

Eggs from Iowa farms could come to table near you

August 25 2010, By DAVID MERCER , Associated Press Writer



Wright County Egg on Highway 69, near Galt, Iowa, is seen Friday, Aug. 20, 2010. After an outbreak of salmonella in several states, investigators traced the problem to Wright County Egg, leading to a recall of 380 million eggs. It's one of the largest shell egg recalls in recent history. (AP Photo/Nirmalnedu Majumdar)

(AP) -- The Iowa hens at the heart of a massive recall are still laying eggs that could end up on a table near you. And food safety experts say that's OK.

The eggs will first be pasteurized to rid them of any salmonella. Then they can be sold as liquid eggs or added to other products.

Officials from the two farms that have recalled more than a half-billion eggs say there's no reason not to use the eggs while federal officials investigate the [outbreak](#). Wright Egg Farms and Hillandale Farms issued

the recall after learning that salmonella may have sickened as many as 1,300 people.

Spokeswomen for the farms said their hens are still laying several million eggs a day. Those eggs are being sent to facilities where their shells are broken and the contents pasteurized.

Hillandale Farms spokeswoman Julie DeYoung said the operation has 2 million birds that lay an egg about every 26 hours.

"It's close to 2 million eggs a day," she said.

But the pasteurization only affects eggs that are being laid now. Recalled eggs that had already been shipped to stores are destroyed.

Both companies say they are waiting to hear from the [Food and Drug Administration](#) before deciding what, if anything, to do with their hens.

The FDA cannot order the farms to kill hens that may be infected with salmonella, but the farms could decide to take that step on their own. Neither would discuss that possibility.

University of Illinois food science professor Bruce Chassy said there's no reason the eggs - even from infected [hens](#) - cannot be safely sold if they are pasteurized or cooked. Doing so raises the temperature of the eggs high enough to kill most if not all [salmonella](#).

The bacteria "are all going to be dead, and if they're dead, they're not going to hurt anybody," he said.

Food processors buy eggs that have been removed from their shells to make mayonnaise, ice cream, omelet mixes and other products.

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