

Which eggs should I buy?

A guide to buying eggs in Canada

There are many different labels on egg cartons – let's unscramble their meanings!

There are five types of eggs based on the housing system the laying hens are raised in. What do these labels mean for animal welfare?



	Cage-free	Natural behaviours	Outdoor access	Independent inspections
Conventional cage	✗	✗	✗	✗
Enriched cage	✗	!	✗	✗
Free-run	✓	✓	✗	✗
Free-range	✓	✓	✓	✗
Organic	✓	✓	✓	✓

! Enriched cages have perches, nests and foraging areas, but the crowded conditions mean hens cannot perform most natural behaviours.

Eggs may also have an animal welfare certification label

Animal welfare certification programs certify farms that raise animals to high standards of care.

BC SPCA recommends:



Benefits of an animal welfare certification program:

- ✓ Laying hens are cage-free
- ✓ Laying hens can perform natural behaviours
- ✓ Farms are independently inspected to ensure the standards are being met
- ✓ Outdoor access is required by some programs. To be sure the hens can go outside, look for the free-range or organic label as well!

THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

Consider buying cage-free eggs, where hens have more space and opportunities to perform natural behaviours. Eggs farmed in this way cost more than caged eggs, but the hens have a better quality of life.

CAGED EGGS

Conventional cage: Hens live in small groups with no enrichments to encourage natural behaviours.

➤ **Tip** - if there is no label stating how the hens were housed, the eggs are from caged laying hens!



Enriched cage: Hens live in larger groups with slightly more space. Cages have some enrichment but the crowded cage space limits their use.



CAGE-FREE EGGS

Free-run: Hens roam the barn freely with various enrichment opportunities, but do not go outside.



Free-range: Hens roam the barn freely with various enrichment opportunities and can go outside when weather permits.

Organic: Hens roam the barn freely with various enrichment opportunities and can go outside when weather permits. Farmers follow organic standards and are independently inspected to ensure the standards are being met.