



UNITED EGG  
PRODUCERS

CONTACT: Mitch Head

(520) 398-7379

### **CHANGES PROPOSED IN FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

#### **MAY ONLY INCREASE EGG COSTS TWO CENTS PER DOZEN OVER 18 YEARS, NEW STUDY SHOWS**

WASHINGTON D.C. (June 7, 2012) –Changes to egg production practices that are proposed in federal legislation (S. 3239 and H.R. 3798) may only increase consumer prices by less than two cents per dozen, a new economic study shows.

The legislation, which is supported by United Egg Producers (UEP), which represents nearly 90 percent of egg farmers, would set a national standard for egg production and labeling and would provide more space for hens and enrichments such as perches and nest boxes in their cages.

The study, commissioned by UEP and conducted by the independent research group Agralytica based in Alexandria, Virginia, concludes “Most of the impact on consumer prices will not occur until well into the 2020’s, and will probably average a 1% increase relative to the baseline (1.5 cents per dozen) over the 18 years” that the changes in egg production methods are phased in according to the legislation. The increased cost includes capital investments by farmers of new housing facilities (\$20-\$24 per hen, for a total of \$1.6 billion more than if current housing facilities were simply replaced with the same style of conventional cages over the next 18 years rather than replaced with enriched colony cages); modestly higher labor costs (9%) and slightly higher feed consumption (4%).

The current (week of June 1, 2012) national average advertised retail price for one dozen grade A eggs is \$1.15, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Based on this new study, that same dozen eggs produced in the new, enriched colony cages might be expected to cost just two cents more.

-MORE-

Gene Gregory, president of UEP, said “In polling, consumers have told us, by an overwhelming margin of 12-to-1, that they prefer their eggs to be produced in the enriched colony cage system because it allows the hens nearly double the amount of space, as well as opportunities to perform more of their natural behaviors like perching and nesting. Farmers need a level playing field and a reasonable transition period to be able to invest the capital needed to give consumers what they want, and this federal legislation is what consumers want, what farmers need, and what scientific experts support.”

The legislation was introduced in the House by Reps. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore, Elton Gallegly, R-Calif., Sam Farr, D-Calif, and Jeff Denham, R-Calif., and has 60 co-sponsors in the House; and in the Senate by Senators Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., Scott Brown, R-Mass., Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., David Vitter, R-La. and Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

In addition to being supported by UEP, it also is supported by the Humane Society of the United States, the American Veterinary Medical Association, Consumer Federation of America, National Consumers League, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, American Humane Association, local Humane Societies, dozens of state and regional egg producer groups, and many other groups. There is no government or taxpayer cost anticipated with the legislation.

# # #

*United Egg Producers (UEP) is a Capper-Volstead cooperative for U.S. egg farmers, representing the ownership of approximately 88 percent of the nation’s egg-laying hens. UEP members produce eggs using various systems including modern cage production, enriched cages, cage-free, free range, organic and other specialty eggs. For more information about UEP, please go to [www.eggbill.com](http://www.eggbill.com).*