



## ink spots: *opinions, news, and reviews from an inkjet*

"Autumn, the year's last, loveliest smile." William Cullen Bryant, 1817-1878.

"Earth's crammed with heaven/And every common bush afire with God /But only he who sees takes off his shoes—/The rest sit around it and pluck blueberries." Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1806-1861.

*Carol and Dick Cover* / 701 N Lincoln St / Northfield MN 55057 / 507-645-7202

## The sorry saga of federal intervention: too little, too late

The mantra of the *eat local* movement in our community is "From Farm to Fork." But what about the following?

**Eggs.** " 'When infected eggs still make it from farm to table, we know we have more work to do,' said President Clinton in 1999. 'That's why today I am taking new action on food safety to cut in half, over the next five years, the number of *Salmonella* cases attributable to eggs. And our goal is to eliminate these cases entirely by 2010.'"

So it's 2010. Did that happen? No, in April, tens of thousands of those who had eaten eggs from two Iowa egg producers were sick, in a huge *Salmonella* outbreak, and by August, those egg producers had recalled more than half a billion eggs, probably too few, considering how many people had already eaten their eggs. What had federal inspectors found in their hen houses? "Mice, maggots, and eight-foot-tall manure piles," including manure streaming out the door at Hillandale Farms, according to [ABCnews.com](http://ABCnews.com) and Michael Jacobson PhD in the October 2010

*Nutrition Action Health Letter.*

How can these things be? "Between 1999 and 2009, the egg safety rule languished due to turf battles between the FDA and the US Department of Agriculture.....At long last, in July 2009, the Obama administration finalized [legislation], giving egg producers a year to clean up their act. But it was too late. By the July 2010 deadline, eggs from filthy hen houses were already sickening thousands of Americans.

"Did we learn a lesson? I hope so, because also languishing for a decade has been legislation to improve the safety of..... all the foods that the FDA regulates...Has Congress forgotten the victims who died, or suffered paralysis, or kidney damage because they ate spinach or cookie dough contaminated with *E. coli* or peanut butter, tomatoes, or Serrano peppers that harbored *Salmonella*?"

As of early September, the Senate hadn't yet addressed the strong bill that the House passed a year ago, even though the food industry supports it. "The goal of the legislation is to get industry to

prevent contamination, rather than playing catch-up after outbreaks strike. The bill would also require more inspections and give the FDA new tools to track and recall contaminated foods;" at present the FDA cannot order companies to recall foods.

The Senate says it's too expensive, and that's because "industry got the House to slice—from \$2,000 to \$500—a new yearly fee to fund inspections. Now the Senate bill has no fee at all."

Do you want to help? Call your Senators [202-224-3121] and urge them to pass the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act before they adjourn in October and before the next outbreak. Tell them you want stronger penalties for mice, maggots, and manure violations, which they will only find with more inspections.

**Produce.** Consumers Union, the non-profit publisher of *Consumer Reports*, is supporting a bill currently under consideration in Congress that would set up new rules for produce safety to *prevent* contamination. Meantime, there have been recalls all summer. In late May, e.g., Caldwell Fresh

Foods of Maywood, CA, recalled alfalfa sprouts labeled Caldwell's Fresh Foods, California Exotics, and Nature's Choice, because of possible *Salmonella* contamination. In our classes we taught participants to sprout their own seeds and to avoid those in produce departments, since sprouts are so easily contaminated. Freshway Foods recalled romaine lettuce owing to a dangerous strain of *E. coli*. The recalled lettuce had been sold to wholesalers in 23 states and Washington DC, under Freshway and Imperial Sysco brands. At least 26 confirmed and seven probable illnesses were linked to the romaine.

The March 2010 issue of *Consumer Reports* reported that a test of 208 containers of bagged salad from 16 brands found "bacteria that are common indicators of poor sanitation and fecal contamination."

The FDA says we need to wash our produce. Of course. But will *anything* change so long as animal feed lots exist next to produce fields? Unless we buy local, or can grow our own produce, God have mercy on us all. +++

**The End of Overeating: watching for triggers that cause you to lose control**

**"In 1960, when weight was relatively stable in America, women ages 20-29 averaged about 128 pounds. By 2000, the average weight of women in that age group had reached 157."**

**Among women 40-49, weight gain in forty years was similar: "The average weight had jumped from 140 pounds in 1960 to 169 in 2000."**

*In the US, billions are spent on weight loss products, with few long-term benefits. "That is because we have not understood why eating certain foods only makes us want to eat more of them. No one has really recognized what is happening."*

**The End of Overeating,**

David A. Kessler MD, Rodale Press, 2009.

The August 2010 issue of *Environmental Nutrition* reported on a talk given by David Kessler MD at the 7th Annual Nutrition and Health Conference in Atlanta on 12 May 2010. *Nutrition Action HealthLetter*, July/August 2009, reviewed *The End of Overeating* and did a 4-page interview with Dr Kessler. I found both magazines recently in my next newsletter file. Although I did not buy the book at \$29.95, there's a great deal of helpful material in the two articles.

Dr Kessler was commissioner of the FDA from 1990 to 1997. During that time the agency redesigned the Nutrition Facts labels that are on most foods. Here are EN's list of helps [bold] for fighting food triggers with paraphrased additions [italics] from EN, or the Q&A in NAHL:

> **Identify which foods cause you to lose control and eat too much.** *I wanted to help people to understand why it's so hard to resist food. And for the first time, we now have the science to say to people, "It's not your fault, and there are things you can do to control it."*

> **Understand that foods high in fat, sugar, and salt can become food triggers.** *Thus avoid purchasing them and keeping them in your environment. We gave rats a series of solutions containing combinations of sugar, corn oil, and vanilla, and found that sugar was the prime driver. But when you add fat to sugar, you increase the drive synergistically.*

> **Realize that some foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt can be easily disguised as "healthy," e.g., high fat, high salt, "whole grain" crackers.** *The food industry understands that sugar, fat, and salt drive con-*

*sumption. They've layered it and loaded it into foods. Industry knows the combinations that will drive intake, giving you the greatest neural activation. They also know the bliss points—how much sugar, fat, and salt is just enough and not too much—and what keeps people coming back for more.*

> **Determine which emotions produce bouts of overeating, and try to direct your energy into more positive activity, such as exercise.** *Overeating triggers include emotions, such as anxiety, sadness, or even pleasant memories. In addition, about 50% of obese, 30% of overweight, and 20% of healthy-weight individuals have three characteristics:*

**One:** *Losing control in the face of highly palatable foods, which they cannot resist;* **Two:** *Lacking a feeling of satiation when they are eating;* **Three:** *Thinking about food between meals and while they are eating, thinking about what they will be eating next. These are normal people. But if you add them up, there are some 70 million who have this constellation of characteristics. It's not a disease. It's a syndrome I call "conditioned hypereating."*

> **Consider which environments trigger overeating.** *Because the food and restaurant industry understands the sugar/fat and fat/salt connections, you needn't look far to find environments that place these foods in your path. In any city block, you typically find fast food, convenience stores, or vending machines that stock foods rich in sugar, fat, and salt 24 hours a day.*

> **Try to eat meals at set times, so that you establish boundaries for when it is acceptable to eat.** *Food has*

*to be pleasurable, but it does not need to be regular, out-of-control entertainment. How do we cool down the over-the-top stimulus? The same way we did with tobacco. We used to look at tobacco as something we wanted, something that would make us feel better, that would make us cool. We changed from seeing tobacco as glamorous to perceiving it as a deadly, disgusting product. When you are dealing with a reinforcing stimulus, that's important. If you learn to view a fat/sugar/salt stimulus as something that's your enemy, you are going to avoid it. Social norms and attitudes affect us and affect our brain impulses.*

**So how can we win the battle against obesity?** By realizing that advertising is not just neutral information. We have to teach our kids that although advertising conditions them to be driven by sugar/fat/salt, they can choose not to succumb to the vending machine in the hallway, and we can work to get those machines out of schools.

Dr Kessler says he was recently in the cafeteria at Google's headquarters. "They have red, yellow, and green in front of each lunch item. Green means have as much as you want. Yellow means have a moderate amount. Red means taste it, but be careful how much you eat....We need something like that on the front of food packages. Also the industry needs to set responsible portion sizes. The reality is that once our brains are activated, it's virtually impossible to stop [eating.]"

At book events, obese people tell Dr Kessler: "Finally someone has explained why I do this. Thank you, Dr K." +++

# Which news sources can we trust? Which agencies?

**Who is looking out for the safety and health of the people of our nation?** Government agencies like the FDA, EPA, CDC? Various news media? Whistle blowers?

Consider:

## 1. Why worry about fructose? It's just fruit—right?

Wrong. Reach for an apple or an orange anytime; God made those to satisfy your sweet tooth. But watch out for fructose in any form. Remember water? Would you pour a soft drink for your puppy or kitten? So why do you buy juice boxes for your children and drink Pepsi yourself?

"A new Israeli study reveals that too much sweetened soda and fruit juice may cause long-term liver damage. **Switching to water is the best preventive measure for longterm health.**" According to Christian Arab Dr Nimer Assy, director of the Liver Unit at Ziv Medical Center in Haifa, people who drink more than one liter (about four cups) of sweetened beverages a day have a five times greater risk of developing fatty liver. "While known culprits like sweetened carbonated soda are on the list of *no-nos*, natural and freshly squeezed fruit juices appear there too," so reports Karen Kloosterman, in "Too much fructose causes liver damage," in the August 2010, *Jerusalem Report*, a publication of Bridges for Peace.

The ingredient that causes the liver damage is a fruit sugar called fructose. **It does not affect insulin production but goes straight to the liver where it is converted to fat.** It's not *just* belly fat that will accumulate. "Fructose ups the chances that you will suffer from a fatty liver, which can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer," Assy says, "We found that people who drink more than two cans of Coke a day have increased their chances for a fatty liver, and if left untreated, their chances for heart disease and cirrhosis of the liver also increase."

2. **So I can grab a diet soda instead?** Wrong. "While diet drinks do not contain fructose, they do have aspartame and caramel color. **Both of those increase insulin resistance and may induce fatty liver.**" Assy plans to conduct a more extensive survey of the effects on health of artificially sweetened beverages, and "he suspects that his findings may not be to the taste of the world's beverage industry. His advice to parents is to limit their children's intake of soft drinks and any other sweetened beverage—natural or artificial, to not more than one cup, juice box, or can a day. Assy suggests eating the fruit whole: "The natural orange has fibers that prevent fructose from being absorbed in the liver."

3. **How can we stay informed about issues that affect our health so drastically?** The day after I wrote the above, Dr Mercola sent us his regular e-mail. After I clicked on *fructose* under HOT TOPICS, we watched an excellent hour-long lecture by Robert Lustig MD, at the University of CA, San Francisco, who said the same thing, only more so: **Fructose is a poison that causes cirrhosis of the liver, the same way that alcohol does.** If you would not buy your child a Budweiser, why do you pour him or her some Mountain Dew? You **must** watch this.

Perhaps that saddest slides Dr Lustig showed were of obese six-month-olds. How is this even possible? Because President Nixon's 1973 *War on Poverty* mandated the WIC [Women Infants Children] subsidies program for poor women so that they could feed their children, who might otherwise fail to thrive. What foods are on the WIC

list? Juices and *Isomil*, a soy baby formula, both of which contain high fructose corn syrup, which he calls a poison.

4. **But I can trust CNN, right? Or Fox news?** I don't know. Most people rely on television for their news. We only had a TV between the 13th and 14th year of our marriage, so that has never been a news source for us.

When I was studying/teaching journalism in the 50s-60s, the most respected newspapers were *The New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Those newspapers still exist, but the print media, newspapers and magazines, face an uncertain future. I subscribe to four newsmagazines, *US NEWS*, *World*, *THE WEEK*, the *Jerusalem Report*, and several nutrition/environment magazines, all of which I quote in *ink spots*.

Increasingly, we find documentaries on our computers that give us more in-depth reporting than newspapers or the sound bytes on TV. If you haven't seen **SuperSize Me**, it's on your computer at [www.hulu.com](http://www.hulu.com) Even more important is **Food Inc**, which we watched for \$3 each the night of our 55th wedding anniversary at the local Arts Guild. Target sells the DVD of *Food Inc*, or your library may have it. Ours does. After you watch that documentary, find **The Future of Food** on [hulu.com](http://hulu.com) and grieve your way through it. It's older, but the two messages are so similar that you will wonder if there is a conspiracy by Monsanto through its revolving door with our federal government both to destroy family farms in the US and Canada, and also to adulterate our food supply with poisonous pesticides, GMOs, and terminator seeds.

5. **But the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health protect us—right?**

Remember H1N1? I wrote a special issue newsletter about it in the spring of 2009. That February the CDC announced that everyone, age months to the aged, should get a flu shot in anticipation of the flu season. A month later, the World Health Organization announced that a worldwide pandemic of bird/swine/human flu was on its way. Pharmaceutical companies quickly began preparing 170 million doses of vaccine for the US. People who sneezed were detained in airports. We saw people wearing masks at the mall. People lined up in drugstores for their shots, and when drugstores ran out, angry people panicked. But the flu fizzled. There were 71 million doses of vaccine left over. Only 12 million got the flu and most of those who did had mild cases, whether or not they had taken the shots. Did they destroy the leftovers? Chances are; some doses expired in June. But did you know that they cannot be flushed down the toilet or put in the garbage? They are hazardous waste, because they contain Thimerosal, a mercury derivative, a preservative too dangerous for landfills—but it can be injected into pregnant women and 7-month-old infants. **Once again, all 300 million of us are being told to get this season's flu shot.** But did you know that this year the H1N1 vaccine will be *in* it, even though Australia, where flu season is already in progress, has suspended its use because children are getting convulsions? Visit [Mercola.com](http://Mercola.com) and watch Barbara Loe Fisher, founder of the National Vaccine Information Center, so that you can make an informed choices for yourself and your family about how to protect your health.

6. **Do we still have freedom to make our own decisions about how to care for our bodies?** So far.+++

**Resources:** If you don't have a computer, please call us: 507-645-7202. We can send you paper documentation for our sources. I'd also be glad to send anyone who asks "The sweet and the sour: what's so bad about high-fructose corn syrup" from **Eating Well**. It's excellent, but I did not have room to review it.

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## Notable Quotables

**Guessing wrong.** "A British survey found that 84% of pregnant women had not been offered a seat on trains. There are so many obese women, the survey found, that commuters can't be sure if the standee is pregnant, or just fat." *THE WEEK*, June 25, 2010.

**Predicting dementia.** "Having a potbelly is a well-known risk factor for heart disease, but it may also damage the mind.....Boston University researchers measured the abdominal fat, waist size, and body mass index of more than 700 adults with an average age of 60. They found that the more overweight the individual, the more likely he or she was to have a smaller-than-average brain—which in turn increases the risk of developing dementia or Alzheimer's disease. The link was particularly strong among people having the highest amounts of fat around the waistline..... 'A large stomach is associated with high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes—all major risk factors for dementia,' said Susan Sorenson.....Doctors recommend that women limit their waistlines to 35 inches and men to 40 inches." *THE WEEK*, "Health and Science," June 11, 2010.

**Snorting junk food?** "Junk food is literally addictive, producing changes in brain chemistry similar to those that cocaine causes, says a new study..... [S]cientists at the Scripps Research Institute in Florida monitored electrical activity in the brains of rats given unfettered access to cheesecake, frosting, bacon, and other fatty, high-calorie foods. Not surprisingly, the rats quickly became obese. They ate compulsively and continuously, even ignoring electric shocks applied to their feet in the presence of food.....As the food-addicted rats ate, the high-fat, high-sugar foods lit up the pleasure centers of their brains just as if they were taking drugs. Over time, the rats had to eat more and more fat, sugar, and salt to feel rewarded. 'They lose control,' co-author Paul Kenny [says]. 'This is the hallmark of addiction.....[H]eavily processed foods are stripped of fiber and designed to trigger innate preferences for fat, sugar, and salt. We make our food very similar to cocaine now,' he says." *THE WEEK*, "Your brain on junk food," April 6, 2010.

**B-EGging for trouble?** "A salmonella outbreak at two Iowa companies showed how the egg industry has consolidated over the past 20 years so that a problem in one company ripples out to the entire food supply. Currently 192 companies produce 95% of the nation's egg supply—down from 2,500 in 1987..... The FDA...had never inspected either of the farms." *World*, 11 Sept 2010. +++

## Why the EPA needs to embrace the *Precautionary Principle*

There are nearly 80,000 industrial chemicals used in the US. While they are regulated under the Toxic Control Substances Act of 1976 [TSCA], many consumer watchdog groups say TSCA has not kept our citizens safe. The July/August 2010 *Green American* says that there are some "TSCA reform efforts afoot."

Although scientists have found chemicals used in manufacturing toys, furniture, household cleaners, and other everyday consumer products linked to cancer, asthma, and developmental disorders, "the EPA has done little to purge

those toxins; in fact, over 62,000 chemicals were 'grandfathered' into use in the US when TSCA became law, and they've never been tested for safety. **Since 1976, the EPA has only required 200 chemicals to submit to safety tests, and it's banned a scant five chemicals.**"

In May, the President's Cancer Panel released a report stating that "many known carcinogens are completely unregulated" under TSCA. Both the Senate and the House have introduced bills that would require a minimum set of safety data on

all industrial chemicals currently in use, and would give the EPA the authority to request further testing on any substance. If the EPA flags a chemical as problematic, the Safe Chemicals Act would **put the burden of proof on industry to prove that it is safe for people or the planet.**

It's a good first step toward reform, but **current language in the bill allows companies to introduce new chemicals into the market without assessing them for safety.**

Green America and other groups are working to close the loopholes and to get

Congress to embrace what they call the *Precautionary Principle*, a concept that would require that "a chemical would have to be proven safe before it could be included in consumer products," says Tracy Fernandez Rysavy, editor of *Green America*. "Demand that your Congressional representatives pass **the strongest version of this important bill**, which will go a long way toward protecting our children and future generations."

For updates, subscribe to their e-mail newsletter at [greenamericatoday.org](http://greenamericatoday.org) **Change is way overdue.** +++

***“Don’t worry or fret. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns... Philipians 4:6-7, The Message.***



circle of influence

fall 2010

## LET'S TALK ABOUT TRUST

“In the darkest days of WWII, Britain began to prepare for likely invasion. Over sixty years later, a poster was discovered that had been printed at that time but never distributed. It read KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON—a phrase that has become popular in these times of economic uncertainty. Around the world we have seen social unrest, changing governments, industrial accidents, natural disasters—a never-ending list of crises demanding our attention....,” *letter from Wycliffe translators, Victor and Sara Gaultney, June 2010.*

Whether you watch TV, or read newsmagazines like we do, you probably feel there’s plenty of reason to worry. Mortimer Zuckerman’s 2-page editorial in the November 2010 *US NEWS & WORLD REPORT* says, “Every measurement of consumer confidence suggests attitudes consistent with an even more prolonged recession.... By some key measures, this is the weakest recovery ever—and as for employment, housing, and personal income, there has been no recovery at all.” The forwards people send by e-mail are even more worrisome, since they purport to be stories that news media have not covered. People have always enjoyed a good conspiracy theory, at least as far back as the Kennedy assassinations, which is as far back as I have been aware of them.

We want to trust our physicians, but it appears that many of them have to order tests to pay for their high tech machines, and others have sold their souls to the pharmaceutical industry. We’d like to believe that the drugs that are prescribed have been thoroughly tested and follow the priority of Hippocrates, called the father of medicine, who said, “First, do no harm.” We’d like to trust our representatives in Washington, but one scandal after another reveals that they may finance their affairs at taxpayer expense, or they cheat on their taxes, take bribes, and abuse campaign funding laws. Some use their power and their bigger *war chests* to destroy candidates of the other party, even those in other states. We’d like to believe that our food is safe, but massive recalls, that sometimes do not occur until several people have died, suggest that contamination of our water supply from animal feces can poison whole fields of irrigated produce. We don’t want to believe that there’s a company called Monsanto that has so much unbridled power that it can control our food supply from seed to harvest, and put out of business the family farmer who has saved his own seeds for generations and refuses to use their terminator seeds, or plant their GMO crops that actually require more pesticides, which Monsanto also makes.

We want to believe that since we were created in God’s image, we are inherently good, that most of us try to follow the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves, and that we really have the best interests of our fellow creatures at heart. We forget that only Adam and Eve were made in God’s image but that their sons and daughters were not: “And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and begot a son in *his own likeness, after his image*, and he called his name Seth.” His name means *substitute*. *Genesis 5:5.*

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I like to explore the Jewish roots of my faith. While journaling Leviticus, I have been reading *Looking into Leviticus*, by Lawrence Duff-Forbes, DLitt, DD, FPhS. Since his readers do not understand the 61 Hebrew words for “sin,” he says, “they can be reduced to English thought by the following English words; *astray, crooked, rebellion, ungodly, incurable, wicked, guilty, and wrong....*” He says Rabbi Phillip Bernstein correctly epitomized sin...in its Hebrew origin as “falling short” or “missing the mark.” One Jewish confession of sin is “May it then be Thy will, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, to forgive us for all our sins, to pardon us for all our iniquities, and to grant us remission for all our transgressions.” *The Longer Confession for the Day of Atonement.*

The only physical education class in which I did reasonably well was archery. I got pretty good at hitting the target and sometimes even the bulls-eye. But when it comes to God’s command in Leviticus: “*Be ye holy for I, the Eternal God, am holy*”, I regularly miss the mark. Dr Duff-Forbes says “*Sin found its entrance into the human economy through what Jewish theology appropriately termed the Fall of Man.*” But the rest of us mortals *fall* by our own choices, every day. It does no good to say to a policeman, “*Yes, officer, I admit I did make a left turn, but it was such a teeny-weeny left turn.*”

Jewish Scriptures teach that “*there is none righteous, no, not one.*” As one who believes that the God of Israel has already sent the Substitute to pay the penalty for my sins, I can confess to missing the mark *every* day, not just for ten days once a year. He’s also a Redeemer who can buy me back from the deceiver who tricked our first parents. Knowing that my sins are forgiven, I can ask God to forgive those I listed in the third paragraph. Only he knows if greed or hunger for power have caused *them* to miss the mark. In spite of what we see in the media, we can indeed KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON, by *shaping our worries into prayers, letting God know our concerns.*

Who can we trust? The God of the Universe, who had a plan from the beginning, because he knew that each of us would miss the mark. Those who seek to know God can look at the events of our time and say, along with the psalmist in Psalm 31, “But as for me, I trust you, O Lord; I say, ‘*You are my God. My times are in Your hand.*’” Because we have that assurance, we remind one another *Don’t worry or fret. Instead of worrying, pray.* +++

## What Does It Mean?

Don't believe everything you read on an egg carton. Some claims mean something, while others don't.

Here are some common claims...and some claims that we wish were more common.

### Certified Claims

*These claims have been verified or certified. You can trust them.*



**USDA Organic:** Hens must be uncaged inside barns or warehouses, and must have outdoor access (how much isn't specified). Hens must be fed an organic, all-vegetarian diet that is free of antibiotics and pesticides. Beak cutting is permitted. (Egg producers often trim hens' beaks to prevent the animals from harming each other.) Hens cannot have received any antibiotics after they were three days old.



#### American Humane Certified

Hens can be confined in cages or can be cage-free. Beak cutting is allowed.



#### Animal Welfare Approved

Hens are raised by independent family farmers in flocks of no more than 500 birds that spend their adult lives outside. Beak cutting is prohibited. The animals aren't fed any animal byproducts. (The eggs are available at some farmers markets and restaurants.)



#### Certified Humane

Hens must be uncaged inside barns or warehouses, but may be kept indoors at all times. Beak cutting is allowed.



#### United Egg Producers Certified

Meets minimum voluntary industry standards, which,

according to the Humane Society, "permit routine cruel and inhumane factory farm practices."

### Uncertified Claims

*If the eggs haven't been certified by an organic or animal-welfare organization, these claims haven't been verified and are as honest as the companies that make them.*

#### Raised without Antibiotics:

The hens were not fed antibiotics at any time. If a hen was sick and given antibiotics, its eggs cannot make the claim. The routine use of antibiotics in hens is illegal.

#### Cage-Free:

Hens live outside of battery cages in barns or warehouses, but usually don't have access to the outdoors. Cage-free hens typically have two to three times more space than caged hens.

#### Free-Range or Free-Roaming:

Cage-free hens with some outdoor access. There are no requirements for how much or what kind.

#### Pasture-Raised or Pastured:

Hens spend at least some time outside foraging for vegetation and bugs.

### Claims that Mean Nothing

*You can safely ignore these claims.*

**Hormone-Free:** Claim or no claim, it's illegal for egg producers to feed hormones to their hens.

**Natural:** It can mean anything.

### Nutrient Claims

Caged and cage-free hens typically eat the same corn-based diet, so there's no nutritional difference between their eggs. But some producers supplement their hens' diets with ingredients that raise the level of some nutrients.

Two large Eggland's Best eggs, for example, contain 50 percent of the Daily Value for vitamin E. That's 10 times as much as two regular large eggs contain. If an egg carton makes a claim, check the Nutrition Facts label to see what percent of a day's worth of the nutrient the eggs supply.



### Omega-3 Claims

"Not all omega-3 eggs are created equal," warns Mary Van Elswyk, a

dietitian and omega-3 consultant in Longmont, Colorado. "You need to know which omega-3s you're interested in and how much of them the eggs contain."

**DHA and EPA** help reduce the risk of heart attacks, lower blood triglyceride levels, and are key constituents of brain cells and the retina. They're found most plentifully in fatty fish like salmon. A 3½ oz. serving of cooked salmon contains roughly 1,200 milligrams of DHA and 600 mg of EPA.

The third omega-3 fat—**ALA**—doesn't protect the heart as much as DHA and EPA do. Most Americans get enough ALA from margarine, salad dressing, and other foods made with vegetable oils.

A typical egg naturally contains about 25 mg of DHA and 25 mg of ALA. So if a carton claims that its eggs have omega-3s but doesn't say how much, or if it boasts that it has 50 mg of omega-3s per egg, "chances are, it's actually just an ordinary egg," says Van Elswyk.

Last summer, the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee said that eating seafood twice a week that provides an average of 250 mg a day of DHA plus EPA is associated with a lower risk of fatal heart attacks in people with or without heart disease. The committee also concluded that there isn't enough evidence that ALA can do the same.

A few companies feed their hens fish-meal or algae, which can get the DHA up to about 100 mg per yolk. By feeding their hens flaxseed or canola oil, they can easily boost the ALA to 350 mg or so. So if a carton boasts that its eggs have 300 mg or more of omega-3s, you can assume that most of it is ALA and not the more desirable DHA and EPA.

The FDA has banned all omega-3 claims on eggs, but that hasn't stopped producers from making the claims. 🍳

Sources: Humane Society, others.