

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Lands and Natural Resources
Department of Agriculture: Animal Health Section**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources Announces Partial Lift of Poultry Import Ban: Hatching Eggs Permitted with Restrictions, Live Poultry Ban Remains in Place

February 26, 2025 – Saipan, CNMI – The CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR), Animal Health Section, has announced a partial modification to the poultry import ban. The importation of hatching eggs is now permitted, with strict requirements. However, the live poultry ban remains in effect due to the continued spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) across the world. This decision follows a careful review of disease risks. The goal is to support local poultry production while prioritizing the safety of our community.

Rationale for Allowing Hatching Eggs

Current scientific data and expert assessments indicate that hatching eggs present a significantly lower risk of transmitting HPAI compared to live birds. An infected hen does not transfer HPAI to the embryos inside eggs. The risk is further decreased by adhering to strict pre-shipment sanitation requirements. Finally, the high temperatures used during incubation effectively inactivate viral particles that may be present on eggshells. With these safeguards in place, CNMI is allowing the importation of hatching eggs under the following strict conditions.

Import Requirements for Hatching Eggs

To protect local poultry populations and prevent the introduction of HPAI, all imported hatching eggs must meet the following requirements:

- **Veterinary Health Certificate:** Each shipment must include a veterinary health certificate from a USDA-accredited veterinarian verifying that the source flock is free from HPAI, in addition to the following standard requirements:
 - Description of the hatching eggs
 - Statement of pullorum-clean rating for the originated flock in accordance with accepted federal standards
 - Statement that flock has been free of symptoms of transmissible diseases for sixty days prior to shipment
- **Sanitation Protocols:** Exporters must submit a statement regarding their following of strict sanitation procedures before shipment, including:
 - Thorough cleaning to remove organic debris
 - Disinfection using EPA-approved avian influenza disinfectants

- Fumigation or fogging to eliminate potential surface contamination
 - Adherence to biosecurity measures during handling and transportation
- **Entry Permit Requirement:** Importers must obtain an entry permit from the DLNR Animal Health Section before shipping hatching eggs. Approval is required before importation.
 - The above veterinary health certificate and sanitation statement must be submitted with the entry permit request.
- **Packaging Requirements:** Hatching eggs must be transported in new, unused containers to minimize contamination risks.
- **Inspection Upon Arrival:** All shipments will be inspected by designated DLNR officials before being cleared for entry.

The CNMI Department of Land and Natural Resources remains committed to supporting sustainable poultry production while maintaining strict disease prevention measures. The Department will continue to monitor global HPAI developments and adjust policies as needed to protect the health and stability of CNMI's poultry industry.

To inquire about importing hatching eggs or submit a request for entry permit, please call Animal Health Section at (670) 256-3319 or email cnmianimalhealth@gmail.com.