

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

The President has signed H. R. 12000 - Egg Research and Consumer Information Act which authorizes egg and chicken producers to establish, finance, and carry out a program of research, producer and consumer education, and promotion to improve, maintain and develop markets for their products.

Since the early 1950's, per capita egg consumption has fallen from 387 eggs to 306 eggs, a decline of more than 20 percent. This decline appears to be based on two factors: (1) the concern that egg cholesterol is a source of certain health problems; and, (2) the consumer switch to higher cost forms of protein such as beef made possible by increasing per capita incomes over the last two decades.

H. R. 12000 will authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to establish an 18 member Egg Board composed of egg producers or representatives of egg producers. Establishment of the Egg Board or any other order issued under this Act will require approval through an egg producer referendum with not less than two-thirds of the producers voting in favor or by a majority of the producers voting in favor if such majority constituted over two-thirds of all egg production. The Egg Board and orders administered by it will assist egg and chicken producers in establishing, financing, and carrying out a program of research, producer and consumer education, and promotion of research; producer and consumer education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for their products. Orders can be suspended or terminated and certain small egg producers will be exempt. The Secretary can prohibit brand name advertising and "unfair or deceptive" practices which will not be allowed in any of the industry's activities.

The program will be financed entirely by an assessment paid by producers of not to exceed 5 cents per case (30 dozen eggs) of commercial eggs -- approximately \$7,500,000 will be generated annually by the assessments. Producers not favoring the program can demand and receive a refund of their assessment. While the \$150,000 cost for the initial referendum will be paid by Agriculture, all subsequent Federal costs will be defrayed by the assessments.

#