



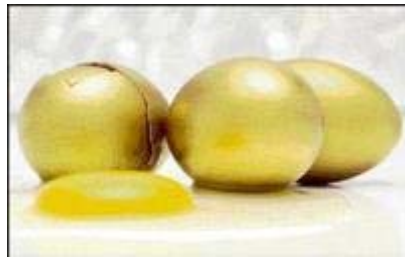
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'Local egg industry cracking up' - Liquefied imports crippling industry

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SPANISH TOWN, St. Catherine:

CHAIRMAN OF the Jamaica Egg Farmers Association (JEFA), Mark Campbell, said the local egg industry is currently under threat from the importation of liquefied egg.

Mr. Campbell was at the Eden Farm in Kitson Town, St Catherine, where a state-of-the-art grading facility was handed over by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under its Jamaica Business Recovery Programme (JBRP) at a cost of \$2.2 million.

Speaking with **Farmers Weekly**, Mr. Campbell said about 75 per cent of the eggs that are consumed in the tourist industry is imported. "The Minister of Agriculture has tried to work with us. However, we understand that persons attached to the Veterinary Division have been issuing permits for the continued importation and we need some help in this regard," the JEFA chairman claimed. Mr. Campbell said the egg farmers have not been consulted in the process, resulting in heavy losses for many who have since gone out of the business.

The installation of the new grading facility, he said, would greatly assist egg farmers in achieving parity with overseas competitors.

The benefits of the facility include: delivering a cleaner and safer product with a longer shelf life, reduce egg losses due to improved handling, more equitable pricing, with the ability to provide value added advantages in the form of sizing and grading. The machine has the capacity to wash 10 boxes of eggs every 10 minutes.

In the meantime, he said the egg farming industry also needs the support of local consumers in order to survive the competition from foreign imports. The industry produces approximately 10.58 million dozen of eggs per year. Currently, local eggs are sold for an average of \$90 per dozen.



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