

# FARMER IN THE FIELD



## Egg Knowledge 101

By Bonnie Swank

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This month I have decided not to talk about produce but something that is still produced on the farm, eggs. Eggs come in a variety of colors including white, brown and pastels. Different varieties of chickens produce different colored eggs and it in no way effects what's inside. Some eggs just like getting dressed up more than others. That being said what does make a good egg good? If you've ever been lucky enough to eat a farm fresh egg you know they definitely taste better than the ones in the store. Why? Because they are farm fresh and the chickens are exposed to fresh air and sunshine and eating grasses and bugs, all the things that go into making a deep orange creamy yoke. The difference is amazing and the whites whip up so fluffy and beautiful you'll be in egg heaven.

If you peel a farm fresh hardboiled egg vs. a store bought egg there is a huge difference too. It is nearly impossible to peel the farm fresh egg without bits of the white coming off. This is because the whites are pressed so hard against the shell. In store bought eggs they have been in storage long enough for some evaporation of the whites to take place and the shell peels off clean. The air space at the top is bigger with store bought eggs too.

In California if an egg is kept at 45 degrees or below it can be held up to 30 days in storage. Yes eggs have a long shelf life but if you had a choice why would you choose store bought over farm eggs. And if you are worried about the pesky rooster on the farm having his way with the hens don't worry, a fertilized egg tastes no different than

an unfertilized egg. So do yourself and your family a favor and make the switch to farm fresh eggs today.

### **How to Test Eggs for Freshness**

Fill up a bowl with cold water and gently place eggs in the bowl.

***If they float*** – throw them away

***If they stand on end*** – use immediately (very good for hard boiling, they will peel easily)

***If they lay on the bottom*** – very fresh

### **My Chili Relleno Recipe**

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I have been making this recipe since I was in my early 20's. The last time I made it I used our own farm fresh eggs and what a difference. They were a rich golden color from the yolks and the egg whites didn't break down during cooking.

The rule of thumb with this recipe is for every two chilies use one egg and for every egg use 1 tablespoon of flour.

- 6 Pasilla Chilies
- 3 Farm fresh eggs, room temperature if possible
- 3 tablespoons flour
- Salt
- Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 pt. Swank Farms Hot Salsa, or salsa of choice
- 1 tablespoon corn starch
- Cooking spray
- Cilantro for garnish, optional

Roast the peppers over a hot grill or in the oven until charred on both sides and put in a paper bag to rest. After about 20 minutes remove the chilies from the bag and peel off the charred skins. Cut a slit in each chili and remove the seeds. Do not remove the stem. Lay chilies out on a paper towel to absorb any extra moisture. Depending on the size of the chilies, cut the cheese into  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " pieces a little shorter than the length of the chili. Stuff chilies and close opening.

Separate the whites and the yolks from the eggs. Do each egg separately as to not contaminate all the egg whites with a broken yolk. Yolks in the whites will keep them from whipping up nice and fluffy. Transfer the whites to a stainless steel bowl and whip until you can form peaks. Lightly salt the egg whites, sprinkle in the flour. Using a fork

break up the yolks, give them a stir and pour over whites. Gently fold together all of the ingredients until mixed through.

Heat up a non-stick pan to medium, *I like to use an electric skillet. You have more cooking space without the rounded edges and more control over the heat (300 – 350 degrees).* Dip each chili in the egg mixture coating completely and lay in pan. Cover the pan and cook until golden brown and fluffy. Using a sharp spatula carefully cut between the chilies and turn cooking uncovered until the other side is golden.

Meanwhile put the salsa in a saucepan reserving some of the liquid. To the liquid add the corn starch mixing until smooth, stir into salsa and heat. Cook until bubbly and thick. *(If using a different salsa add cornstarch to a little water and slowly add to heated salsa until you get the right consistency).*

To serve lay the chilies out on a platter and spoon salsa over them. Garnish with cilantro and serve.