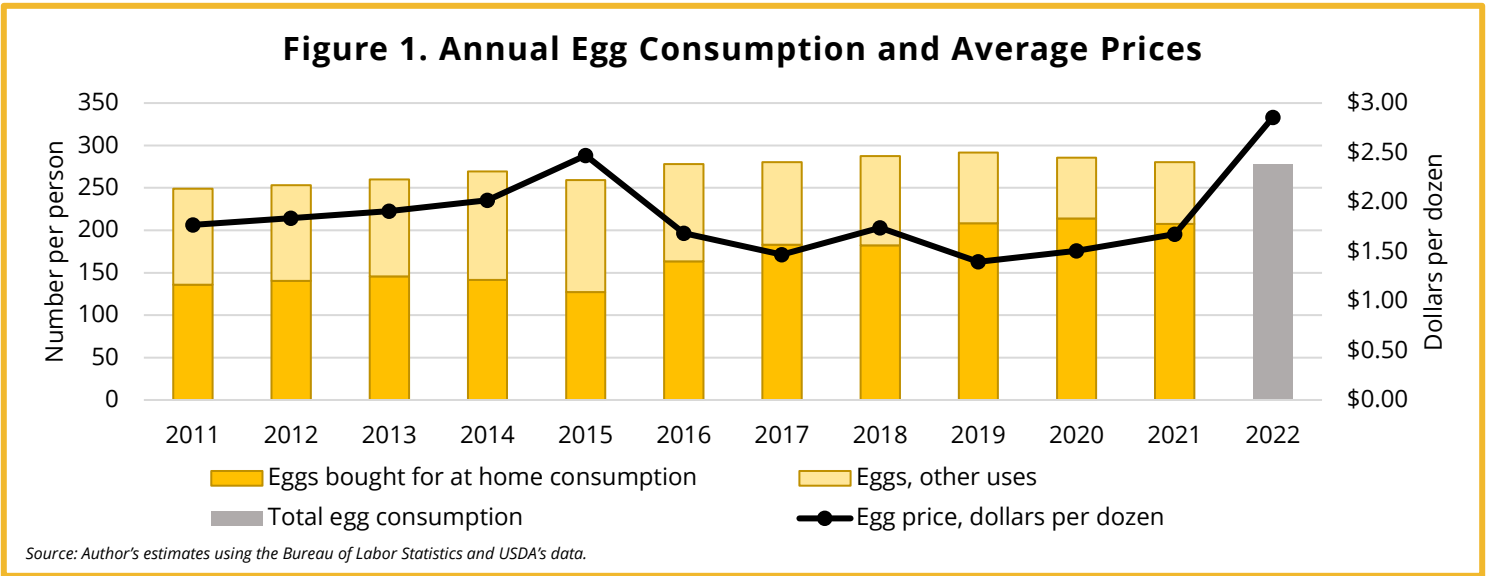




Rebound in U.S. Egg Consumption Cracks Under Avian Influenza Pressures

Figure 1. Annual Egg Consumption and Average Prices



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, total U.S. egg consumption showed a steady increase and peaked in 2019, minus a drop in 2015 due to an avian influenza outbreak. Between 2011 and 2020, the number of eggs bought for at-home consumption by U.S. households increased 60%. This jump from 150 to 213 eggs per person, per year, accounts for roughly two-thirds of total egg consumption. However, as households spend less time cooking post-pandemic and face higher egg prices, at-home consumption is projected to decline from record levels seen a few short years ago. Based on this projected trend, egg consumption will be primarily driven by food processors and bakeries. These entities seemed to increase consumption slowly in 2021 but were hit hard in 2022 when avian influenza caused egg prices to climb 70% (Figure 1).

It should be noted that eggs account for less than 2% of an average household's grocery spending. This share might have increased in 2022 due to higher prices but is expected to remain relatively small compared to other breakfast-related food items (Figure 2).

It's hard to say if the outlook is sunny side up or scrambled for egg consumption in the near term. There are postulations that without skyrocketing prices, total egg consumption may have rebounded to pre-pandemic highs despite a slight decline in at-home egg consumption. With wholesale egg prices showing some signs of tapering off in January, an uptick in egg consumption might materialize in 2023.

Figure 2. Share of Selected At Home Food Items

