <http://livinghomegrown.com/2012/06/decoding-the-terms-cage-free-free-range-pasture-raised-eggs.html>)

