



Salem, Oregon

May 26, 2009

by

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Introduction

Dear Mayor & City Councilors:

In recent years many municipalities have adopted ordinances that allow residents to keep a few backyard hens as pets and for eggs. We, the people of Salem would like the same opportunity.

Much of the work that has already been done by other cities is applicable here. By utilizing this packet of information which reflects six months of research and by adopting similar policies to those already implemented and working elsewhere, Salem will realize savings in work, time, money, and effort.

Currently, Section 146.020 of the Salem Revised Codes lists land uses permitted in Single Family Residential zones (Appendix A). Any use *not* on this list is considered unlawful, based on its omission. Chickens are not listed. This, and the fact that chickens are defined as livestock in Section 111.130, Section (e), of the Salem Revised Code, makes keeping chickens inside the city illegal (Appendix B). Yet, according Section 146.030(a) Special Uses and 119.070, city residents can keep a miniature pig weighing up to 100 pounds (Appendix C). We think it's unreasonable that you can keep a 100-pound pig, but not a 4-pound bird that produces eggs.

As some of you know, residents have brought up the issue of chicken-keeping several times in past years. It was discussed at a council meeting in 2007, twice in 2006, and even years before that. Each time your constituents tried to convince government representatives at the time to allow a few backyard hens. Given the growing popularity of urban hen keeping and our current economic situation, this request is bound to come up again and again until the city finds a way to accommodate its citizens' request.

After six months of research and interviewing officials in other cities, all of whom say chicken-keeping works well and has *not* been a problem, we submitted our proposal to you on February 23rd. On May 11th, city staff came back with the following recommendations:

- (a) No roosters to be allowed.
- (b) No more than three hens allowed on a property.
- (c) Minimum lot size to be 10,000 square feet.
- (d) Chicken coops to be permitted in side and rear yards only, with a setback of twenty (20) feet to any property line.
- (e) Chickens must remain in the enclosure.
- (f) Chicken keeping as a Special Use in Resident Single Family (RS) zone only.
- (g) Chickens must be kept in a sanitary condition, so as not to emit odors or endanger public health.

We appreciate staff's efforts to draft a recommendation, and we agree with 5 of the 7 stipulations. However, we strongly believe that items (c) and (d) are not practical or fair and we will explain why in the following pages.

Lot Size Doesn't Matter

Staff's recommendation includes a stipulation that would allow three hens in the RS zones, but *only* on lots larger than 10,000 square feet. According to GIS data at the Marion County Assessor's office, this requirement would automatically exclude 75% of all households zoned RS.

But it gets even worse. Many of these oversized lots do not have houses on them. Instead, they are churches, schools, golf courses, country clubs, and businesses that must have been granted zoning variances. When you take into account the fact that some of those 10,000+ sized lots are not even homeowners, the number of households allowed to raise hens would be *even less* than 25%.

There are 27,711 lots less than 10,000 square feet in size. Of those, the vast majority (72%) fall between 4,000 and 8,000 square feet. This is where the people who want or need chickens reside as indicated in the table below:

Lot Size (sq ft)	# of Lots	% of Total
4,000 to 6,000	7,112	19%
6,001 to 8,000	12,798	35%
8,001 to 10,000	7,801	21%
> 10,000*	9,151	25%
Total	36,862	100%

Keeping this stipulation would essentially be the same as not changing the ordinance in the first place as most Salem households would not qualify, including the members of our group who have worked so hard to bring about this change.

This requirement is more than unfair. It would create a loophole that would have the opposite effect of what we are requesting.

We see no reason why Salem residents can't have a policy similar to Portland's, a city just 40 miles away and where the chicken-keeping policy works well. There, three pet hens are permitted in *all* residential zones including the R5 zone, which has a minimum lot size of 3,000 square feet, and the R2.5 zone, which has a minimum lot size of just 1,600 square feet.

More importantly, the housing density per square mile of land in Portland is 1776.7 compared to just 1176.8 in Salem.

In Portland, a city with smaller lots and higher housing density, three hens are permitted and this creates no significant code enforcement problems or financial burden on the city. See Appendix D for letters from the Mayor and Commissioner Randy Leonard attesting to that fact.

More to the point, lot sizes are completely irrelevant to this issue because you can't assume smaller lots lack adequate backyard space or distance to adjacent property.

Many lots have large homes on them, leaving very little yard space. Others have small houses, but large backyards that can easily accommodate a coop. The size of the house and its location on the property are what determine if there's enough space for a coop.

We strongly urge council to remove any lot size requirement from the ordinance.

Setback Requirement

We assume the reasoning behind the 10,000 square foot lot requirement is to ensure adequate space for a coop and its distance from neighbors. Because of the requirements that only 3 hens be allowed, kept in a sanitary condition, and enclosed at all times, we do not believe neighbors would be impacted, but to provide additional safeguards, we are agreeable to a reasonable setback requirement.

However, the setback requirement recommended by staff should be reevaluated and here's why. Staff recommends chicken enclosures be 20' from all property lines. For a lot of us, that would mean putting the coop right in the center of the yard, which would not be practical because it would limit space for gardens, play areas, etc.

The table on the following page lists 44 cities that allow chickens. You can see that many do not specify a setback of any kind and those that do typically make it 20' from dwellings on adjacent properties, *not* the property line. Cities in Oregon and Washington are highlighted. Due to their proximity to us, similar demographics, (and the fact that they report chicken-keeping already works well there), we think it's reasonable for Salem to implement a similar policy.

Also, staff's recommendation does not take into account all the homes that sit next to alleys or other existing buffers that already provide a 20' setback. In those situations, residents should be allowed to build a coop next to the fence.

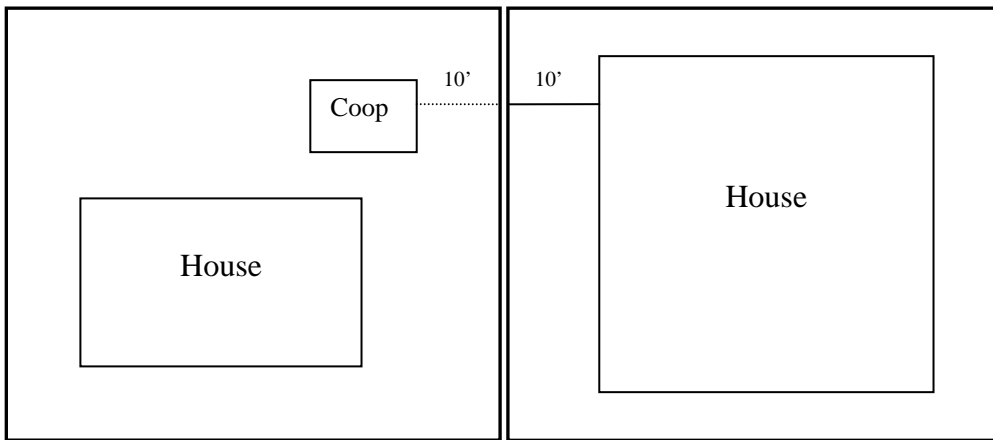
One councilor pointed out in a prior meeting the possibility a neighbor adding on to an existing home. This could cause an existing coop to no longer qualify.

Our solution would solve all of the above-mentioned problems. We strongly urge council to reword the setback requirement to read "Chicken enclosures must be 10' from property lines **OR** 20' from residential structures on adjacent properties." With an "either/or" statement, all situations would be covered. Please refer to the diagrams on page 8 that illustrate examples of this.

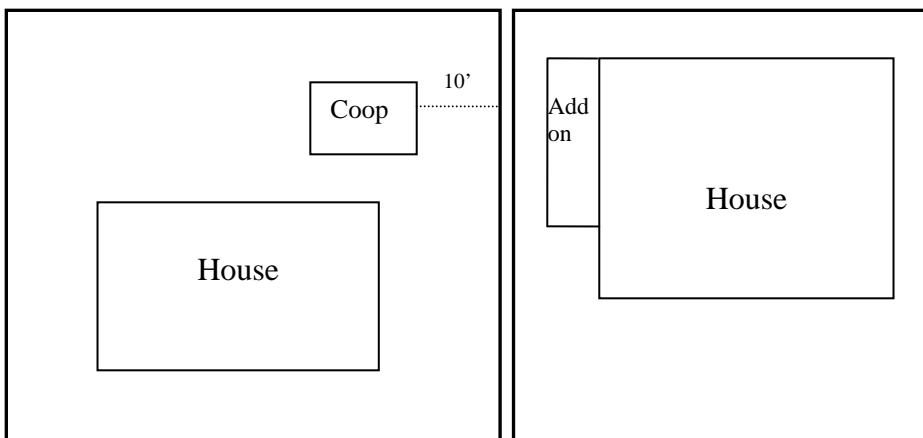
This modification would allow for the possibility of any home additions, take into account those of us who live next to an alley or some other type of buffer, and at the same time, make it more practical for those who do not.

City / State	# Hens Allowed	Setback from Property Line	Distance from Adjacent Dwellings	Minimum Lot Size
Fayetteville, AR	4		25'	
Little Rock, AR	4			
Mobile, AL	Unlimited			
Anaheim, CA	3			5,000
Berkely, CA	Unlimited		30' (from bedrooms)	
Downey, CA	5			
Irvine, CA	2			
Long Beach, CA	20		20'	
Mountain View, CA	4		25'	
Oakland, CA	Unlimited		20'	
Petaluma, CA	20	5'	20'	
Redwood City, CA	3			
Roseville, CA	10		20'	
San Jose, CA	6		20'	
San Francisco, CA	4		20'	
Vallejo, CA	25		15'	
Colorado Spgs, CO	10			
Ft. Collins, CO	6	15'		
Windsor Hts, IA	2		25'	
Boise, ID	6			
Westwood, MA	10	15'		
Baltimore, MD	4		25'	
Missoula, MT	6		20'	
Albuquerque, NM	Unlimited		20'	
Corvallis, OR	Unlimited			
Eugene, OR	2		20'	
Portland, OR	3		25'	
Lake Oswego, OR	Unlimited			
Forest Grove, OR	4		20'	5,000
Catawissa, PA	Unlimited	10'		
Pittsburg, PA	5			
Laredo, TX	6			
Round Rock, TX	5		25'	
San Antonio, TX	5		20'	
Brigham City, UT	6			
Burlington, VT	3			
Bothell, WA	3		20'	
Everett, WA	5			
Olympia, WA	3			
Seattle, WA	3			
Spokane, WA	3			
Tacoma, WA	Unlimited			
Vancouver, WA	Unlimited			
Madison, WI	4		25'	

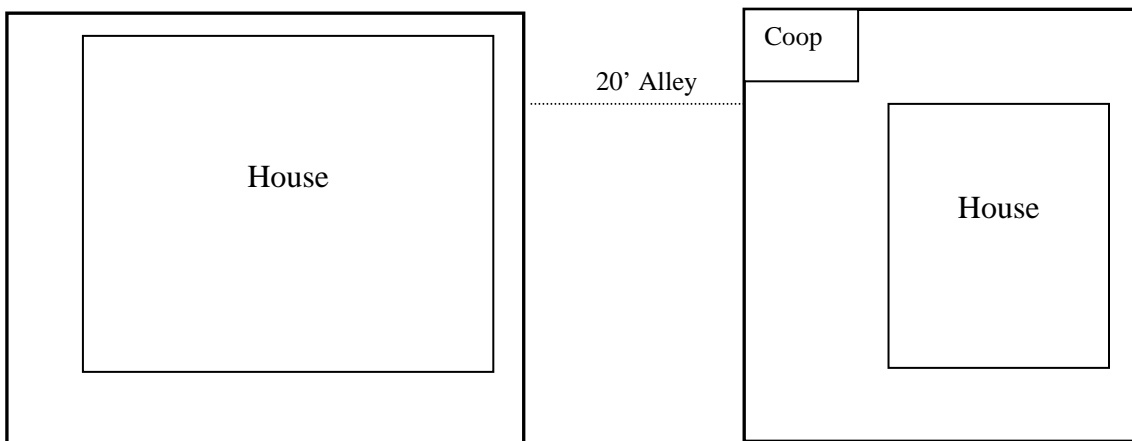
Source: <http://home.centurytel.net/thecitychicken/chickenlaws.html>



Before the addition is built – coop qualifies because it's 20' from adjacent dwelling.



After the addition – coop still qualifies because it's 10' from property line.



Coop allowed next to property line. Because of alley, it's still 20' from adjacent dwelling.

Odor

We have listened to the comments of our opposition and they seem to stem from one thing, potential odor problems.

Chickens themselves do not smell. This is a fact. It's only their feces that have the potential to stink, which is also true of feces from dogs, cats, or any other animal that leaves their waste in the yard.

Unlike dogs and cats, who leave their waste on the lawns of their neighbors or in public places, chicken waste would be confined to the coop in the backyard of the owner because we have stipulated that the hens be enclosed at all times.

It's also important to realize that the maximum number of chickens allowed is just three. Three small hens weigh less than 15 pounds collectively, and generate less waste than one average dog. For those of you who are not aware, pot-bellied pigs weighing 100 pounds are currently allowed in the city. This animal produces 30 times more waste than a chicken and you don't get the benefit of eggs.

Furthermore, chicken manure is a highly valued fertilizer that can be used in the garden, whereas waste from dogs and cats cannot because of the parasites and human diseases it can harbor.

According to Dr. Hermes, OSU Extension Poultry Specialist, "once added to the compost or tilled into the soil, the odor-causing compounds are no longer able to cause objectionable odors." This statement is an exact quote taken from his letter (Appendix E).

The reason people fear an odor problem is because their only experience with chickens (if they have any at all) is a farm or commercial poultry operation. In these situations, chickens are viewed as a commodity and are raised with the intention of profit from meat or egg production.

Under *those* circumstances, hundreds, if not thousands, of chickens are sometimes kept in crowded conditions with poor ventilation and without regular cleaning. As a result, ammonia can build up and these facilities can stink.

On the contrary, people who want to raise 3 hens in the city are not looking to make a profit. They list a variety of reasons including educational opportunities for their children, a desire to be more self-reliant, or to have some control over the quality of their food and the welfare of the animals that provided it. Some view hens as an extension to their garden, and others want organic food that is more affordable.

Whatever the reason, urban hen-keepers all consider them to be pets that they will love and care for. There is a huge difference between the very popular and rapidly growing urban hen movement and the traditional farm or commercial poultry operation that the opposition is envisioning.

Definition of Livestock

The city's definition of livestock according to section 111.130(e) in the revised code includes all species of swine and poultry (Appendix B).

However, this differs from the definition of livestock according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the authority on what constitutes livestock and what doesn't. This agency excludes pot-bellied pigs and chickens from the definition (Appendix F).

The staff report points out that if chickens remain listed as livestock, then any dog that harms them could be impounded or euthanized because livestock are protected under the law. According to Oregon Revised Statute 609.140(1), this is true. But this is also true for any dog that harms a pot-bellied pig, which as you know, is currently allowed in the city, and also falls under the city's definition of livestock.

Since allowing three hens is apparently going to require a land use change, this would be a good time to update the city's definition of livestock to match the Department of Agriculture's definition.

It's unlikely that dogs will harm chickens because we have stipulated that the birds be enclosed at all times. But in the event that this should occur, we urge council to modify the definition of livestock so that dogs would be protected.

Complaints / Code Enforcement

According to Kat West, Multnomah County Sustainability Manager, Portland has the highest urban chicken population in the country per capita. Comparing "apples to apples" this is what that means for Salem:

If a city with a population nearly 4 times the size of Salem (and with more chickens than any other city of its size) only has 39 complaints per year, then Salem should anticipate one quarter of the number of complaints, which would be about 10.

This figure matches the number of chicken-related complaints in cities with a population closer to Salem's, like Madison and Eugene (see table below):

Cities that allow Chickens	Population	Complaints/Yr
Portland	529,121	39
Madison	223,389	10
Eugene	137,893	11
Olympia	42,514	<5
Lake Oswego	36,698	0

Instead, Salem (population 139,924) currently receives 30 complaints per year because hens are not allowed. Based on the statistics above, if hens were allowed, this number would most likely go down, not up.

According to our code compliance office, they respond to over 8,000 complaints per year, only 30 of which have anything to do with chickens, or just .00375%. Of those, 15 were about roosters. Our proposal clearly states that roosters would be prohibited in the city because they can be noisy and aggressive. Hens, on the other hand, are gentle and quiet and fortunately, you don't need roosters to get eggs.

Nowhere in the Salem Revised Code does it specifically state that roosters are prohibited. It's only implied because they are omitted from the list of approved land uses (Appendix A) and because they fall under the city's definition of livestock (Appendix B). Yet, pot-bellied pigs, another type of livestock, *are* allowed (Appendix C).

Not only is this confusing, but it's a very ambiguous way of expressing the fact that the city does not permit roosters. Whereas, if you implemented our proposal, the code would plainly state, in no uncertain terms, that 3 hens are allowed under specified conditions, and roosters are not. This clarification could significantly help reduce the number of rooster complaints.

Of the remaining 15 complaints involving hens, at least 3 did not originate as chicken complaints. Instead, when code enforcement personnel responded to a different type of complaint, they happened to notice the chickens.

Of the remaining 12 complaints involving hens, half of those were kept in a manner that would have posed no violation if hens *were* allowed as described in our proposal.

That leaves just 6 hen-related complaints that might not have qualified under the stipulations we proposed. This may have been because they had too many hens, or the hens weren't confined, or some other minor problem that can be easily resolved.

Even if these 6 complaints *did* involved unsanitary conditions, this could be addressed with proper training and educational materials that our group has promised to provide, at no cost to the city.

We have provided you with statements from city officials in other towns, similar to Salem, attesting to the fact that their chicken policies have **not** been a code compliance problem or a financial burden to the city (Appendix G). In fact, our neighbor capitol city, Olympia, reports the number of complaints went down significantly once they implemented their policy. In Olympia, code compliance personnel were very skeptical about the city's decision to allow hens, but have completely changed their minds after realizing their fears were unwarranted.

On May 11th, when one councilor asked what this might cost the city, staff admitted it would "not result in a significant cost for code enforcement."

Property Values

Some of our opponents have expressed concerns about the negative effect chickens would have on property values.

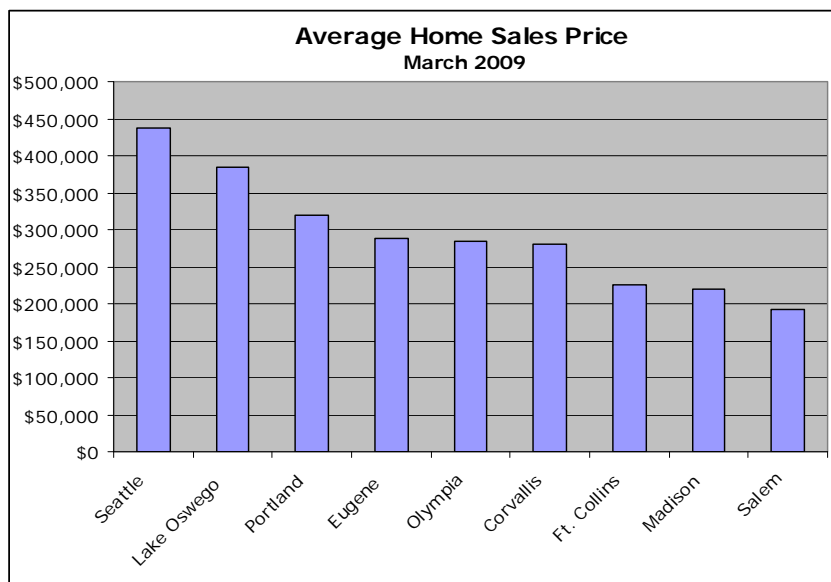
Again, this is an unsubstantiated claim based on fear, not facts. A small backyard flock made up of three small hens treated like pets are about as different from a commercial operation or farm as you can get. City coops are typically small, clean, and attractive because people love their pets and live in close proximity to them.

There is absolutely no evidence to indicate that keeping pet hens, as laid out in our proposal, would have any negative impact on real estate values whatsoever.

In the following charts you can see that as of March 2009, the average sales price of homes in eight chicken-friendly cities is **higher** than homes in Salem. You can clearly see that the average sales price of homes in cities with demographics similar to ours, but that allow chickens, all have higher average sales prices than here where chickens are not allowed. Please refer to table on following page.

In Appendix H you will find letters from Jane Leo, Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors, stating that in her 14 years with that organization, she has never heard of an instance where chickens were associated with lower property values. Also in Appendix H is another letter from a local realtor.

It's simply is **not** true that urban chicken keeping has a negative impact on property values. The statistics prove it.



City	Average Sales Price
Seattle, WA	\$437,247
Lake Oswego, OR	\$384,709
Portland, OR	\$319,911
Eugene, OR	\$287,507
Olympia, WA	\$284,401
Corvallis, OR	\$281,000
Ft. Collins, CO	\$225,924
Madison, WI	\$219,620
Salem, OR	\$193,005

Homes in cities (demographically similar to Salem, Oregon) that allow backyard chickens have an average sales price that is higher compared to homes here, where chickens are currently not allowed. Clearly, backyard chickens do *not* lower property values. (Source: <http://realestate.aol.com>)

Public Health

From time to time we hear about a potentially deadly pathogen capable of jumping from one species to another. Bird flu and swine flu are the most recent examples.

Fortunately, neither of these threats has turned out to be a serious problem here. If that were to happen, State and Federal agencies would respond and infected premises would be quarantined. All residences within a certain parameter would be canvassed to check for other potentially infected animals.

Some people may think that a registration process for people who want to keep hens would simplify this process, but they are mistaken. In this very unlikely event, every residence would have to be checked because, in an emergency situation, officials would not rely a database that could be incomplete or inaccurate.

The type of Avian Influenza that is contagious to humans has not been found in North America. Bird flu is spread by contact with the contaminated feces of wild birds, primarily migratory waterfowl. Unlike rural farm birds, which might co-mingle with migratory birds or drink from a shared pond, "backyard chickens" will be kept in an enclosed pen where contact with migratory birds is unlikely.

OSU Poultry Extension Specialist, Jim Hermes, states "bird flu of the type noted in the media has not been diagnosed in the whole of the Western Hemisphere and may not ever find its way here" and that "chickens are relatively healthy animals." Please refer to his letter in Appendix E.

Dogs and cats can spread Parasites, bacteria, fungi and viruses to humans. Rabies is an example of a viral infection that can be transmitted to people from the saliva or bite of a dog. Cat Scratch Fever is a bacterial infection passed to people by cats. Each year, 25,000 cases are diagnosed in the U.S. Ringworm, a highly contagious fungal infection, can be transmitted to humans by touching an infected animal's fur or skin and is common in stray kittens that roam freely. Roundworm, hookworm, tapeworm, and Giardia are intestinal parasites that can be passed to humans from pet waste. There are also a number of tick-borne diseases that can be brought home from dogs and cats like Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Source: <http://www.petside.com/health/diseases-you-can-catch-from-your-pet.php>.

Chickens can actually keep your yard healthier because they *eat* ticks and insects.

Keep in mind, too, that bird diseases like exotic Newcastle, west Nile, or avian influenza can infect different types of birds, not just chickens, including common pet birds like parrots, finches, and cockatiels. There are also diseases people can catch from hamsters, reptiles, and other household pets.

But regardless of this, people will continue to love and care for all kinds of pets because they enrich our lives, provide companionship, teach responsibility, entertain us, and in the case of chickens, provide eggs!

Sustainability

More and more people are interested in living a sustainable life style. Local government and neighborhood associations are encouraging citizens to reduce their consumption of resources. A small number of backyard chickens allow us the opportunity to reduce our carbon footprint and support the local food movement.

People who have backyard hens are less likely to use harmful chemicals and pesticides in their gardens. Instead, they desire their yard to be healthy and environmentally friendly. They consider chickens a natural extension of their garden because they eat weeds and bugs and provide fertilizer.

Organic gardeners seek natural fertilizer to enhance their garden soil as they grow fresh fruits and vegetables. Chicken manure is one of the most efficient natural fertilizers providing essential nutrients to build the soil. Backyard hens provide a very local source of fertilizer that is easily composted, without any transportation costs. According to Jim Hermes, OSU Extension Specialist, chicken manure is a great addition to sustainable urban gardens (Appendix E).

Backyard chickens eat grass clippings and food scraps, thus keeping these products out of the local landfill by reusing them on site.

We are encouraged to eat locally, reducing the need to transport food long distances. What better place to start than the availability of food right in the back yard! National and local news media has given the *100 mile diet* (eating only food grown within a 100 mile radius of your home) substantial coverage over the last year.

Backyard hens can help promote a 100 yard or even a 100 foot diet! Imagine the lowered gas consumption as trips to the store are made less frequently.



Becoming a more sustainable community becomes easier with the availability of eggs from backyard hens. Local citizens can contribute their surplus eggs to local food banks, or neighbors, feeding the hungry with healthy, locally produced food.

Emergency Preparedness

Government officials encourage us to be prepared in the event of an emergency. Whether it's a fire, flood, earthquake, civil unrest, or economic crisis, having a source of high-protein, nutritious food like eggs readily available can provide critical food in a time of need.

During heavy snow/ice storms and floods like we recently experienced, there could be damage to buildings and infrastructure such as bridges and highways that could hinder transportation. As a result, it can be difficult to get to the store and scarcity of food items on store shelves can occur. Local egg-producing hens will help our community be more food self-sufficient year-round.

The American food system is dependent on centralized processing plants and transportation. A more diversified food system can provide more security by letting citizens grow crops and raise animals they know and enjoy. That way, if the food system should fail, we will be able to feed our selves and our neighbors (Backyard Poultry, vol. 3, no. 6, pg 16).

Educational Opportunities

Raising three small hens in the backyard is a tremendous opportunity for parents to teach young children about the responsibility that comes with caring for a pet, and something about where the food they eat *really* comes from. This is something a dog or cat cannot do. And because of their small size and friendly demeanor, young children can handle without fear of being bitten.

By keeping a few hens, children will also learn about sustainability and recycling because they will see first-hand how grass clippings, bugs, weeds, and kitchen scraps fed to chickens are turned into delicious eggs. They will also see how straw bedding and waste from the chickens improves garden soil that, in turn, produces fruits and vegetables. Instead of just hearing the phrase "reduce, reuse, recycle" they will actually *experience* it.

City kids will have the opportunity to participate in 4-H or FFA programs like their more rural friends. A 4-pound hen is very practical because it is small, inexpensive to raise, and very easy to care for. It is much more practical for city life than a 100-pound pot-bellied pig, which is currently allowed in residential zones.



Many of our grandparents had victory gardens and knew how to grow vegetables, can food, and raise chickens. But this valuable knowledge seems to have skipped a generation and we are anxious to bring it back so that our children will not be so far removed from these basic skills that they think food comes only from the grocery store.

We cherish the opportunity to teach our kids how to be more self-reliant instead of depending solely on others for their sustenance. We value the opportunity to teach our children to have less of an impact on the earth as we have. And we treasure the opportunity to enjoy an activity that can be shared with both young and older members of the family.

Economic Benefits

Food prices have skyrocketed, including the price of eggs, which jumped 43.7 percent last month. Gas prices are on the rise again. The unemployment rate and number of homes being foreclosed on have reached all-time highs. The Marion-Polk Food Share reports a record high in the need for emergency food boxes. Source of egg prices: www.oregonlive.com/business/index.ssf/2009/05/wholesale_prices_jobs_claims_g.html.

A readily available source of eggs saves money, energy, and time. The initial cost of a small chicken coop and pen will quickly pay for itself. These enclosures can be built for as little as \$100 and members of our group have already promised to donate time, labor, and material for those in need.

After the initial investment, hens cost very little to feed: Three hens would require only about four 50-pound bags of commercial feed per year, especially if you supplement their diet with weeds, grass clippings, bugs, and kitchen and garden scraps. In return, you would get about 730 eggs per year, or about 61 dozen. Even if you add in the cost of straw for bedding and nesting material, you will still end up saving money, especially if you consider the price of fresh, home-grown eggs available at the Farmer's Market.

Consumer Control

In addition to saving money, there is a growing desire among consumers to regain some control over the food we serve our families. Food recalls have become common and people are concerned about the safety of their food and the welfare of the animals that provided it.

Not only are home-grown eggs fresher and tastier than store-bought eggs that can be up to 45 days old and are often shipped from out-of-state, but studies show home-grown eggs are also more nutritious and less likely to contain *Salmonella*. Source: (<http://www.cspinet.org/nah/eggs-ja.htm>).

Older relatives have shared stories with us about how chickens saved the family during the Great Depression. Given our current economic situation, keeping a few backyard hens has never been more practical.

In addition to saving money and gaining some control over the food we eat, we ask that you not to underestimate the value and satisfaction of knowing where your eggs came from, how old they are, what went into making them, and how the chickens that laid them were treated.

Gardening / Pest Control

To many of us, chickens are a natural extension to the garden. They are world-class recyclers. Within 24 hours, they turn garden scraps, bugs, and weeds into one of two things we can use, eggs or fertilizer.

Chicken manure is highly prized among gardeners because it is rich in nitrogen and breaks down quickly in the soil, eliminating any odors. Gardens grown in soil amended with chicken manure will have better yields without the cost of purchasing fertilizer and traveling to the store to get it.

At the March 9th city council meeting two speakers expressed concern about chickens attracting flies, cockroaches, and other bugs. This is simply not true. Insects are a primary food source of chickens. They do not attract bugs, they *eat* them! And this includes fly larvae (or maggots) before they can become adult flies.

In fact, chickens love to eat bugs more than anything else. Anyone who has been around chickens knows that a cockroach, grasshopper, beetle, earwig, centipede, or ant would not live long around a chicken. They also eat ticks that can carry diseases and those bothersome slugs that can destroy gardens.

In his letter, Dr. James Hermes, OSU Poultry Extension Specialist, supports our claim that if chickens have access to fly larvae, they will never develop into a problem. He also states that chickens do not attract rodents and that a small number of hens can be a great addition to any urban family backyard (Appendix E).

Please give us this opportunity to expand our gardens, save money and energy on fertilizer, and reduce our bug population without having to resort to chemicals.

Water & Air Quality

A 4-pound laying hen produces 0.0035 cu ft of manure per day whereas a 100-lb pig (the size currently allowed in the City of Salem) produces 0.109 cu ft per day.

Source: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/em/em8649.pdf>

According to the FDA, an average dog generates 3/4 of a pound of manure a day that cannot be composted because of the harmful bacteria and parasites (hookworms, roundworms, and tapeworms) that can infect humans. This waste is considered a major source of bacterial pollution in urban watersheds.

Source: <http://www.pacshell.org/projects/petwasteinfo.htm#facts>.

Dog waste contains higher concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorus than cows, chickens, or pigs and is a major contributor of excessive nutrients that flow into ground and surface waters through runoff from city sidewalks and lawns. Source: www.csld.edu/Downloads/Sussman_2008_DogParks.pdf.

Not only do chickens produce less waste, most people who keep chickens in the city also have a garden and therefore compost their chicken manure. If composted and added to the garden, the water quality impact would be virtually nothing. Chickens also reduce the need for pesticides because they eat bugs and weeds, further reducing the potential for water pollution.

Last summer the city of Fort Collins, Colorado changed their city ordinance to legalize backyard hens at its citizens' request. At that time, a thorough investigation was conducted which included the possibility of increased methane gas emissions. It was concluded that backyard hens would not significantly impact methane gas emissions (Appendix I). There is no reason to believe that this would be any different in Salem.

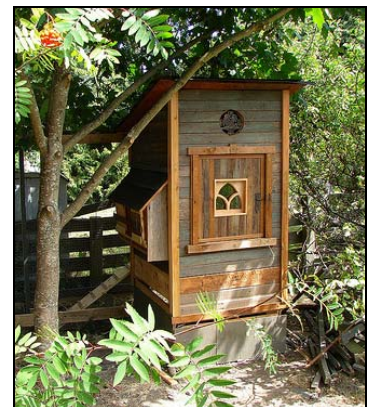
City Coops

Unlike commercial poultry operations or rural farms, people in the city who keep chickens as pets tend to keep them in very attractive enclosures (Appendix J). In fact, they treat them like pets and tend to spoil them. They take such great pride in their pampered pets and backyard coops that they often hold annual tours to show them off. In cities like Portland, Seattle, and Madison, chicken enthusiasts participate in tours, classes, and clubs, adding fabric and educational opportunities to their communities.

A small backyard flock made up of three small hens that are treated like pets, are as different from a farm or commercial operation as you can get. City coops are typically small, clean, and attractive because people love their pets and live in close proximity to them.

Attractive and inexpensive pre-made chicken coops are available on various websites for those who are not able to build their own. Books on coop construction can be checked out at the local library and free coop building instructions are available on the internet. Our website has links to these resources. Our group has also offered to teach chicken-raising and coop-building classes and will serve as a resource where experienced chicken-keepers can share their knowledge with beginners.

Below are pictures of the types of coops commonly found in the city.



The Urban Chicken Movement

According to the Worldwatch Institute, *"... an Urban Chicken Movement has swept across the United States in recent years"* and it began right here in the Pacific Northwest (Appendix K).

Some people want organic eggs and garden compost, others are concerned about food security, others want to "eat local" to save resources, and others wish to enjoy the entertaining, fun pets hens can be. There have been lots of news articles written about this growing trend, increasing primarily in upscale neighborhoods.

Our request is not unreasonable or unusual. Cities like Portland, Boise, Denver, Madison, Seattle, and Fort Collins (just to name a few) have relaxed their zoning laws to allow for a few backyard hens. In fact, according to Newsweek Magazine, more than 65% of major U.S. cities now allow backyard hens.

We located more than 20 additional news articles describing this popular trend and how municipalities have accommodated their citizens' requests to raise a few chickens.

A research paper by a graduate student at the University of New Mexico who evaluated chicken-keeping policies in 25 cities can help your decision-making in the coming weeks. Source: <http://urbanchickens.org/files/Ordinance%20research%20paper.pdf>.

This is a chance for Salem to show that it is a progressive, green city by joining the Urban Chicken Movement.

Support for our Proposal

As of May 26, 2009, C.I.T.Y. has gathered over 1,300 signatures on a petition from Salem residents over the age of 18 who support our proposal and we have been endorsed by the following organizations:

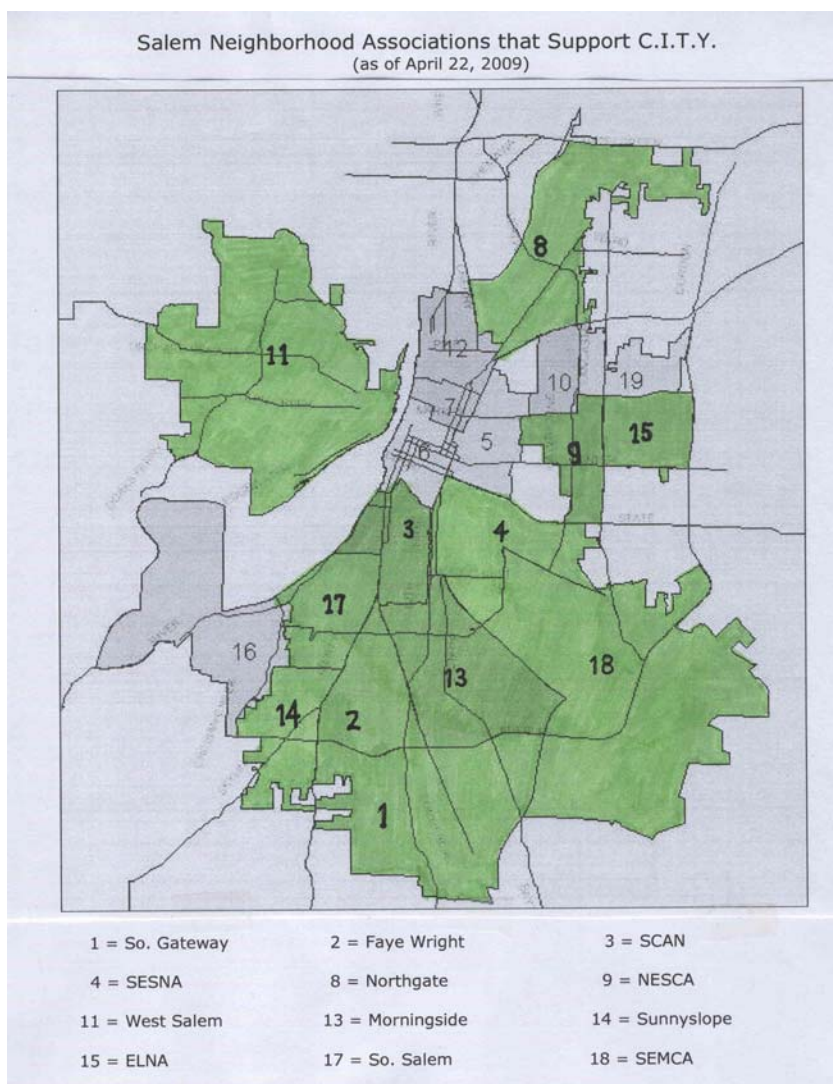
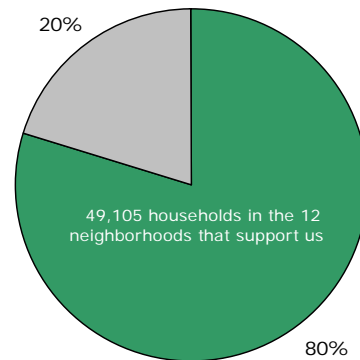
Marion-Polk Food Share
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Center for Sustainable Communities at Willamette University
Oregon Tilth
Friends of Marion County

We also have the support 12 Salem Neighborhood Associations. According to The Department of Community Services at the City of Salem, there are currently an estimated 61,618 total households that receive mail in the 19 Salem neighborhoods. Of those, 49,105 (80%) are represented by the 12 neighborhood associations that voted to support Chickens in the Yard. Please refer to chart and map on the following page. Pages 21 through 28 are letters of support we've received.

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>House-</u> <u>holds</u>	<u>Councilor</u> <u>Ward(s)</u>
So. Gateway	5,327	4
ELNA	3,462	6
Faye Wright	4,572	3, 4
Morningside	3,706	2, 3
Northgate	4,683	5
SCAN	3,181	2, 7
SEMCA	2,036	2, 3, 4
SESNA	2,381	2
So. Salem	2,443	7
Sunnyslope	3,465	7
NESCA	2,121	6
West Salem	<u>11,728</u>	8

Total: 49,105

Households Represented by the 12 Salem Neighborhood Associations that Support our Proposal



Map showing all 19 neighborhood associations in the city of Salem.

The 12 that support Chickens in the Yard are highlighted in green.

Because no one should be hungry.



January 22, 2009

Mayor Janet Taylor and City of Salem Council Members
555 Liberty St. SE, Room 220
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mayor Taylor and City Council Members:

Please accept this letter in support of the citizen based initiative to permit individual households to raise backyard hens within the City of Salem. The group has done an exemplary job of researching the issue and presents a strong and timely proposal for your consideration. We encourage Salem to follow the lead of other innovative communities in Oregon, including Portland, Corvallis, Eugene, Gresham, Beaverton, Hillsboro, and Milwaukie, that have passed ordinances that allow backyard hens within city limits.

Since 1987, Marion-Polk Food Share has been "leading the fight to end hunger" as the nonprofit regional food bank serving Marion and Polk counties. As the regional food bank, we provide centralized food collection and distribution, as well as fundraising and capacity building support, for our 80 member agency network. Last fiscal year, we provided 4.8 million pounds of emergency food and distributed 69,892 food boxes and 989,041 meals.

In Salem the need is especially great. Last year, within the city, we distributed 34,279 food boxes and served over 350,000 meals through 43 member agencies. Approximately 15,000 Salem households, representing 44,000 individuals reached out for emergency food assistance. A total of 3,336 *new households* in Salem received a food box (up 26% from the previous year). This represents the highest number of local residents we have seen coming for help in the 21 years of our existence.

As President of Marion-Polk Food Share, I am aware of the local and nationwide movement in support of backyard hens as a means to increase household self-sufficiency and reduce hunger. Recently we have worked with a dietician to put together a list of the most nutritious "core" food box items. Eggs are on this list for the quality nutrition they provide, especially for children.

At my house in rural Marion County, I raise 6 hens. I know firsthand how simple and clean it can be to raise chickens, and I benefit from having enough eggs for my family, as well as a weekly surplus that I donate to the local food pantry. At the Food Share, we see great hope in educating low-income community members about how to raise a few backyard hens to improve their nutrition and increase self-sufficiency. We envision households with not only enough for themselves, but with the potential to provide many dozen eggs each year to their local food pantry.

On behalf of the Food Share, and those we serve, I encourage you to pass an ordinance to allow backyard hens in Salem. It is another step we can take in our fight to end hunger in our community. If you have any questions, please call me at 503-581-3855, ext. 306 or e-mail rhays@foodbanksalem.org.

Sincerely,

Ron Hays
President

1660 Salem Industrial Drive NE Salem, Oregon 97301 P: 503 581-3855 F: 503 588-4077 www.foodbanksalem.org



WILLAMETTE
THE FIRST UNIVERSITY IN THE WEST

900 STATE STREET
SALEM, OR 97301

PROFESSOR JOE BOWERSOX
DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
DEMPSEY ENDOWED CHAIR IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY
900 STATE STREET
SALEM, OR 97301
503-370-6220
JBOWERSOX@WILLAMETTE.EDU

January 7, 2009

Mayor Janet Taylor &
City of Salem Council Members
555 Liberty St SE
Room 220
Salem OR 97301

Dear Mayor Taylor and City of Salem Council Members,

The Center for Sustainable Communities at Willamette University would like to encourage the City of Salem to join many other cities across the country in permitting individual households to raise limited numbers of chickens. In doing so, Salem would join other Oregon cities, including Portland, Corvallis, Eugene, Gresham, Beaverton, Hillsboro and Milwaukie. With proper regulation prohibiting the presence of roosters and mandating proper enclosures, these cities have demonstrated that chickens can indeed be kept in urban and suburban environments and not adversely affect public health, livability, or property values. In fact, as these cities have demonstrated, allowing residents to raise chickens can improve the diet, pocket book, and sustainability of individual households.

Residential chickens have been shown to offer many benefits:

- 3 hens can lay an average of 2 eggs per day (without the presence of a rooster). During our current economic downturn, these eggs can provide a valuable and economical source of protein to families;
- Chicken waste is a great fertilizer for backyard gardens;
- Chickens offer a means of natural pest control in an enclosed yard – eating aphids, grubs and other numerous garden pests. This reduces the needs for chemicals, and helps keep our urban watersheds clean of substances toxic to aquatic species;
- Chickens provide children and their families with a great opportunity to learn about being responsible and caring for animals, as well as an appreciation about where our food comes from.
- Hens are quiet and go to sleep once the sun goes down.

In these tough economic times, the Center encourages the Salem City Council to adopt the draft ordinance developed by the group "Chickens in the Yard." Modeled after successful ordinances in effect in cities across the country, we believe the ordinance facilitates the benefits noted above while protecting public health and safety.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Joe Bowersox

Director, Center for Sustainable Communities



470 Lancaster Drive NE | Salem, OR 97301 | www.tilth.org | PH 503.378.0690 | FX 503.378.0809 | organic@tilth.org

To the Mayor and Councilors of Salem;

As the garden coordinator for Oregon Tilth, I am writing in support of "Chickens in the Yard."

Oregon Tilth is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to supporting and promoting sustainable agriculture through education, research, organic certification and advocacy. The Organic Education Center, a project of Oregon Tilth, is a land-based resource hub for biologically sound, backyard gardening and farming. Each year, our organic demonstration garden plays host to hundreds of community members who convene to learn more about the ease and abundance of growing their own food.

In recent seasons, we've witnessed a groundswell of interest in backyard homesteading and hands-on living in the urban centers of the Pacific Northwest. Chickens are an integral and important part of this movement for a number of reasons:

1. Chickens provide a consistent and healthy source of food for the family. Eggs are a valuable treasure to the backyard homesteader.
2. Chickens can be a great source of fertility for the garden. Poultry manure is high in Nitrogen, and helps to create rich, natural compost, further diminishing the need to buy expensive (and possibly harmful) fertilizers.
3. Chickens are expert bug hunters, controlling unwanted and damaging garden pests. Again, this service reduces the gardener's need to buy inputs, like pesticides.
4. Chickens make extraordinary pets. They are a pleasure to watch and require relatively minimal care. People of all ages are inspired to raise chicks, from peepers to egg producers, and as such, chickens add an interesting and educational dimension to the neighborhood.

Overall, keeping chickens in the backyard is an endeavor that connects an urban population to its food source. It creates a sense of self-sufficiency both through the production of food, and through the provision of helpful services, such as pest control and soil fertility.

Oregon Tilth is encouraged to know that the city of Salem values the diversity of a productive, and sustainable, urban landscape. We hope you give due consideration to the motion brought forth by Chickens in the Yard.

Sincerely,

Conner Voss
Demonstration Garden Coordinator
Oregon Tilth
503.798.8906
conner@tilth.org

Tuesday, January 06, 2009

To City of Salem staff and Council members:

I am writing to express my strong support for raising chickens in residential areas within the city limits of Salem. A proposal to change this code is coming before you, and a deliberative and democratic process will determine the outcome of such a change in policy. What I am advocating for, as a garden project manager for Marion Polk Food Share, is to ensure the long-term sustainability of our community through myriad of ways, including community gardening, urban farming, and teaching a future of food growing that includes keeping hens. The cost-benefit of such an endeavor is one that favors the community, the neighborhood, and the home, from the constant supply of high protein food, to the production of appreciable quantities of highly concentrated manure, to the destruction of countless insects and consumption of kitchen and table scraps.

Marion Polk Food Share has a continuing interest in the building of partnerships that lead to the betterment of our community's health, self-reliance and sustainability. I see an opportunity to create neighborhood connections that bring people out of the woodwork, people that are interested in engaging in a process of getting back to the basics. More specifically, I see the development of sustainable models for keeping hens to be included in our growing foundation of food security curriculums, lessons of which will be delivered throughout and within neighborhoods in the coming years. Marion Polk Food Share itself has been considering small-medium and large scale production of eggs, and this change will only increase our capacity to meet our mission, which is to end hunger in Marion and Polk counties.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will leave you with a quote from, "Five Acres and Independence," by M.G. Kains.

"The best way to be successful with poultry is to start with a few hens, give them good care and comfortable quarters, and—keep both eyes open. By this I mean that one should study the matter in a practical way by familiarizing him/herself with the habits and requirements of his/her fowl..."

Sincerely,



Jordan Blake – Garden Project Manager



Because no one should be hungry.
1660 Salem Industrial Drive NE
Salem, Oregon 97303

December 5, 2008

Mayor Janet Taylor

555 Liberty St. SE

Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Keeping Chickens in Salem

Dear Mayor Taylor,

I've been asked to write a letter concerning the keeping of chickens in Salem. I base my comments on my profession and experience. For eleven years I've taught Environmental Conservation and Sustainability at Oregon State University. I constantly encourage my students to "Rethink" their lifestyle to become more sustainable. For the long term sustainability of our culture, the world's resources, and economic viability, we must think more sustainably.

"Buying Local" has become a mantra of the sustainability movement in the Willamette Valley. The most "local" of all food is produced at home. Vegetable gardens, fruit trees, berry bushes, all help reduce consumption of resources, reduces synthetic chemical use, keeps local communities viable, and almost as a bonus the taste of home grown food is awesome.

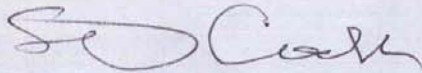
But in addition to my profession, proselytizing for sustainability, I have a practical side, having a blue collar background, I live a frugal lifestyle. Producing food at home saves money, it is as simple as that.

Most of my life I've had chickens around. I like chickens. They are much more fun to watch than a sleeping cat. Mine all have names—Helen (she sleeps next to my lawn chair), Buffy (a buff orpington), Sexy (a golden sexlink) etc. They have unique personalities. But enough silliness. They also lay eggs. People keep chickens for their eggs. As a bonus they consume organic kitchen scraps, reducing the garbage load of society. Finally, chicken manure is a high-nitrogen fertilizer. In one day food scraps become fertilizer. Many people have compost piles and one problem with a compost pile is that it attracts "disease vectors" (as a Corvallis Public Works employee explained to me). With chickens, edible organic waste is consumed the day it is put out, thus reducing these "disease vectors" (disease vector is pronounced "RAT").

Chickens eating fresh organic food, including grass, produce eggs with a bright orange, high beta carotene yolk, so the eggs not only taste better, they are better for you. I've also sold surplus eggs for five years and paid for all of my feed, so they even pay their way.

In conclusion, I encourage you to help the people of Salem help themselves to become more sustainable by allowing them to keep chickens.

Sincerely,



Steve Cook, PhD

Sr. Instructor of Geosciences, OSU

Proud owner of a flock of backyard chickens

Sarah Evans
1180 16th St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

January 3, 2009

Dear Mayor Taylor and City Council Members:

My name is Sarah Evans, and I am a resident of Ward 1 in Salem. I am writing in support of the Chickens in the Yard proposal to allow Salem residents to raise hens in their backyards.

I am an employee of Willamette University, which recently was named the top university in the country for sustainable activities by the National Wildlife Federation. I am proud to work for an organization that places so much importance on sustainability, and I hope to see these activities and attitudes spread even further into the Salem community. That is why I urge you to consider the Chickens in the Yard proposal.

The local food movement is growing quickly nationwide, especially in the Willamette Valley where residents have easy access to vegetables, meat and eggs from area farmers. These "locavores" seek alternatives to the industrial agriculture system. They want to keep dollars in the community by supporting local farmers, conserve oil and reduce carbon emissions by purchasing food from their area rather than something that was shipped thousands of miles before reaching their plates, and not worry about whether their spinach or tomato might carry disease or be drenched in pesticides. These are all valid concerns that can also be addressed by allowing residents to raise their own hens. By keeping hens to produce eggs, residents can have the most local product of all — something they raised themselves in their yard. There is no worry about where the eggs came from or how the chickens were raised. It is yet another way to live sustainably. If you haven't ever tasted farm fresh eggs, I highly encourage you to seek them out the next time you visit one of Salem's farmers markets. These eggs are much fresher and tastier than the ones typically found at a grocery store.

I understand that you may have some concerns about allowing residents to keep hens, but almost all of these concerns can be addressed by the restrictions in the proposal. By not allowing roosters, the city would have few noise complaints. Hens are relatively quiet animals that remain silent in their coop at night — that's much more than I can say for the many loud barking dogs and train whistles I hear whenever I'm trying to sleep. The proposal also limits the number of hens to five, which minimizes issues relating to sanitation, animal health or excessive regulations. Chicken manure can easily be composted for use as a natural fertilizer — the same does not apply to dog and cat feces that sometimes carry disease. I understand that regulating residents' chickens has potential to add to the city's workload, but as chickens are fairly quiet and clean animals, there should not be many more complaints than the city already receives from people concerned about barking dogs or roaming cats.

Allowing residents to raise hens has numerous benefits. Hens can eat grass clippings and kitchen scraps, allowing residents to reduce the waste they send to our landfills. The hens also eat insects and slugs that gardeners might otherwise have to eliminate with pesticides. Hens are a wonderful educational tool for children. Many experts note that one of the best ways to encourage children to eat healthier is to plant a garden. When children are actively involved in planting and harvesting carrots, broccoli or green beans, they are much more likely to eat them at the dinner

table. The same can apply to hens' eggs. Raising hens can teach children valuable lessons about animals and where their food comes from, which in turn makes them more excited about eating a healthy, balanced diet. As we continue to hear scary statistics about the rise in childhood obesity and diabetes, we should seek out more ways to curb the epidemic.

Raising hens in the backyard also can help neighbors get to know each other. If you've ever had a neighbor give you fresh zucchini or tomatoes from his garden — or you've traded your own garden's vegetables with someone on your street — then you know how raising food can build community. The same could apply as people raise hens and share the eggs with their neighborhood. There also is the possibility of starting egg co-ops — as some neighborhoods have done in Portland — where neighbors work together to care for one set of hens in order to share in the bounty of eggs, like a community garden.

As you can see, there are many reasons chicken-raising can help Salem show that it is a progressive, sustainable community. I appreciate you taking the time to consider the Chickens in the Yard proposal.

Sincerely,



Sarah Evans

November 14, 2008

To: The City of Salem

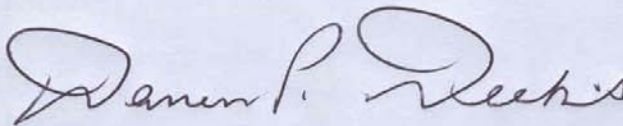
I am extremely disappointed to learn that my neighbors, Barbara Palermo and Kenneth Hill, were forced to get rid of their 4 hens. My property sits directly behind theirs and nobody would be impacted more by their chickens than me because of our adjoining property lines. In fact, my front yard overlooks their back yard and I have a clear view of the chicken coop and exercise pen that they have built. Given that, I would like to express how I feel about the keeping of chickens within the city limits.

First, I can attest to the fact that the four birds in question are indeed treated as loved pets. Barbara and Ken built a very attractive enclosure for their birds and spend a great deal of time playing with them, talking to them, and tending to their needs. It gives me great pleasure to know that some chickens are treated kindly, as opposed to commercial operations where chickens are often kept in poor conditions and confined to small, crowded cages.

Second, I can also attest to the fact that the chickens do not pose any nuisance of any kind. They are quiet, clean, attractive, and essentially odor-free. In my opinion, they pose absolutely no threat or problem whatsoever and I have no objections to the hens returning to their rightful home. I know that Barbara and Ken have taken all precautions to ensure that the birds are maintained in a predator-free, healthy environment. As their close neighbor, I also benefit from the nutritional value of fresh, organic eggs which Barbara and Ken frequently share, along with vegetables from their garden. I rarely hear the birds, except for an occasional soft cackle which brings a smile to my face knowing that they have just laid an egg. Certainly, they are much quieter than dogs, children, traffic, and other noises in the vicinity which I hear on a regular basis.

I fully support their endeavor and feel honored as their neighbor to be a part of what I understand has been called "The Urban Chicken Movement." There is no reason to think that residents of Salem would be any different from residents of other cities, like Portland, that wish to keep a few backyard hens and who's city officials have accommodated their request. I strongly urge the City of Salem to reconsider their stand on this issue and grant Barbara and Ken, and other responsible homeowners in Salem, the right to keep chickens as pets.

Sincerely,



Darren Deeks
861 Whitetail Deer St NW
Salem, OR 97304

Appendix A

Current City Ordinance in Salem Single Family Residential Zones

146.020. PERMITTED USES. The following uses, when developed under the general development standards in this zoning code applicable to the RS district and to all such uses, generally, are permitted in the RS district:

- (a) One single family dwelling, other than a manufactured home, per lot;
- (b) One duplex on a corner lot;
- (c) Manufactured homes in manufactured dwelling parks developed pursuant to SRC chapter 123.
- (d) Planned unit developments approved under SRC chapter 121.
- (e) The following agricultural uses:
 - (1) Agricultural production - crops (01) with no retail sales area;
 - (2) Timber tracts (081);
 - (3) Forest nurseries and tree seed gathering and extracting;
- (f) Playgrounds and parks.
- (g) Public buildings and structures, such as libraries and fire stations.
- (h) Rights-of-way for:
 - (1) Electric service lines;
 - (2) Gas mains, oil and gas transmission lines;
 - (3) Communications lines;
 - (4) Water lines; and
 - (5) Sewer lines.
- (i) Transit stop shelters.
- (j) Public utility structures and buildings such as pump stations and reservoirs, radiomicrowave relay stations, telephone substations, and electric substations.
- (k) Accessory uses and structures such as:
 - (1) Customary residential accessory buildings and structures for private use of the property and its occupants.
 - (2) A private garage or parking area;
 - (3) Storage for not more than one commercial vehicle per dwelling unit.
 - (4) Sleeping quarters for domestic employees of the resident of the main building;
 - (5) Guest houses and guest quarters not in the main building provided such houses and quarters are and remain dependent upon the main building for either kitchen or bathroom facilities, or both, and the guest facilities are used for temporary lodging and not as a place of residence;
 - (6) Swimming pools for private use;
 - (7) Home occupations;
 - (8) The taking of boarders or leasing of rooms by a resident family, providing the total number of boarders and roomers does not exceed two in any dwelling unit;
- (l) The following transitional uses. Where the side of a lot abuts property other than a street or alley in any C or I district, and the entire lot is within 165 feet of the C or I district:
 - (1) One duplex on a lot of 7,000 square feet or more;

Appendix B

Such term does not include the lease or rental of a dwelling unit or the rental of guest rooms on the same premises.

(g) **Hotel** means any building containing six or more guest rooms intended or designed to be used, or which are used, rented or hired out to be occupied or which are occupied for sleeping purposes by guests. (Ord No. 13-90; Ord No. 31-96; Ord No. 59-2000)

111.100. "I" Definitions.

(a) **Interested person** with respect to a land use action means any person or organization, or the duly authorized representative of either, having a right of appeal pursuant to SRC 114.200(a).

(b) **Interior lot.** See "lot, interior."

111.110. (Reserved for "J" definitions)

111.120. (Reserved for "K" definitions)

111.130. "L" Definitions.

(a) **Land use action** means a zone change, conditional zone change, variance, adjustment, conditional use approval, specific conditional use approval, planned unit development approval at any stage requiring commission or council action, or any other action requiring discretionary review by an administrative body, including appeals from any of the foregoing.

(b) **Land use proceeding** means a proceeding on a zone change, variance, adjustment, conditional use, specific conditional use, or planned unit development application; a council or commission initiated zone change proceeding; a proceeding to designate zoning classifications for a newly annexed area; or any other proceeding which will result in a land use action unless dismissed.

(c) **Landscaped** means primarily devoted to the planting and preservation of trees, shrubs, lawn and other organic ground cover, together with other natural or artificial supplements to that primary use such as watercourses, ponds, fountains, decorative lighting, benches, arbors, gazebos, bridges, rock or stone arrangements, pathways, sculpture, trellises, and screens.

(d) **Lattice Tower** means a freestanding support structure which consists of a network of crossed metal braces, forming a tower which is usually triangular or square in cross-section.

→ (e) **Livestock** means one or more members of any species of cattle, swine, sheep, goat, poultry, horse or other equine, or llama, alpaca or related ruminant, regardless of the purpose for which any of the foregoing may be kept; and of any species of rabbit, bee, or fur-bearing animal kept for sale, for sale of by-products, for livestock increase, or for value increase.

(f) **Loading space** means an off-street space or bay on the same lot or parcel with a building or complex for the parking of a vehicle while loading or unloading passengers or cargo.

Appendix C

- (2) Community or neighborhood club buildings, including swimming pools and similar recreation facilities, when operated by a nonprofit community club.
- (m) Residential home.
- (n) Child day care homes and babysitting.
- (o) Adult day care home.
- (p) On-site response actions in accordance with applicable law to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants. (Ord No. 53-83; Ord No. 5-84; Ord No. 146-84; Ord No. 149-84; Ord No. 16-85; Ord No. 17-88; Ord No. 71-91; Ord No. 28-92; Ord No. 2-93; Ord No. 18-94; Ord No. 32-2000)

146.030. SPECIAL USES. (a) The following uses, when restricted, developed and conducted as required in SRC chapter 119, are permitted in the RS district:

- (1) Funeral service (726) except crematories.
- (2) Public golf courses (7992).
- (3) Membership sports and recreation clubs (7997) having golf courses.
- (4) Elementary and secondary schools (821).
- (5) Religious organizations (866).
- (6) Boat and recreational vehicle storage area.
- (7) Zero side yard dwellings.
- (8) Two family shared housing.
- (9) Public automobile parking areas.
- (10) Manufactured homes on individual lots.
- (11) Bed and breakfast establishments.
- (12) Adult day care center.
- **(13) Keeping of a miniature swine.**
- (14) Residential Sales/Development Office.
- (15) Existing wildlife rehabilitation facility.
- (16) Construction of a replacement single family dwelling unit on an individual lot.
- (17) Antennas attached to existing or approved structures.
- (18) Parking for Special Activities at High Schools with Community Parks.
- (19) Cottage Housing.
- (b) In lieu of establishing any use listed in subsection (a) of this section as a special use under SRC Chapter 119, the developer may elect to apply for conditional use approval pursuant to SRC Chapter 117 or 118. See SRC 119.010. (Ord No. 149-84; Ord No. 16-85; Ord No. 17-88; Ord No. 13-90; Ord No. 3-91; Ord No. 10-91; Ord No. 81-92; Ord No. 2-93; Ord No. 67-93; Ord No. 18-94; Ord No. 48-94; Ord No. 16-95; Ord No. 82-96; Ord No. 57-2000; Ord No. 25-2004; Ord No. 30-05)

119.030. through 119.040. Reserved for Expansion.

119.050. VETERINARY SERVICES FOR ANIMAL SPECIALTIES. Where permitted as a special use, veterinary services for animal specialties (SIC 0742) shall meet the following additional use and development standards:

- (a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, all operations shall be conducted within completely enclosed and soundproof buildings.
- (b) Outside runs for dogs and other animals shall be operated only between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with an attendant present on the premises. Outside runs shall be located at least 60 feet from every property zoned or used for residential purposes. Outside runs shall be screened from adjacent properties and streets by a sight-obscuring fence, wall, or hedge.

➔ **119.070. KEEPING OF MINIATURE SWINE.** Where permitted as a special use, not more than one miniature swine of the species *Sus scrofa bittatus* (commonly known as a "potbellied pig") per dwelling unit may be kept provided the following conditions are met and maintained:

- (a) The animal is less than 100 pounds in weight;
- (b) The animal is less than 18 inches in height at the shoulder;
- (c) The animal is spayed or neutered as evidenced by a veterinarian's certificate, which certificate shall also certify the species of the animal, its age, shoulder height and weight when spayed or neutered. (Ord No. 67-93)

119.080 WILDLIFE REHABILITATION FACILITY. Where permitted as a special use, a wildlife rehabilitation facility shall meet the following additional use and nonvariable development standards:

- (a) Commercial activities such as breeding or raising wildlife for sale or trade, or the sale or trade of animal products shall be prohibited.
- (b) If a dwelling is used for wildlife rehabilitation, the total floor area used for wildlife rehabilitation shall not exceed 25 percent of the habitable space of that dwelling.
- (c) No structural alterations shall be made to any dwelling which would be inconsistent with future use of the building exclusively as a dwelling.
- (d) Proper sanitation must be maintained at all times. Property sanitation includes, but is not limited to:
 - (1) Not allowing wildlife waste to adversely affect the health of the wildlife itself, property residents, or neighbors.
 - (2) Taking necessary steps to ensure odors are not detectable beyond property lines.
 - (3) Storing of all wildlife food in rodent- and pest-resistant containers.
 - (4) Butchering, processing, or maintaining live or dead animals or fowl on-site as food for wildlife being rehabilitated shall be conducted entirely within an enclosed building.
- (e) Inspection of all cages and wildlife facilities by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and federal agencies as required.
- (f) All wildlife must be naturally occurring in Oregon as defined in ORS Chapter 496.
- (g) Current and continuing licensing by the state of Oregon as a wildlife rehabilitator or conducting wildlife rehabilitation under the supervision of a licensed rehabilitator.

Appendix D



Office of Mayor Sam Adams
City of Portland

February 25, 2009

Mayor Janet Taylor and Members of the Salem City Council
555 Liberty St. SE, Room 220
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mayor Taylor and Members of the Salem City Council,

The City of Portland has a long-standing code that allows its residents up to three hens per property without a permit. We also have a permit process to consider larger home flocks. This has presented a tremendous opportunity for Portland families to engage in sustainable food practices, and enjoy eggs from their flock. I personally have two chickens at home in my back yard.

Responsible chicken-keeping in our city is something we encourage and promote. To meet the challenge of our current economic climate, we are doing all we can to support programs and policies that encourage residents to incorporate sustainability in everyday life. In that way, allowing urban chickens—an economical source of an everyday food staple—has never made more sense. Residents can also enroll in classes through our Urban Growth Bounty program and learn how to keep a backyard flock safe, sound and healthy.

I'm confident that more cities can craft reasonable policies to ensure urban chicken keeping is allowable, while minimizing impacts on neighbors. I absolutely encourage you to adopt the proposed amendment and allow Salem residents to keep backyard chickens.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Mayor Sam Adams

CC: Chickens in the Yard (C.I.T.Y.)



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON
OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Randy Leonard, Commissioner
1221 S.W. 4th Avenue, Room 210
Portland, Oregon 97204
Telephone: (503) 823-4682
Fax: (503) 823-4019
randy@ci.portland.or.us

November 19, 2008

Mayor Taylor and Members of the Salem City Council
555 Liberty St SE, Room 220
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mayor Taylor and Members of the Salem City Council,

The City of Portland has allowed its residents up to 3 hens per property for many years. To my knowledge, we have not experienced any significant problems relating to reduced property values or threats to public health as a result of the hens co-existing with city residents.

Citizens of Portland enjoy having chickens as pets as well as the eggs they provide. As a City Commissioner, I feel it is important to provide this option to our citizens and see no reason why the citizens of Salem should not enjoy the same opportunity.

I have reviewed the proposed amendment drafted by citizens of Salem and find it fair and reasonable.

Given the current economic conditions and the growing trend to live a more sustainable lifestyle, keeping a few backyard hens has never been more practical. Thus, I urge you to adopt the proposed amendment to allow Salem residents to enjoy this privilege.

If I can help address your concerns or help in any way, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Commissioner Randy Leonard

Appendix E

DEPARTMENT OF
ANIMAL SCIENCES



James C. Hermes, PhD
Extension Poultry Specialist
Associate Professor

112 Withycombe Hall
Corvallis OR, 97331-6702

Tel: (541) 737-2254

Fax: (541) 737-4174

email:
james.hermes@oregonstate.edu

January 26, 2009

To: Troy Bissell

Re: Questions on Urban Chickens

There is great interest in recent years in raising a few hens in urban settings. In fact, most cities in Oregon and nationwide allow a few chickens (usually between 3 and 6) within their city limits. Hens can be a great addition to a backyard with only minimal management required. Their care requirements are no more than that of dogs or cats with the advantage that hens produce eggs for the family and their manure can be used to enhance the compost pile and is an excellent fertilizer for the garden. When considering chickens in urban areas the concerns usually center around five areas; Noise, Odor, Flies, Rodents and Disease. However, these concerns are typically not a problem in small flocks of hens when they are managed appropriately. I will address each of these concerns.

Noise: Hens are relatively quiet animals. They cluck and cackle but these noises are usually confined to a few minutes a day most often following egg laying. It is the rooster that makes annoying crowing noises most of the day. It is a misconception that the rooster is needed in a flock of hens. Hens will lay perfectly well without the presence of a rooster so in an urban environment roosters are usually not allowed. As urban pets go, a barking dog is far more annoying than cackling hens.

Odor: As with any animal, odors are a potential problem and of course chickens are no different. However, when well managed, odor is not a problem, which can also be said of well managed dogs and cats. With regular cleaning, the litter from a small chicken pen is a valuable addition to any compost container or an excellent fertilizer for a garden. Once added to the compost or tilled into the soil, the odor causing compounds are no longer able to cause objectionable odors. This is a great addition to any small "sustainable" urban garden.

Flies: Probably the most common misconception is that flies increase when chickens are present. This is true when chickens are raised in cages, unable to scratch around in the litter. However, chickens that are housed in floor pens are able to find and eat any fly larvae (maggots) before they develop into flies. Flies lay eggs in high moisture manure or other decaying matter. When the manure is collected regularly for the compost and the chickens have access flies never develop into a problem. Once again, a poorly managed backyard with some dogs or cats can also have problems with flies.

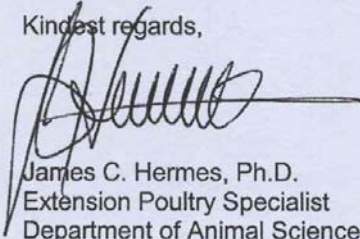
Rodents: Mice and rats can be associated with poultry operations. Their presence is usually the result of spilled feed which the rodents seek out and find. However, if feeding is done carefully with minimal spillage and feed is stored in metal or plastic containers instead of bags, rodent populations are controlled. In addition, rodent control efforts such as trapping or baiting are necessary to keep their numbers low. Once again, dog or cat feed stored improperly will have the same result, increased rodent populations.

Diseases: Chickens are relatively healthy animals. Being birds, their diseases rarely cross into mammalian populations. Recent concerns expressed in the media suggest that "Bird Flu" is of concern with chickens. While there are potential disease problems with all animals major problems are rare and "bird flu" of the type noted in the media has not been diagnosed in the whole of the Western Hemisphere and may not ever find its way here. Typical hygiene methods of hand washing and isolation of these flocks are very effective in reducing these concerns.

Small numbers of hens can be a great addition to any urban family backyard. They provide enjoyment to the whole family, they produce eggs for the family and fertilizer for the garden. The problems are minimized by proper management and should cause no more problems than those raised by the presence of dogs or cats.

I hope that I have answered your questions concerning chickens in an urban setting.

Kindest regards,



James C. Hermes, Ph.D.
Extension Poultry Specialist
Department of Animal Sciences
OSU

Appendix F



Information for animal owners in Oregon



Oregon
Department
of Agriculture

[Definition of livestock](#)

[Keeping exotic animals](#)

[Travel with animals within US](#)

[Animals legal in Oregon](#)

[Livestock loose on my property](#)

[Traveling with pets outside US](#)

[Certificate of Vet Inspection](#)

[Livestock transportation](#)

[Disposal of dead animals](#)

[ODA State Veterinarian](#)

[Dead livestock identification](#)

[Pasture Permit](#)

[Found "exotic" animals](#)

[Rabies vaccination questions](#)

Definition of livestock

"Livestock" refers only to

- cattle, (but does not include bison, or yak)
- horses, mules, donkeys, asses, (all equidae)
- sheep and goats, and
- all swine except potbellied pigs and feral swine.



Animals legal in Oregon

Which animals are not legal to keep in Oregon? Check the [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Integrity Rules](#).

Certificate of Vet Inspection

What is a "[Certificate of Veterinary Inspection](#)", when and why do I need one?

Disposal of dead animals

Any dead domestic animal within one-half mile of any dwelling or within one-fourth mile of any running stream of water must be disposed of within 15 hours (ORS 601.140). The owner may choose to bury it, burn it, move it farther from the dwelling or stream, or have it hauled away by commercial rendering company or a commercial carcass pickup service .

If buried, no part of the body shall be nearer than four feet to the natural surface of the ground and every part of such body shall be covered with quicklime and by at least four feet of earth. (ORS 601.090(7))

Exemptions

If the carcass is more than one-fourth mile from a running stream of water or more than one-half mile from any dwelling, and on the owner's property, the owner is not required to take any action.

Note: The Oregon [Department of Environmental Quality](#) may have requirements or recommendations for burial near wells, septic systems, or streams. Contact them at 503-229-5696.

Appendix G

Chickens in an urban setting

Georgia Sabol <gsabol@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Thursday, March 12, 2009 7:51:06 AM

To: "salemchickens@yahoo.com" <salemchickens@yahoo.com>

Our city council decided to allow hens in the City of Olympia six or seven years ago. As I said over the phone, it would be difficult to go back and find out exactly how many chicken complaints per year prior to allowing them. I am sure that since hens are allowed we have fewer complaints, I'd say five or less per year. The complaints are mostly about roosters crowing. We've had several complaints about someone having too many hens.

I believe that we now receive fewer complaints because the "chicken advocates" were good about educating new owners care of their hens. It seems that we never get complaints about hens out wondering loose anymore. Good fences(pens) do make good neighbors.

I also should mention that we in code enforcement were not keen on the chickens being allowed. However, that attitude has completely changed.

Georgia Sabol
Code Enforcement Officer
Community Planning & Development
360-753-8393

Chickens - City of Eugene

From: **MCDONALD Janis K** (Janis.K.MCDONALD@ci.eugene.or.us)
Sent: Wed 1/07/09 9:57 AM
To: getaholdofBP@hotmail.com
Cc: MCKERROW Mike J (Mike.J.MCKERROW@ci.eugene.or.us)

Hello Barbara,

Here is the information you requested:

We had 11 chicken-related complaints in 2008. All of these were prompted by the presence of a rooster(s). One also included sanitary/odor issues and house proximity to the adjacent property line, two included the issue of more than two hens.

If possible, we will try to call the property owner right away to get something done about the rooster noise. We send an Order to Correct requiring the rooster(s) be gone as soon as possible, maximum 5 days, or civil penalties may be levied. Our enforcement notifications go to the property owner, with a copy to the tenants. When talking with the owner and/or tenant, we will ask that they keep the rooster inside/contained during the interim to try and stop the noise quickly. They are usually gone soon after making contact. In many cases the residents got 'chicks' that had been sexed incorrectly and one/two turned out to be a rooster. We do get calls about just the hens too, usually to confirm how many are permitted, or what the other regulations are; some neighbors will try to work out small problems to avoid filing a written complaint against their neighbor. In 5 of the cases we needed Spanish-speaking assistance, either by someone in the household or by staff.

Our zoning regulations were adopted by the Lane County Commissioners for all property within the Urban Growth Boundary of the City of Eugene, so these regulations apply beyond the city limits.

Our regulations may be found on our website: www.eugene-or.gov
Select Resources at the top menu, Eugene Code, and scroll down to Chapter 9, then Section 9.5250, which is titled Farm Animals.

Hope this is helpful.

Janis McDonald
Land Use Inspector
City of Eugene
682-8452

Keeping of chickens in the City of Madison]

From: **Tucker, Matthew** (MTucker@cityofmadison.com)

Sent: Fri 1/30/09 11:52 AM

To: getaholdofbp@hotmail.com

Barbara-

You had asked for a brief summary in regard to our Zoning Code enforcement experience relative to our ordinance allowing the keeping of chickens in the City.

Our enforcement practice is primarily based upon the submission of a complaint, which results in the creation of an inspections case. Generally, **we receive less than 10 complaints in a typical calendar year**. The majority of complaints relate to roosters being on site, too many chickens on site, or coops/shelters/enclosures that are placed too close to neighbors homes or property lines. It is not uncommon for us to discover that the person(s) keeping the chickens has not obtained the required city license, which is a simple issue to resolve.

I would say the enforcement burden of managing this ordinance is fairly minimal, as we put the majority of the responsibility for compliance on the party desiring to keep the chickens. Our mission is to educate folks on the regulations first, and save more significant enforcement action where voluntary compliance is not achieved. I cannot specifically recall any cases where a municipal citation was issued or a case was referred to the City Attorney's office for prosecution. Voluntary compliance is usually the result of any orders sent.

Also, please note, the City recently revisited our "keeping of chickens" ordinance. The legislative file with the bulk of pertinent information may be found at this link:
<http://legistar.cityofmadison.com/detailreport/?key=12318>

Feel free to call or reply with any questions.

Matt Tucker

Zoning Administrator

Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development

Building Inspection Division, City Of Madison

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

PO Box 2984

Madison, WI 53701-2984

608/266-4569 PH

mtucker@cityofmadison.com

<http://www.cityofmadison.com>



April 27, 2009

Barbara Palermo
Chickens in the Yard (C.I.T.Y.)
Salem, Oregon
Letter Emailed: [salemchickens@yahoo.com]

Dear Ms. Palermo,

I am responding to your phone and email requests for information about keeping chickens in Lake Oswego.

LAKE OSWEGO
REDEVELOPMENT
AGENCY (LORA)

CITY OF
LAKE OSWEGO

380 A Avenue
P.O. Box 369
Lake Oswego
Oregon 97034

(503) 635-0235
Fax (503) 697-6594
www.ci.oswego.or.us

Question: *It is my understanding there is no limit to the number of chickens people can have in Lake Oswego. Is that correct? Can you please tell me what policies are in place regarding keeping chickens?*

Answer: The City's Community Development Code, LOC 31.02, [Animals and Fowl], pertains to the keeping of chickens within the City of Lake Oswego. It does not establish a maximum number of chickens allowed on a site; however, it does address possible negative impacts to neighbors by establishing what conduct is prohibited and regulated from animals and from their keepers. (Please see high-lighted sections of the attached "Animals and Fowl" regulation). Chickens are not regulated as a "use" within Lake Oswego zone districts, and therefore, are allowed in each zone district.

Question: *Has Lake Oswego's current "Animals and Fowl" policy proven to be an enforcement problem? How many complaints are on record?*

Answer: I have worked for the City since October, 2008, and I have not received any complaints against livestock. Also, I reviewed the City's Complaint Log since 2005 and was not able to find a complaint case filed against livestock.

Question: *Do people generally do a good job of keeping their chickens (e.g. treat them as pets, etc)?*

Answer: I have received 3 or 4 inquiries from parents about keeping chickens at their home. All of these inquiries were related to educating their children about the raising of fowl for eggs as a food source.

Please give me a call (ph. 503-699-7473) or send me an email [byoungblood@ci.oswego.or.us] if you have questions or otherwise need additional information.



Thank you,

Bill Youngblood
Bill Youngblood
Code Enforcement Specialist

Appendix H

Ted Shepard - Fwd: Urban chickens and property values in Portland

From: "Dan Brown" <fortcollinshens@gmail.com>
To: "Ted Shepard" <tshepard@fcgov.com>
Date: 8/12/2008 4:18 PM
Subject: Fwd: Urban chickens and property values in Portland

Ted,

Here are some comments from Jane Leo at the Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors in regard to the impact of urban chickens on property values. Please include this in our documentation.

Regards,

Dan

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jane Leo <JLeo@pmar.org>
Date: Mon, Aug 11, 2008 at 2:36 PM
Subject: RE: Urban chickens and property values in Portland
To: Dan Brown <fortcollinshens@gmail.com>
Cc: Michelle Jacobs <mjacobs@fcbr.org>

Dan--In response to your request for comment regarding the impact of chickens in a residential zone in the City of Portland, I can only iterate comments made during our telephone conversation. Chickens can be found in both older and newer Portland neighborhoods. City code, available at www.portlandonline.com, regulates the distance the livestock area must be from residential units and the gender of the chickens. Roosters are forbidden. During my 14-plus years with the Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors, I have not had a conversation with any member in which the discussion centered around chickens negatively impacting the desirability of a neighborhood nor housing values.

Best regards,

Jane Leo
Governmental Affairs Director
Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors
Direct Phone Line: 503/459-2163

From: Dan Brown [mailto:fortcollinshens@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, August 08, 2008 12:55 PM
To: Jane Leo
Subject: Urban chickens and property values in Portland

Jane,

Thank you very much for talking with me about the effects of urban chickens on property values in Portland, OR. There have been some concerns raised about the possible impact on property values of

file://C:\Documents and Settings\tshepard\Local Settings\Temp\GW100001.HTM

8/20/2008

This unofficial copy was downloaded from CityDocs at <http://prometheus.fcgov.com>
For additional information or an official copy, please contact City Clerk's office at (970) 221-6515

Toni Keener,
Broker
Houck and Associates, LLC
3755 Commercial Street, SE
Salem, OR 97302
Office: 503-510-6178
Email: tonikeener@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been brought to my attention citizens of Salem are requesting laying hens be allowed within City Limits. Apparently, one argument against allowing chickens is that the neighboring property values would be affected.

It is my professional opinion, chickens allowed in moderation would not affect the property value of a home or it's neighbors. Based on my personal experience with chickens, they are quiet and virtually odorless. The proposed limits of 25 ft from a dwelling would insure no disturbance to neighbors.

I have lived next door to a house with two chickens, within city limits and found no disturbance in the form of odor or noise. I sold that house and the new buyers were not concerned about the chickens at all. The free eggs from the neighbor were a bonus.

There are many things in a neighborhood that can turn a buyer against a property, train tracks, power lines, traffic noise, barking dogs, loud music or rundown properties. I don't believe chickens, in moderate limits, would affect the property value.

Sincerely,

Toni Keener

Appendix I

Methane

ATTACHMENT 4

From: Lucinda Smith, Senior Environmental Planner, Department of Natural Resources
To: Cameron Gloss
Date: June 6, 2008
Subject: City Council, Meeting of June 3, 2008, Follow-up to Question

I understand that a question was raised at the June 3 City Council meeting about the potential impact of urban hens on air quality, especially greenhouse gas emissions.

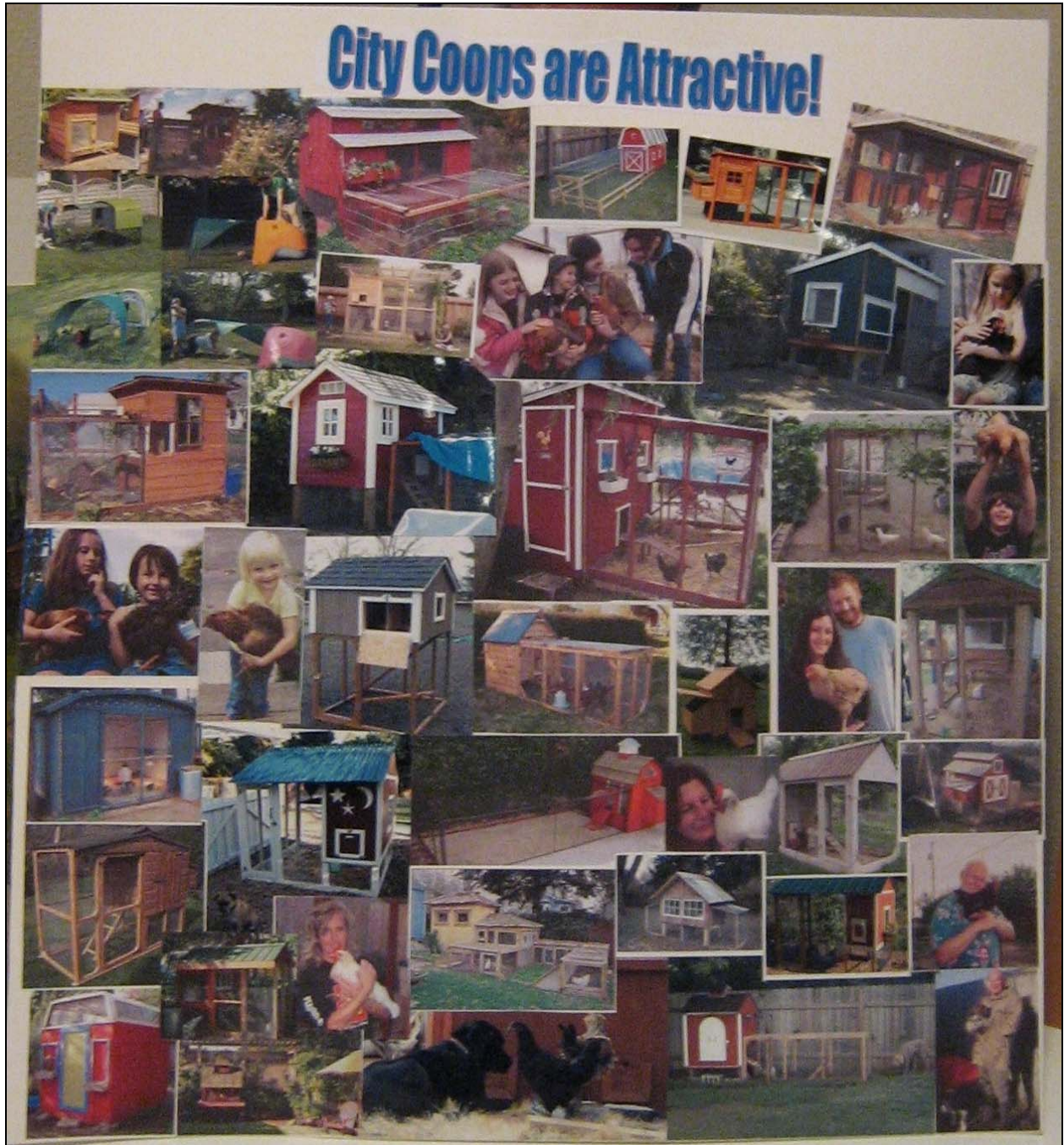
The U.S EPA Web site on methane emission sources (<http://www.epa.gov/methane/sources.html>) states that methane emissions from non-ruminant animals is insignificant:

"Livestock enteric fermentation. Among domesticated livestock, ruminant animals (cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, and camels) produce significant amounts of methane as part of their normal digestive processes. In the rumen, or large fore-stomach, of these animals, microbial fermentation converts feed into products that can be digested and utilized by the animal. This microbial fermentation process, referred to as enteric fermentation, produces methane as a by-product, which can be exhaled by the animal. **Methane is also produced in smaller quantities by the digestive processes of other animals, including humans, but emissions from these sources are insignificant."**

The U.S. EPA INVENTORY OF U.S. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND SINKS: 1990-2006 (April 2008; USEPA #430-R-08-005) states that ruminant animals are the major emitter of methane because of their unique digestive systems. Ruminant animals have the largest methane emissions of all animals. The report calculates the methane emissions from beef cattle, dairy cattle, horses, sheep, swine and goats; it does not even consider chickens. (See http://epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/downloads/08_Agriculture.pdf)

Most likely, the impacts of increased urban chickens in Fort Collins would be insignificant on local greenhouse gas emissions, even before considering the net carbon impact which would factor in reduced organic food scrap decomposition and other potential benefits.

Appendix J



Appendix K



U.S. City Dwellers Flock to Raising Chickens

Submitted by Ben Block on October 6, 2008 - 08:30.



Photo Courtesy Growing Gardens

At July's Tour De Coop, about 600 people visit, on average, 17 backyard chicken farms in Portland, Oregon, during the annual event organized by urban agriculture group Growing Gardens.

In the backyard of a suburban home in Denver, Colorado, 22 chickens are hiding out from the law.

They arrived when a member of [BackyardChickens](#), an online forum, ordered the birds in the mail this past May. "I actually get my chicks in today hopefully, and I am worried that animal control will be at the post office waiting for me with hand-cuffs," the new poultry farmer wrote.

An underground "urban chicken" movement has swept across the United States in recent years. Cities such as [Boston, Massachusetts](#), and [Madison, Wisconsin](#), are known to have had chickens residing illegally behind city fences.

But grassroots campaigns, often inspired by the expanding movement to buy locally produced food, are leading municipalities to allow limited numbers of hens within city limits.

Cities such as [Anne Arbor, Michigan](#); [Ft. Collins, Colorado](#); and [South Portland, Maine](#) have all voted in the past year to allow residents to raise backyard poultry. "It's a serious issue - it's no yolk," said Mayor Dave Cieslewicz of Madison, Wisconsin, when [his city reversed its poultry ban](#) in 2004. "Chickens are really bringing us together as a community. For too long they've been cooped up."

Raising backyard chickens is an extension of an [urban farming movement](#) that has gained popularity nationwide. Home-raised livestock or agriculture avoids the energy usage and carbon emissions typically associated with transporting food.

"Fresh is not what you buy at the grocery store. Fresh is when you go into your backyard, put it in your bag, and eat it," said [Carol-Ann Sayle](#), co-owner of five-acre (two-hectare) farm in [Austin, Texas](#), located within walking distance from the state capitol. "Everyone should have their own henhouse in their own backyard."

"Buying local" also provides an alternative to factory farms that pollute local ecosystems with significant amounts of animal waste - which can at times exceed the waste from a small U.S. city, a [government report](#) revealed last month. In the United States alone, industrial livestock production generates 500 million tons of manure every year. The waste also emits potent greenhouse gases, especially methane, which has 23 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide.

Meanwhile, advocates insist that birds raised on a small scale are less likely to carry diseases than factory-farmed poultry, although some public health officials are concerned that backyard chickens could elevate avian flu risks.

Chicken: The 'Buy Local' Mascot

After the trend first gained popularity in London, England, with the invention of the "eglu" chicken house about ten years ago, large numbers of city dwellers began to raise chickens in the U.S. cities of Seattle and Portland, said Jac Smit, president of the [Urban Agriculture Network](#). "It's no longer something kinky or interesting," Smit said. "The 'chicken underground' has really spread so widely and has so much support."

Within the past five years, the trend has expanded to cities where raising hens was already legal, including [Los Angeles](#), [San Francisco](#), and [Chicago](#). "Chicken has become the symbol, a mascot even, of the local food movement," said Owen Taylor of New York City, who knows of at least 30 community gardens that raise poultry, mostly for their eggs. One Brooklyn home has raised upward of 50 hens. "We're the biggest city in the country, so to have it here I think blows people's minds."

K.T. LaBadie, a University of New Mexico graduate student, was born into a family that grew its own fruits and vegetables. So when she moved to Albuquerque and met a friend who was raising his own chickens, poultry was a logical progression in her own home. She began with two hens, and now she has four.

"It felt like a good compliment to our backyard gardening. We get compost from the chickens that goes back into the vegetable beds," LaBadie said. "And there's really nothing better than harvesting tomatoes and peppers from your garden and being able to make an omelet with it using a meal that was based in your backyard."

The spread of backyard chickens has promoted spin-off businesses that cater to the local market. Some communities are relying on [mobile slaughterhouses](#) to manage and distribute the poultry meat, according to Smit. "It's no longer huge slaughterhouses doing millions [of birds]. It's a guy driving around on a truck, visiting neighborhood to neighborhood," he said. "And it's not chickens only.... Duck, turkey, and quail are particularly attractive."

In Portland, Oregon, residents have organized a [farming cooperative \[video\]](#) to raise hens for egg production. "The money is used to maintain the cooperative. It's not necessarily organized to be a profit-sharing venture," said Debra Lippoldt, executive director of [Growing Gardens](#), a Portland urban agriculture advocacy group.

Public Health Concerns

If avian influenza eventually evolves to infect humans, experts fear that backyard chickens will be vectors of the disease. Government officials have threatened to ban free-range chickens in cities in Thailand, Indonesia, and Hong Kong, where bird flu has spread in the past. Governments around the world are also concerned that wild fowl will infect backyard chickens, leading to calls for similar bans in the Canadian province of [British Columbia](#) and in [Australia](#).

But several public health officials argue that homegrown poultry are not a disease threat if the chickens are properly maintained. "Make sure the roof of the pen has a solid cover to protect birds from fecal matter that may drop from birds flying overhead," said University of California at Davis poultry specialist Francine Bradley in a [statement released in 2005, at the peak of avian flu concerns](#). "We always tell people, don't let anyone near your birds who doesn't need to be there [due to fears of people carrying the virus]."

Sustainable farming advocates insist that backyard chickens are less of a concern than factory-farmed poultry, which the [Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production](#) has said poses serious risks of transmitting animal-borne diseases to human populations, especially due to the prevalence of antimicrobial resistance.

"When it comes to bird flu, diverse small-scale poultry farming is the solution, not the problem," the international sustainable agriculture organization [GRAIN](#) concluded in a [2006 report](#).

For urban poultry farmers, a more relevant health issue is whether the chickens, which many owners consider to be pets, can survive urban wildlife, even in New York City. "It's awful how often flocks are decimated by raccoons or hawks or possums," said Owen Taylor, who runs the [City Farms](#) livestock program, an extension of the sustainable food organization [Just Food](#).

As the backyard chicken movement spreads, urban farmers are finding new ways of experiencing city living, whether their chickens are pets or dinner. "Raising chickens on a backyard stoop, especially if you have children, is agreeable," Smit said. "How you convince the kids you'll cut its neck and eat it is another thing."

Ben Block is a staff writer with the [Worldwatch Institute](#). He can be reached at bblock@worldwatch.org.

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The New Coop de Ville

The craze for urban poultry farming.

Jessica Bennett
NEWSWEEK

For Brooklyn real-estate agent Maria Mackin, the obsession started five years ago, on a trip to Pennsylvania Amish country. She, her husband and three children, now ages 17, 13 and 11 sat down for brunch at a local bed-and-breakfast, and suddenly the chef realized she'd run out of eggs. "She said, 'Oh goodness! I'll have to go out to the garden and get some more,'" Mackin recalls. "She cooked them up and they were delicious." Mackin and her husband, Declan Walsh, looked at each other, and it didn't take long for the idea to register: Could we have chickens too? They finished their brunch and convinced the bed-and-breakfast owner, a Mennonite celery farmer, to sell them four chickens. They packed them in a little nest in the back of their Plymouth Voyager minivan and headed back to Brooklyn.

The family has been raising chickens ever since, in the backyard of their brick townhouse in an urban waterfront neighborhood called Red Hook. Every Easter, Mackin orders a new round of chicks, now from a catalog that ships the newborns in a ventilated box while they are still feeding from their yolks. When they are grown, she offers up their eggs and occasionally extra chickens, when she decides she's got too many, to friends and neighbors, and sells a portion to a local bistro, which touts the neighborhood poultry on its Web site. She gives the chicken manure, a high-quality fertilizer, to a local community garden in exchange for hay, which she uses to pad the chickens' wire-fenced coop. Occasionally, she kills and cooks up a chicken for dinner, "though, she says, her chickens are egg layers and aren't particularly tasty. "We joke and call ourselves the Red Hook Poultry Association," says the former social worker, who at one time housed 27 chicks inside her kitchen for six weeks. "Sometimes people are like, 'This is really kind of weird'."

As it turns out, Mackin is hardly an anomaly, in New York or any other urban center. Over the past few years, urban dwellers driven by the local-food movement, in cities from Seattle to Albuquerque, have flocked to the idea of small-scale backyard chicken farming, mostly for eggs, not meat, as a way of taking part in home-grown agriculture. This past year alone, grass-roots organizations in Missoula, Mont.; South Portland, Maine; Ann Arbor, Mich.; and Ft. Collins, Colo., have successfully lobbied to overturn city ordinances outlawing backyard poultry farming, defined in these cities as egg farming, not slaughter. Ann Arbor now allows residents to own up to four chickens, while the other three cities have six-chicken limits, subject to various spacing and nuisance regulations.

That quick growth in popularity has some people worried about noise, odor and public health, particularly in regard to avian flu. A few years back in Salt Lake City, which does not allow for backyard poultry farming, authorities had to impound 47 hens, 34 chicks and 10 eggs from a residential home after neighbors complained about incessant clucking and a wretched stench, along with wandering chickens and feathers scattered throughout the neighborhood. "The smell got to be unbelievable," one neighbor told the local news. Meanwhile, in countries from Thailand to Australia, where bird flu has spread in the past, government officials have threatened to ban free-range chickens for fear they are contributing to outbreaks. (In British Columbia, where officials estimated earlier this year that there are as many as 8,000 chicken flocks, an avian flu outbreak four years forced the slaughter of more than 17 million birds.)

But avian flu has not shown up in wild birds, domestic poultry or people in the United States. And, as the Washington-based Worldwatch Institute (an environmental research group) pointed out in a [report last month](#), experts including the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production have said that if we do see it, it'll be more likely to be found in factory-farmed poultry than backyard chickens. As GRAIN, an international sustainable agriculture group, concluded in a 2006 report: "When it comes to bird flu, diverse small-scale poultry farming is the solution, not the problem."

Many urban farmers are taking that motto to heart. In New York, where chickens (but not roosters, whose loud crowing can disturb neighbors) are allowed in limitless quantities, there are at least 30 community gardens raising them for eggs, and a City Chicken Project run by a local nonprofit that aims to educate the community about their benefits. In Madison, Wis., where members of a grass-roots chicken movement, the Chicken Underground, successfully overturned a residential chicken ban four years ago, there are now 81 registered chicken owners, according to the city's animal-services department. "There's definitely a growing movement," says 33-year-old Rob Ludlow, the Bay Area operator of BackyardChickens.com and the owner of five chickens of his own. "A lot of people really do call it an addiction. Chickens are fun, they have a lot of personality. I think people are starting to see that they're really easy pets and they actually produce something in return."

Because chickens can be considered both livestock and pet, farming them for eggs or keeping them as pets is unregulated in major cities like New York and Los Angeles. But it isn't legal everywhere. According to one recent examination by urban-agriculture expert Jennifer Blecha, just 65 percent of major cities allow chicken-keeping, while 40 percent allow for one or more roosters. (Hens don't need roosters to lay unfertilized eggs.)

Chicken slaughter, meanwhile, tends to fall under a separate (and generally stricter) set of regulations, though they're not always enforced. Most cities that allow chicken farming limit the number to four or six per household, so many urban farmers aren't raising enough chickens to slaughter and sell anyway, though they may cook up a meal or two at home. If they want to slaughter more, there are mobile slaughterhouses in places like Washington state that will do the dirty work for you: USDA-approved refrigerated trucks will pull right up to your doorstep.

Chicken farmers are finding each other on sites like TheCityChicken.com, UrbanChickens.org and MadCityChickens.com. BackyardChickens.com logs some 6 million page views each month and has some 18,000 members in its forum, where community members share colorful stories (giving a chicken CPR), photos (from a California chicken show), even look to each other for comfort. "I am worried that non-BYC people won't understand why a 34-year-old woman would cry over a \$7 chicken," writes a Stockton, N.J., woman, whose chicken was killed by a hawk.

Over at UrbanChickens.org, which launched this year, founder K. T. LaBadie, a master's student in community planning, provides updates on city ordinances, info about local chicken-farming classes and coop tours and has been contacted by activists hoping to overturn chicken bans around the nation. In Albuquerque, where she lives with her husband and four chickens, Gloria, Switters, Buffy and Omelet, residents can keep 15 chickens and one rooster, subject to noise ordinances, as well as slaughter the chickens for food. In July, LaBadie wrote in detail of her first killing: she and her husband hung the bird by its legs, slit its throat, plucked its feathers and put it on ice. Then they slow-cooked it for 20 hours. "It's not pretty, it's kinda messy, and it's a little smelly," she writes. "But it's quite real."

Meanwhile, at MadCityChickens.com, the Web site created by the Madison Chicken Underground, chat-line operator Dennis Harrison-Noonan has turned his chicken love into a mini-business: he's sold 2,000 design kits for his custom-made playhouse chicken coop, which retails for \$35. "It's really not that crazy to think that people are doing this," says Owen Taylor, the urban livestock coordinator at Just Food, which operates the New York Chicken Project. "Most of the world keeps chickens, and they've been doing so for thousands of years."

Historically, he's right. During the first and second world wars, the government even encouraged urban farming by way of backyard "Victory Gardens" in an effort to lessen the pressure on the public food supply. (Until 1859, there were 50,000 hogs living in Manhattan, according to Blecha.) "It's really only been over the last 50 years or so that we've gotten the idea that modernity and success and urban spaces don't involve these productive animals," Blecha says.

There are a host of reasons for the growing trend. "Locavores" hope to avoid the carbon emissions and energy consumption that come with transporting food. Chicken owners and poultry experts say eggs from backyard chickens are tastier and can be more nutritious, with higher levels of supplements like omega-3 fatty acids. Their production cost is cheap: you can buy chickens for as little as a couple of dollars, and three hens will likely average about two eggs a day. You can also use their waste to help revitalize a garden. "There've been recalls on everything from beef to spinach, and I think people want to have peace of mind knowing their food is coming from a very trusted source," says LaBadie. "As gas prices go up, and people realize how food is connected to oil and transportation, they are bound to realize they can get a higher quality product cheaper if they get it locally."

Keeping a chicken is relatively easy, too, assuming you don't get too attached. (That's a talk Mackin says she had with her kids early: these chickens aren't pets.) They'll eat virtually anything, pork products, string cheese, even

Chinese takeout," she laughs, and they feed on bugs and pests that can ruin a garden. They can withstand harsh weather conditions. (In one oft-told tale, a Maine woman lost her chicken in a blizzard and found it, a day later, frozen solid with its feet stuck straight in the air. She thawed it and administered CPR. The chicken made a full recovery.) And much like New Yorkers, not much bothers chickens grown in urban environments. "[Those] raised in a really controlled environment like factory farms are very fragile, both physically and emotionally," says Blecha, who lives in St. Paul, Minn., with her partner and six chickens. "My chickens, I mow the lawn a foot away from them and they don't even look up from their pecking."

But even urban chickens, who can live more than five years, can die easily: from predators like dogs or possums, catching a cold or sometimes for no apparent reason at all. Once, one of Mackin's chicks got stuck in a glue trap. She drowned it, to put it out of its misery. "That was really sad," she says. (Mackin doesn't name her chickens, for that very reason.)

But the overall experience seems to be positive for everyone. "We have people calling weekly to say, 'This is really cool'," says Patrick Comfort, a spokesman for Madison's animal-services department, where the chicken ban was reversed in 2004. "Chicken people love it, the neighbors don't care, we have no complaints." Minneapolis enthusiast Albert Bourgeois sums up the appeal. "Chickens are really fun pets," he says. His flock is named Cheney, Condi, Dragon, Fannie and Freddie. The next one, he says, will be Obama.

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Chickens given roosts in urban backyards

By Trevor Hughes, USA TODAY

Posted 1/2/2009 1:56 AM



Rob Ludlow, 33, and his daughters Alana, 5, left, and April, 2, interact with their hens in their Pleasant Hill, Calif. backyard on Dec. 6.

California Web developer and business consultant Rob Ludlow gets laughs when he tells people his pets make him breakfast.

It's no joke. Ludlow, his wife, Emily, and their two daughters have five egg-laying hens living in the backyard of their Bay Area home in Pleasant Hill, Calif. "Can your dog or cat claim the same?" Ludlow asks.

He is among the growing number of city dwellers across the country choosing chickens as pets — raising them for eggs that proponents say taste fresher, for pest control, for fertilizer and, as the economy continues to struggle, for a cost-saving source of protein.

Enthusiasts have been pecking away at multiple local laws this year and have persuaded officials in cities such as Fort Collins, Colo., Bloomington, Ind., and Brainerd, Minn., to change the rules.

Ludlow, who began raising chickens five years ago, has become somewhat of an expert on the topic through his website, BackYardChickens.com, which, he says, has grown to a community of 19,000 members around the world the past two years.

Ludlow has tapped into what he and others say is a growing trend among residents from California, New York, Washington, Oregon, Colorado and elsewhere.

Their efforts, he says, are a sign of the tough economy and harken back to the victory gardens planted by Americans in previous economic downturns and during the two world wars.

"It's like that saying, a chicken in every pot. Well, I think it should be a chicken in every backyard," Ludlow says.

Longmont, Colo., city planner Ben Ortiz says elected officials in his city of about 85,000 near Fort Collins are considering whether to let residents raise chickens. Ortiz says many residents have cited financial sustainability as a major reason. "There may be some pent-up demand for this kind of thing," he says.

New York City, Los Angeles, Portland, Ore., and Seattle all permit urban chickens, Ortiz says. Such cities generally limit residents to five or fewer hens, with no roosters, a review of their laws shows.

Sonya Chamberlain of Brainerd, Minn., is the only person in her city licensed to keep backyard chickens, after her successful effort this fall to change the law. But she still doesn't have chickens, she says, and has been concentrating on building a coop in her city of about 14,000.

"In Minnesota, you don't want to get chicks in December," she says.

Chamberlain cites access to eggs produced without antibiotics, a fresher taste and a greater emphasis on locally produced food as benefits of backyard chickens. "For me, it's primarily a local foods and sustainability issue. My whole front yard is vegetables, and this is a natural extension of that," she says.

Ortiz says Longmont officials began considering the proposal after some residents noted that Fort Collins approved a similar law in September. "What precipitated this is the sustainability movement. That seems to be the rationale that a lot of these people are employing," Ortiz says.

Ludlow says the chickens eat leftover food and provide a daily lesson for children about where their food comes from.

Chamberlain says she took her request to city hall, drawing inspiration from friends in Portland, Ore., and websites such as Ludlow's and the Albuquerque-based UrbanChickens.org. Both sites discuss everything from the best types of food to how to answer neighbors' concerns.

Ortiz says skeptics in Longmont worry that the hens will be noisy, smelly and dirty, attract rodents and predators, and pose health risks from disease.

"Who wants to be looking at a makeshift chicken coop and hens running around 365 days a year?" asks Longmont resident Stephen Donnellan, a retired insurance claims adjuster. "To me, it's laughable. This idea of having fresh eggs — you can go to a nearby farm."

Donnellan, who says he likes his eggs with bacon, calls backyard chickens a fad that will pass. "We live in a city. They belong on a farm," he says.

Chamberlain says her experience in Brainerd shows that people who grew up in rural areas seem most opposed to the chickens, which they see as livestock. "They said, what happens if there's chickens running amok?" she says.

Find this article at:

http://www.usatoday.com/news/offbeat/2009-01-02-urban-chicken_N.htm



City Folk Flock To Raise Small Livestock At Home

by Megan Verlee

All Things Considered, January 10, 2009

If you picked up a carton of eggs at the store this week, they probably set you back about \$1 or \$1.50. The organic, cage-free kind costs more like \$3. But some urban and suburbanites are skipping the store entirely when it comes to things like eggs and honey and turning instead to their own backyards.

Whether from tighter food budgets or local-eating ideals, more and more people are petitioning their cities to allow small animal husbandry.

City dwellers are accustomed to being awakened at night by the occasional siren or the roar of a low-flying jet. But the nocturnal disturbances in a Denver neighborhood have a slightly more agrarian feel.

Cutting-Edge 'Locavores'

A rooster belts out a cry from one of the yards, where the homeowners also keep a pair of geese in a converted sun porch. What they don't have, however, are any permits for their minor menagerie. Denver does allow chickens for an annual fee. Roosters, though, are entirely outlawed.

So it's understandable that the homeowner, Brad, doesn't want his last name used.

Many of the folks pushing for urban livestock ordinances do so because of trendy modern ideas about sustainability and local food. They're known as "locavores."

Brad says he simply loves chickens.

He says he had them as a boy in the countryside and just kept on raising them even after moving to Los Angeles as a teenager.

"So I was walking around L.A. streets with a Rhode Island Red and people would say, 'Whoa, my god that's a beautiful bird! What is it?' 'Oh, it's a chicken.' 'A chicken?!' You know, city folks, never seen 'em before," Brad says.

That seems to be changing. Forget growing your own vegetables — cutting-edge locavores are now pushing backyard honey, eggs and milk. Researchers with the American Planning Association say that in the past six months they've fielded more questions about livestock ordinances than almost any other topic.

Chickens As Rock Stars

Colorado zoning consultant Christopher Duerksen is trying to simplify some of the answers. He's putting together a model sustainability code for cities trying to green up their rules.

Asked how city planners tend to react when they hear the word "chicken," Duerksen quips: "They tend to squawk. I think most planners, like most people, don't think of urban areas as food producing areas, but that's changing with the cost of food and questions about the health of food. And so we're seeing a real change in mindset among urban planners."

This means residents can now keep bees in Denver or raise a mini-goat in Seattle. But the real rock stars of this movement are chickens.

Urban livestock researcher Jennifer Blecha says that in recent years a dozen or more cities annually have joined the pro-chicken flock. And she says chicken advocates are starting to get more organized.

"When I over the last year or two have done presentations at various conferences on urban agriculture," Blecha says, "a swarm of people comes afterward and says, 'I'm from Cleveland and we need to get our regulations changed, can you please help?' 'Oh, we're from here and we're trying to get our regulations changed, could you give me some advice?'"

Some municipalities have bucked the agrarian trend. Just north of Denver, the planning board for the city of Longmont, Colo., recently gave the thumbs-down to a chicken ordinance. According to Jon Van Bentham, the board chairman, concerns ranged from unsightly chicken-coop construction to noise and smell, to slightly more dire topics.

"Avian flu came up," Van Bentham says. "Again, that's maybe kind of a nightmare scenario, but that's one of the places where folks are concerned that it comes from."

But backyard farmers seem to have one ace in the hole for answering any local objections: bribery. Plenty of Brad's eggs, for example, end up on his neighbors' breakfast plates.

"I ask them every now and then if it's bothering them and they say, 'Oh no, it doesn't bother us at all and besides, you wouldn't mess with the one that feeds ya,'" Brad says.

For the record, no eggs — goose, chicken or otherwise — changed hands in the reporting of this story.

Additional News Articles About Urban Chicken Keeping

<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/5900>

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/168740>

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<http://urbanchickens.org/files/Ordinance%20research%20paper.pdf>



Don't be chicken to take a stand

Please vote yes for city hens!