

FREE
Feb - May '11

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Up-to-date news for consumers

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For consumer advice contact



Report rogue traders and
scams online



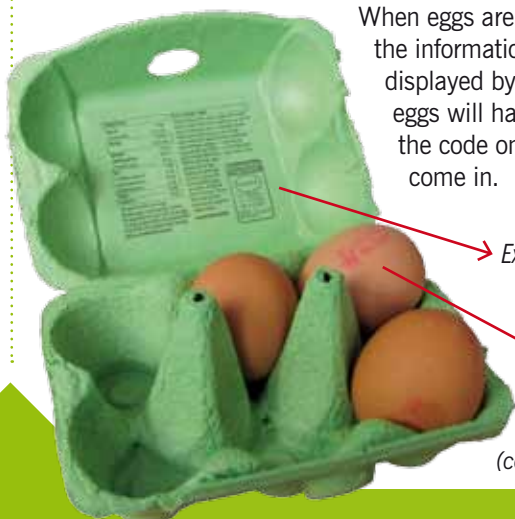
Egg Facts

You can tell from the number stamped on a hen's egg whether it's free range etc.

All fresh eggs sold to the public must be marked with the producer code, unless the producer has less than 50 hens.

The producer code, eg. 1UK66666 is made up of a single number giving the method of production (0 = Organic, 1 = Free Range, 2 = Barn, 3 = Eggs from Caged Hens), then two letters to identify the country of production, then a series of numbers (and sometimes a letter) that identify the specific farm where the eggs were laid.

When eggs are sold loose, the information should be displayed by them. Packaged eggs will have an explanation the code on the box they come in.



Explanation of egg codes

Producer Code
and date

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Conventional cages are currently being phased out to be replaced by 'enriched cages' that provide more space, perching, nesting and scratching areas for the birds. From 1st January 2012 establishments of 350 or more laying hens won't be allowed to keep them in conventional barren cages.

Digital switchover update

Most of Leicestershire and Leicester is switching in August 2011. Hinckley and some villages west of the City won't switch until September. Check your dates by going to www.digitaluk.co.uk and entering your postcode.

What will I have to do?

Your old analogue set won't work any longer and you will have a number of options:

to buy a set-top box to get Freeview, using your existing aerial, for a one-off payment;

to buy Freesat, for a one-off payment and set-top box (from £30). However, you will need a satellite dish if you do not have one (£80 approx).

to subscribe to a service giving more channels than Freeview or Freesat, through your aerial or a satellite dish.

Note that many TVs bought in the last few years will already have a digital tuner built in. You won't have to do anything, except possibly retune your TV.

Most set top boxes will work with any TV, as long as the exterior aerial is in good condition. If you rely presently on an interior aerial, you will probably have to have an external aerial fitted.

Remember there is no such thing as a 'digital aerial'. Most existing exterior aerials will work with a set-top box.

What to be aware of?

If you need a new aerial, the cost will be between £60 and £180. Choose a Registered Digital Installer, displaying the digital 'tick' logo.



No official from Digital TV UK Ltd will call without an appointment. Always ask for ID.

If someone does call at your door, don't make a decision there and then. Shop around and take advice about your options.

TOP TIPS

- The British Blind and Shutter Association have released a video on their website to show how you can make roller blinds with looped cords safer for homes with small children. Visit: www.makeitsafe.org.uk
- If someone asks you for your bank details, pin numbers, passwords etc in the course of an unsolicited phone call or e-mail, it is almost certain to be a scam, however convincing the reason seems to be.



Stop the scammers

Nearly half of the UK's population has been targeted by a scam at some point in their lives, and this February the Scamnesty campaign will seek to raise awareness of the problem, which costs the economy £3.5bn every year.

The top scam complaints to Consumer Direct include dodgy prize draws and sweepstakes, bogus holiday clubs and phony ticket sales for festivals and gigs.

Holiday scams often tie people into expensive timeshare schemes they did not realise they were joining, and cost the British public an estimated £1.17bn a year, with each victim losing an average of £3,000.

Fake ticketing websites, which often look genuine and realistic, sell unwary fans tickets that are never delivered.

Trading Standards officers will be encouraging consumers to put any scam mail they receive in special Scamnesty bins provided for their community.

If you would like further information or think that you might be the victim of a scam please contact our partners, Consumer Direct, on 08454 040506.

Call for carers to be vigilant

Carers across Leicestershire are being urged to alert Trading Standards to anyone who tries to 'con' older or vulnerable people.

Leicestershire County Council spoke out amid concerns that rogue traders are preying on older people and often those who live alone.

The County Council's Trading Standards Service believes many older people are reluctant to come forward to report attempted 'cons', so they are now urging people's carers and relatives to speak out for them.

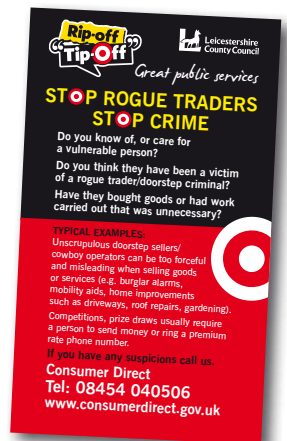
Byron Rhodes, Cabinet Lead Member for Trading Standards said: "We want to clamp down on any firm trying to trick older or vulnerable people out of their money.

"We've had reports of people who try to sell unnecessary or over-expensive goods to older people, such as wheelchairs, stairlifts and special beds and we are encouraging carers and relatives to let us know. To assist carers Trading Standards have produced a handy card to report the issues we can investigate."

The County Council is also alerting people through the First Contact scheme, where people who visit an older person carry out a checklist which puts them in touch with other help and support.

David Sprason, Cabinet Member for Adults and Communities, said: "I'm backing the Trading Standards' campaign – the more we know about scams involving older people, the more we can do to catch the perpetrators. I'd urge all carers to contact Trading Standards, if they have any concerns."

Anyone with concerns about rogue traders can contact Trading Standards via Consumer Direct, on 08454 04 05 06



X-Box flashing scam

Don't be tempted to have your games console altered to play pirated games – it could cost you more than you bargained for.

That's the message from Trading Standards, which is alerting people about a new scam known as X-Box flashing.

Unscrupulous dealers can insert a special card into the games console, which will allow it to play cheaper, pirated games.

But Trading Standards Officers say that once a dealer is caught, the console manufacturer can send a signal over the internet to disable every device they have "flashed".

Head of Trading Standards, David Bull, said: "Getting your console altered is a false economy.

"You might think you're saving money, but buying legitimate games is far cheaper than having your console wiped out."

Leicestershire Trading Standards recently brought the first "flashing" case to a court in the county. On the 9th November 2010 at Leicester Crown Court, a director of the business pleaded guilty to 17 offences under the Copyright Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

These related specifically to importing, advertising and selling special electronic cards that can be fitted to games consoles, to allow people to use pirated games.

TOP TIPS

- You can keep up to 50 hens and sell their eggs locally without registration. If you want to keep more contact your local Animal Health Office for advice.

How to Contact us

If you have a problem with something that you've bought or work you have had done, please contact our consumer advice service.



Telephone: 08454 04 05 06*

Minicom: 08451 28 13 84

Website: www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

* Calls to the Consumer Direct 0845 numbers are charged at no more than four pence per minute from a BT landline. Call charges from other landline providers or mobile phones may vary. Please check the rate with your phone service provider.

Opening hours:

8am to 6.30pm Mon- Fri, 9am to 1pm Sat
CLOSED on bank holidays and public holidays.

After your call to Consumer Direct your complaint or enquiry may be referred to Leicestershire Trading Standards Service if appropriate.

**Our Business Advice Service
is available on 0116 305 8000**

**This information can be made
available in large print or an
alternative language. Please
phone Consumer Direct.**

Our aim is to promote a fair and safe trading environment for the people of Leicestershire. Whether you are a consumer or a business you are equally important to us.

Product Recalls

Log onto the following website to check the **latest product recalls:**

www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

Tell us what you think about Consumer Affairs! If you have any topics that you would like covered in future editions or any comments about this publication, simply visit www.leics.gov.uk/consumeraffairs and fill out the Consultation Form so we can improve our services for you.