

WORLD OSTRICH ASSOCIATION

Guide to Purchasing Fertile Ostrich Eggs, Day Old Chicks & Breeder Birds



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Introduction:

The World Ostrich Association (WOA) was set up to enable communication within the industry. The mission statement "*To Represent the International Ostrich Industry through Communication, Dissemination of Information and Provision of Industry Standards*" enforces that statement.

For many reasons, the last decade has witnessed our industry contracting from the peak around 2002.

A major challenge when starting ostrich production today is sourcing foundation fertile eggs and/or livestock. The WOA is receiving an increasing number of enquiries about traders and reports of scams where money has been handed over in good faith with a failure to deliver the goods paid for.

The objective of this document is to provide guidelines in what to look for when searching for reliable suppliers of fertile eggs, day old chick or any other ostrich livestock and genetic material.

Today the Internet is the first place people start their search for knowledge, information and potential suppliers of most goods and services. When first producing this document (Feb 2014), the ostrich industry is so very small that global production levels are challenging to measure. However it could be considered that it has returned close to 1990 levels when measured by slaughter bird production following 2 turbulent decades. An article published in the South African press¹ in 2014 suggests production has reduced to 100,000 slaughter birds – just 29% of the peak production reported in 2002² in South Africa. Today, August 2017, South Africa is once again experiencing a Highly Pathogenic Avian Flu outbreak in ostrich, that has once again closed their borders to the export of fertile eggs, live chicks/adults and meat.

To put these numbers into perspective, when viewing adverts from companies offering supplies of eggs and chicks - these numbers illustrate the very low numbers available for sale.

The purpose of this document is to assist newcomers to understand the requirements when importing their foundation livestock and how to identify the genuine people/companies trading in our industry when supply is so limited.

Trade Directories

Despite slow development of our industry with a history of countries failing to make the transition from breeder markets to commercial production, the demand for eggs and chicks remains strong from new entrants. With the ever increasing number of "trade directory" style web sites, such as Alibaba, developing we are witnessing some disturbing trends.

When answering these types of advertisements there are a number of clues to look out for to determine if the vendors are genuine traders or fraudsters. The next section includes some of the clear clues that we are experiencing.

¹ <http://thegremlin.co.za/oudtshoorn-news/wordpress/2014/01/21/research-may-give-ostrich-industry-wings/>

² <http://world-ostrich.org/world-ostrich-production-statistics/>

Guidelines to Determine the Authenticity of Vendors

The following is a list of facts to verify when evaluating the authenticity of any advertisements you come across. All the facts mentioned below we have experienced:

General Appearance

The following are things to look for when first accessing the listing and/or web site:

- Are the pictures used genuine? Many photos we see on these sites are taken from other website.
 - o Chicken egg boxes displayed when marketing about ostrich egg sales
 - o Narrative describes a photo of growing chicks as breeder birds
 - o Age of web site – some go back to 1997 without updating
 - o Check the path of photos – some directory sites show the path of the original photos
 - o Do different listings use the same photo, but with different contact details and locations?
 - o Does the photo in the listing relate to the specie it is advertising?
- Does the address match the telephone number?
- Does it look a professionally produced web site?
- Does it provide corporate information and company registration information?
- Is the advertisement well written in good English or the language used?

Numbers Available

Current numbers of Ostrich on farms throughout the world are very low. South Africa remains the largest producer of ostrich. The biggest farms in South Africa have a few thousand breeders with authorities reporting 100,000 total numbers of slaughter birds from all farms. Observe caution with vendors that mention numbers in the 10s of thousands. At the time of writing, there is no evidence that such farms exist. There are none known to the Association of that size located in a country able to export to the EU.

If you come across such a trader, check their ability to export to your location before paying any money. [This document](#)³ lists countries that can export to the EU. You are looking for Live Birds (BPR), Day old chicks (DOR) or Hatching eggs (HER).

Units Sold

Do the units offered equate to the product.

Standard units of sale:

- Fertile Ostrich Eggs are sold by the egg
 - o When exporting or shipping any distance there will be a minimum number specified per shipment to establish the most cost effective and commercially viable number for both buyer and seller
- Day Old Chicks are sold by the Chick
 - o Same conditions as for fertile egg
- Young Breeders and Proven Breeders
 - o Generally sold by Pair or Trio at the time of writing

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2008R0798:20120213:EN:PDF>

Several examples of some non-standards offered. Avoid such listings as:

- Fertile ostrich eggs quantities priced and minimum order quoted in litres alongside a photo of boxes of blown egg shells.
- Ostrich Chicks sold by the Litre
- Fertile Ostrich Eggs and Chicks sold by the Pair
- Ostrich Chicks sold by the kilogram

Prices Quoted

Are the prices quoted realistic and reflect today's market prices?

- Eggs – anything less than USD25 per egg should be viewed with caution
- Day Old Chicks – anything less than USD50 per chick should be viewed with caution
- Growing Chicks – the WOA do not recommend shipping growing chicks long distances and across international borders
- Breeders – Proven Breeders are not readily available in today's marketplace as very few people maintain any records. Thus any records provided are likely to be false.

There are many sites offering very much lower prices, prices that are impossible to supply responsibly or commercially viable for the company offering those prices. These low prices are a key indicator that the advertisement is a scam.

Shipping

If the advertisement or paperwork includes such things as:

- Shipping in the price.
 - o It is not possible to quote for shipping until the local regulations and veterinary requirements are known and of course the destination.
- Shipping by sea is quoted for fertile eggs and/or day old chicks.
 - o Fertile eggs and day old chicks must be delivered as fast as possible
 - o Postal services for shipping fertile eggs and/or day old chicks
 - Some potential vendors suggest this – of course that is simply not possible for fertile eggs or day old chicks, so a clear indicator of a scam web site

Unrealistic Claims

Some advertisements are making the claim of 100% hatching rate in fertile eggs. This is never possible, even in the best conditions, there are failures. Some reasoning to support that statement:

- When fertile eggs undergo transport they undergo potential changes in optimum storage temperature
- There are inevitably some delays in setting them into the hatcher
- This transport and delays inevitably place eggs under stress
- The recipient is new to hatching and using the incubator for the first time
- There is inevitably some trial and error when first setting eggs

Additional misleading and erroneous claims:

- Chicks are DNA Tested when related to chicks from South Africa this is untrue

Contract

Should you get to the contract stage, these are a few pointers to look for:

- Is the contract professional in appearance, if not view with caution?
- Is the wording professionally written and free from errors?
- Does the wording describe accurately the product you are purchasing?
- Check the company registration records to verify the authenticity
- Does the contract have a landline telephone number listed or only mobile? If only a mobile number view with caution

The above list are some clues on how to recognise if a vendor is genuine. As always the ultimate responsibility and recognise with a shortage of supply the rouges are out there - "Buyer Beware".

Regulations when Exporting and Importing Eggs, Chicks and Breeding Stock

Each country will have their own veterinary requirements when importing as these will depend on the local health status and the health status of the exporting country. The European Union countries all operate under the same regulations.

When wishing to import once a source of eggs or livestock is identified the first fact to establish is:

- Is the farm located in a country or area acceptable under your country's regulations?

You will also need:

- The name of the supplying farm
- The location of the farm, country and region
- Export registration number of that farm

If the supplier is unable to provide that information, then negotiations must stop as it is unlikely they are able to export. Do NOT part with any money. It can take some time to establish export licenses, depending on the location.

If they can supply that information then you can contact your local department responsible for setting and monitoring these regulations and providing the import licenses.

The following provides links to information required for those wishing to export fertile ostrich eggs, livestock or meat to any European country along with a summary of the criteria these regulations are designed to support. They are copy/pasted from these documents.

Criteria for the authorisation of a third country

Third countries of origin must be on a positive list of eligible countries. The eligibility criteria for the import of poultry and poultry meat are laid down in [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No. 798/2008⁴](#) and the criteria for the import of captive birds are laid down in Commission Implementing Regulation: [Commission Implementing Decision \(EU\) No 139/2013⁵](#).

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32008R0798:EN:NOT>

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:047:0001:0017:EN:PDF>

The main criteria are:

- The exporting countries must have a competent veterinary authority which is responsible throughout the food chain. The authorities must be empowered, structured and resourced to implement effective inspection and guarantee credible certification of the relevant veterinary and general hygiene conditions.
- The country or region of origin must fulfil the relevant animal health standards. This implies that the country should be a member of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and should meet that organisation's standards and reporting obligations. In addition, approved countries have to notify within 24 hours outbreaks of avian influenza and Newcastle disease and must submit virus isolates to the EU Community Reference Laboratory.
- Adequate veterinary services must ensure effective enforcement of all necessary health controls.
- Imports are only authorised from approved establishments (e.g. slaughterhouses, cutting plants, game handling establishments, cold stores, meat processing plants), which have been inspected by the competent authority of the exporting country and found to meet EU requirements. The authority provides the necessary guarantees and is obliged to carry out regular inspections.
- The veterinary authorities must have at its disposal one or more laboratories that comply with certain minimum requirements, ensuring sufficient capability for disease diagnosis.
- The national authorities must also guarantee that the relevant hygiene and public health requirements are met. The hygiene legislation contains specific requirements on the structure of establishments, equipment and operational processes for slaughter, cutting, storage and handling of meat. These provisions are aimed at ensuring high standards and at preventing any contamination of the product during processing. More information on the food hygiene legislation can be found on the webpages of [the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers](#)⁶.

Imports from third countries should therefore meet conditions equivalent to those applied within the Community and which are in line with the revised requirements for international trade in poultry and poultry products laid down by the standards of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) (5) and the Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals (6) of the OIE.

(8) Article 21(2) of Directive 90/539/EEC sets out certain matters that are to be taken into account when deciding whether or not a third country or part thereof may be included in the list of third countries from which poultry and hatching eggs may be imported into the Community, such as the state of health of poultry, the regularity and rapidity of the supply of information by a third country relating to the existence of certain contagious animal diseases, including avian influenza and Newcastle disease and the rules for animal disease prevention and control in the third country concerned

Article 1

Subject matter and scope

1. This Regulation lays down veterinary certification requirements for imports into and transit, including storage during transit, through the Community of the following commodities (the commodities):

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biosafety/hygienelegislation/index_en.htm

(a) poultry, hatching eggs, day-old chicks and specified pathogen-free eggs;

It lays down a list of third countries, territories, zones or compartments from which the commodities may be imported into the Community.

Article 2

Definitions

For the purposes of this Regulation, the following definitions shall apply:

- (1) 'poultry' means fowl, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quails, pigeons, pheasants, partridges and ratites (*ratitae*), reared or kept in captivity for breeding, the production of meat or eggs for consumption, or for restocking supplies of game;
- (2) 'hatching eggs' means eggs for incubation, laid by poultry;
- (3) 'day-old chicks' means all poultry less than 72 hours old, not yet fed and muscovy ducks (*Cairina moschata*) or their crosses, less than 72 hours old whether or not fed;
- (4) 'breeding poultry' means poultry 72 hours old or more, intended for the production of hatching eggs;

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR IMPORTS AND TRANSIT

Article 3

Lists of third countries, territories, zones or compartments of origin from which commodities may be imported into and transit through the Community

The commodities shall only be imported into and transit through the Community from the third countries, territories, zones or compartments listed in columns 1 and 3 of the table in Part 1 of Annex I.

Article 4

Veterinary certification

1. Commodities imported into the Community shall be accompanied by a veterinary certificate, as referred to in column 4 of the table in Part 1 of Annex I, for the commodity concerned, completed in accordance with the notes and the model veterinary certificates set out in Part 2 of that Annex (the certificate).
2. A declaration by the master of the ship, as set out in Annex II, shall be attached to veterinary certificates for imports of poultry and day-old chicks, where the transport of those commodities includes transport by ship, even for part of the journey.
3. Poultry, hatching eggs and day-old chicks transiting through the Community shall be accompanied by:
 - (a) a veterinary certificate as referred to in paragraph 1 which shall bear the words 'for transit through the EC', and (b) a certificate required by the third country of destination.
4. Specified pathogen-free eggs, meat, minced meat and mechanically separated meat of poultry, ratites and wild gamebirds, eggs and egg products transiting through the Community shall be accompanied by a certificate drawn up in accordance with the model certificate set out in Annex XI and complying with the conditions set out therein.

5. For the purposes of this Regulation, transit may include storage during transit in accordance with Articles 12 and 13 of Directive 97/78/EC.
6. Electronic certification and other agreed systems harmonised at Community level may be used.

Article 5

Conditions for imports and transit

1. Commodities imported into and transiting through the Community shall comply with the conditions laid down in Articles 6 and 7 and in Chapter III.
2. Paragraph 1 shall not apply to single consignments of fewer than 20 units of poultry other than ratites, hatching eggs or dayold chicks thereof. However, such single consignments may only be imported from third countries, territories, zones or compartments thereof that are approved

(d) the restrictions in relation to the approval of a *Salmonella* control programme, shall only apply when indicated in the appropriate column of the table in Part 1 of Annex I.