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STATEMENT BY THE EGG NUTRITION CENTER AND AMERICAN EGG BOARD ON *DIABETES CARE* STUDY ON EGG CONSUMPTION

Park Ridge, Ill. (November 24, 2008) – A large body of science supports the beneficial role that eggs play in a healthful diet. Some of the many benefits attributed to eggs and eggs' nutrients include: promoting mind and body energy, reducing the risk of birth defects, promoting muscle and eye health, and facilitating weight management. A recently-published analysis of data collected in the Physicians' Health Study I and the Nurses' Health Study suggests that egg intake is associated with increased incidence of type-2 diabetes.¹ Given the large body of research supporting the health benefits of egg consumption, this finding is unexpected; however, in light of the importance of this research and its implications, further research is warranted to replicate the finding and to identify potential physiological mechanisms.

“The egg consumption study published in the November 2008 issue of *Diabetes Care* should not deter healthy adults from enjoying eggs,” said Donald J. McNamara, Executive Director of the Egg Nutrition Center, the scientific research arm of the American Egg Board. “There is no plausible biological explanation for the findings, and the conclusion could have been influenced by a number of confounding factors.”

By definition, statistical associations do not prove cause-and-effect; rather, they show relationships and are best used in guiding the direction of future research. In the analysis reported in *Diabetes Care*, participants who reported frequent egg consumption also had higher BMIs, were older, were more likely to smoke, reported greater consumption of alcohol, were more likely to have hypertension, and – for women – reported higher total calorie, saturated fat, *trans* fat and cholesterol intakes. Therefore, it is important to consider that for these health professional populations, egg intake could simply have been associated with less healthful lifestyle behaviors overall. The study authors note several limitations of the study design, including:

- Limited dietary intake data available for male subjects, which restricted the researchers' ability to control for intake from nutrients associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, such as saturated fat
- One-time (baseline) estimation of egg consumption for female participants
- Likelihood of other contributing lifestyle factors that weren't controlled for in the study
- Lack of applicability to the general population: more than 90 percent of the subjects were Caucasian

The authors of this study note that eggs serve as a good source for vitamins, protein and other nutrients, and that the observational nature of the study design could have introduced factors that could partly or completely explain the unexpected results. However, given the incidence of type-2 diabetes and the implications of this research, further research must be completed to clarify the role of egg intake and other lifestyle factors in this population.

For more information, visit www.incredibleegg.org or www.enc-online.org.

About the American Egg Board (AEB)

AEB is the U.S. egg producer's link to the consumer in communicating the value of The incredible edible egg™ and is funded from a national legislative checkoff on all egg production from companies with greater than 75,000 layers, in the continental United States. The board consists of 18 members and 18 alternates from all regions of the country who are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The AEB staff carries out the programs under the board direction. AEB is located in Park Ridge, Ill. Visit www.incredibleegg.org for more information.

About the Egg Nutrition Center (ENC)

The Egg Nutrition Center (ENC) is the health education and research center of the American Egg Board. Established in 1979, ENC provides science-based information to health promotion agencies, physicians, dietitians, nutritional scientists, media and consumers on issues related to egg nutrition and the role of eggs in the American diet. ENC is located in Washington, DC. Visit www.enc-online.org for more information.

ⁱ Djousse L, et al. Egg consumption and risk of type 2 diabetes in men and women. *Diabetes Care*. Published online November 18, 2008.