



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 1, 2008

FOOD SAFETY COMES FIRST TO FOURTH OF JULY FUN

Stars and Stripes Salad hits the spot at summertime picnics

COLUMBUS – As the Fourth of July weekend approaches, many Ohioans are preparing to celebrate with family and friends at picnics and barbecues. To ensure a pleasant experience for all throughout the holiday weekend and summer months, it is important to make food safety a priority.

“The warmer weather increases the likelihood for food to be left out for snacking over a period of time,” said Jim Chakeres, executive vice president of the Ohio Poultry Association. “During summertime picnics, it is important that consumers are aware of the proper way to handle, prepare and serve egg dishes, such as Stars and Stripes Salad, to avoid foodborne illnesses.”

When purchasing eggs, consumers should open the carton to make sure that the eggs are clean and the shells are not cracked. The eggs should be refrigerated promptly when arriving home and be stored in the original carton and used within three weeks of purchase.

When preparing eggs, consumers should hard-cook eggs instead of boiling them. To hard-cook eggs, start with cold eggs and cover them with cold water in a saucepan. Then bring them to a boil and remove from heat. For large eggs, leave the eggs covered in the hot water for about 15 minutes.

In addition, when cooking with eggs this summer, consumers should keep the following food safety tips in mind:

- Wash hands before handling eggs and use only clean, uncracked eggs.
- Cook eggs thoroughly to offer the best protection from disease.
- Bacteria can multiply in temperatures from 40°F (5°C) to 140°F (60°C). Remember to keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
- When transporting eggs, or products that contain eggs, store them in an insulated cooler with enough ice or frozen gel packs to keep them cold. A good tip is to use separate coolers for food and beverages.
- Do not keep eggs out of the refrigerator for more than two hours, and no more than 30 minutes if the temperature is above 85° F.

When properly handled, eggs are a healthy way for kids and adults to stay full and fit this summer. The incredible egg provides 13 essential nutrients, while only containing about 75 calories. Research shows that high-quality protein, like that found in eggs, helps build muscle strength and allows people to feel full for longer, helping them stay energized and maintain a healthy weight.

Ohio is the second-largest egg producing state in the nation, producing eight billion eggs each year at an estimated retail value of more than \$607 million.

For more information on safety tips, fun recipes or nutritional benefits, visit the OPA Web site at www.ohiopoultry.org.

###

CONTACT: Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president, 614/882-6111
Hinda Mitchell or Diane Beathard, 614/224-0600

Stars and Stripes Forever Salad

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Ingredients:

1 bag (10 oz.) fresh spinach, torn into bite-sized pieces

1 cup chopped onions

3 large sweet red peppers

6 hard-cooked eggs, chopped

Prepared poppyseed dressing

In a large bowl, mix together spinach and onions. Place salad in a 13 x 9 inch glass dish or plastic container. Cut off tops and bottoms of peppers; remove seeds. Cut peppers in half with a horizontal cut, and remove membranes. Using a 2 inch or smaller star-shaped cookie cutter, cut 5 stars from each pepper. Place pepper stars in rows of 3 down and 5 across. Place eggs in rows between the stars. Serve with poppyseed dressing.

HIGH RESOLUTION PHOTO AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST