

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension Program



PURPOSE OF THIS PRESENTATION IS:



- To present the concept of “Backyard Basics”
- To create an awareness of the possibility of raising backyard chickens for:
 - Fresh eggs to eat & share
 - Natural insect control
 - Educational projects for kids
 - Extra income for kids & you
 - Adding a little “country” to your urban backyard



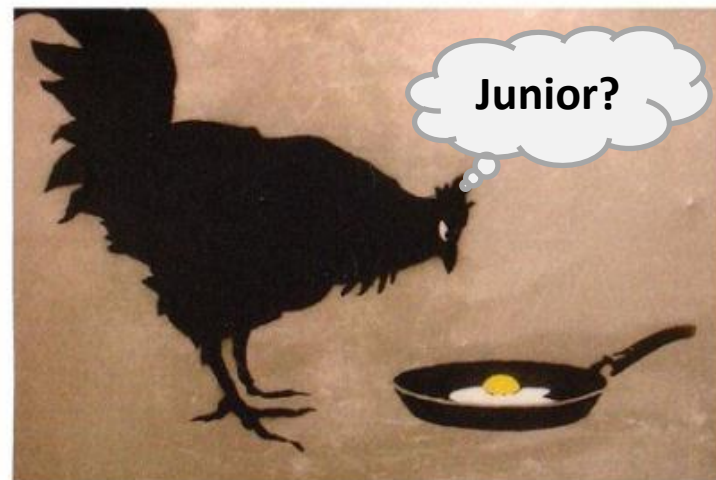


Raising small flock of backyard hens has become increasingly popular over the past couple of years.

- **Membership in Backyard Chickens went from 50 in 2007 to over 61,000 today.**
- **Cover article in Organic Gardening Magazine June/July 2010**
- **July 12, 2010 Time Magazine article covered the growing popularity of BYCs.**

THE TOP TEN REASONS FOR RAISING YOUR OWN CHICKENS

1. **Taste & Freshness - Personal chickens are the ultimate source of truly fresh eggs, and nothing beats the flavor of home raised chickens**
2. **Educational - Your kids will acquire plenty of knowledge of life-cycles, feeding habits, animal characteristics, etc....**



THE TOP TEN REASONS

3. Health & Safety - There's virtually no risk of antibiotic resistant bacteria living in home raised meat or eggs

4. Great Pets - Safer than dogs! Chickens make great pets that require little care, produce fertilizer, eat bugs, and are very cute





Not Much Difference in Favorite Pets





Hens as Pets with Benefits

- Many local chicken owners treat their chickens with the respect and tenderness one treats a pet dog or cat. Yet, hens also provide eggs.
- Some ordinances limit the number of hens per lot as well as stipulating that the hens may be kept as pets and for personal use only – no slaughtering, breeding, egg selling, fertilizer production or other commercial purpose.



THE TOP TEN REASONS

5. 4-H Kids in the City - Since chickens are smaller than cows, urban 4-H kids can keep poultry to learn about responsibility



6. Outlaws - Urbanites with chickens are an elite vanguard that gets to ignore stupid laws



Chronicle / Deanne Fitzmaurice

THE TOP TEN REASONS

7. Variety - Genetically diverse small flocks preserve rare breeds, like ethically run companies maintain honest & accurate breeding stock



8. Cultural - You'll have something real to talk about instead of gossip, complaints, the neighbors, work, money, government, health.....



THE TOP TEN REASONS

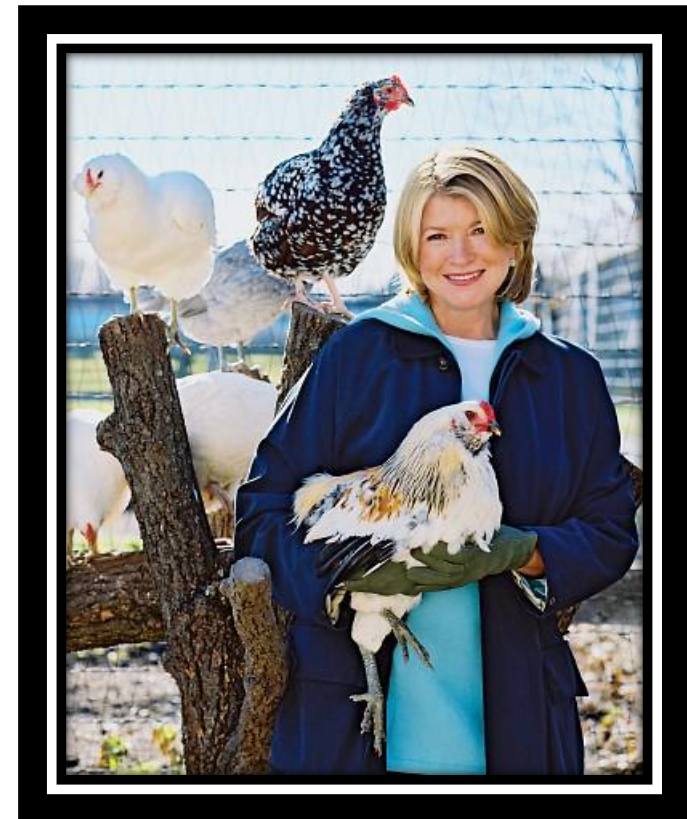
9. Awakenings - If your flock has a rooster, nobody within a hundred yards will need an alarm clock

10. Fashionable - Keeping chickens is stylish no matter what else happens to you. Just ask Martha....





**Now, that's some
classy chicks!**



Celebrities w/ Pets

Miley Cyrus



Tori Spelling

And:

Barbra Streisand
Reese Witherspoon
Hilary Swank

Queen Elizabeth
Chevy Chase
William Masey

Jamie Olliver

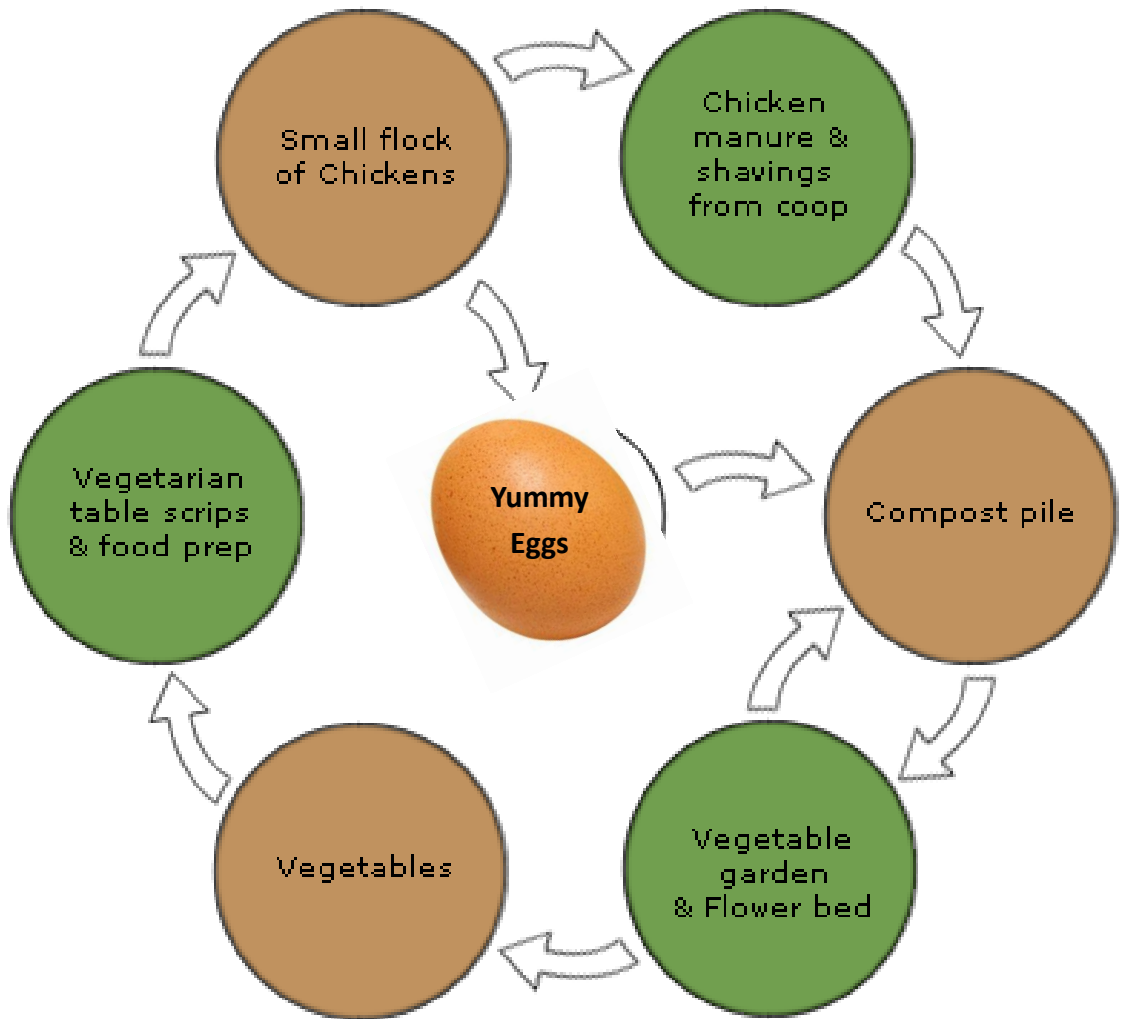




“My family’s interest in poultry goes back to my Great, Great, Great Grandmother – Queen Victoria.....” - Prince Charles

Sustainable Living

- Chickens close the loop for the home gardener, creating the micro ecosystem shown here.
- Eggs are not transported long distances in refrigerated trucks.
- Backyard chickens are raised humanely.



Required Equipment

- Waterer,
 - Standard →
 - Automatic
 - Harvested water ↓



Required Equipment

- Feeders,



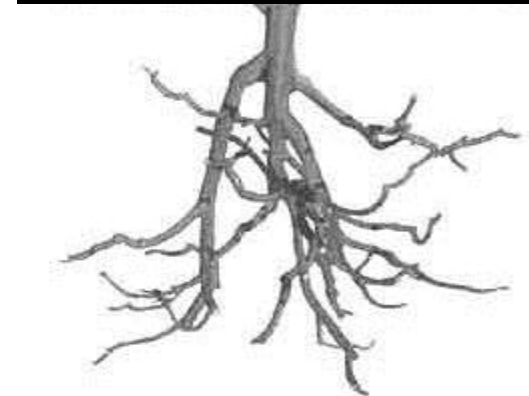
Required Equipment

- Nests,
 - Size - 1ft X 1ft X1ft



Required Equipment

- Roosts – Why:
 - That's what birds do
 - To get them off the ground
 - Create an obstacle for predators



Required Equipment

- Run – Why:
 - For chickens that are not let loose during the day
 - For constant security



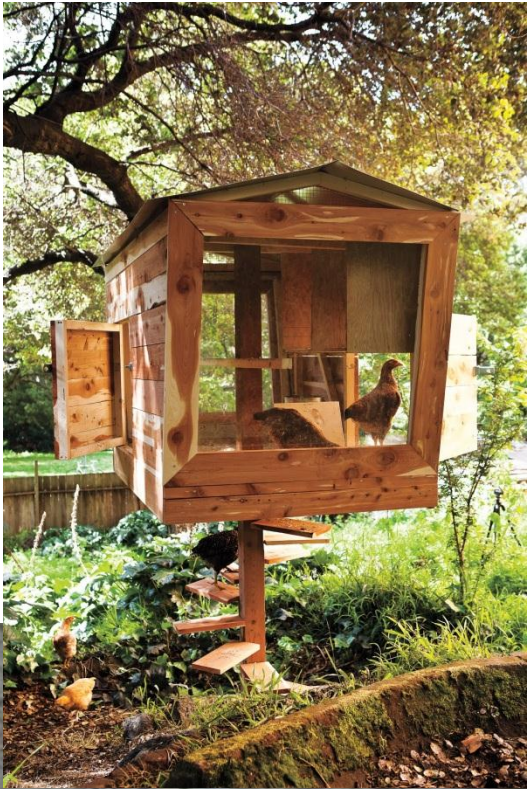
Compatible with Urban Life













And, Suburban Too!



Traveling Coops







“Hide-A-Coops”



Placement of the Coop



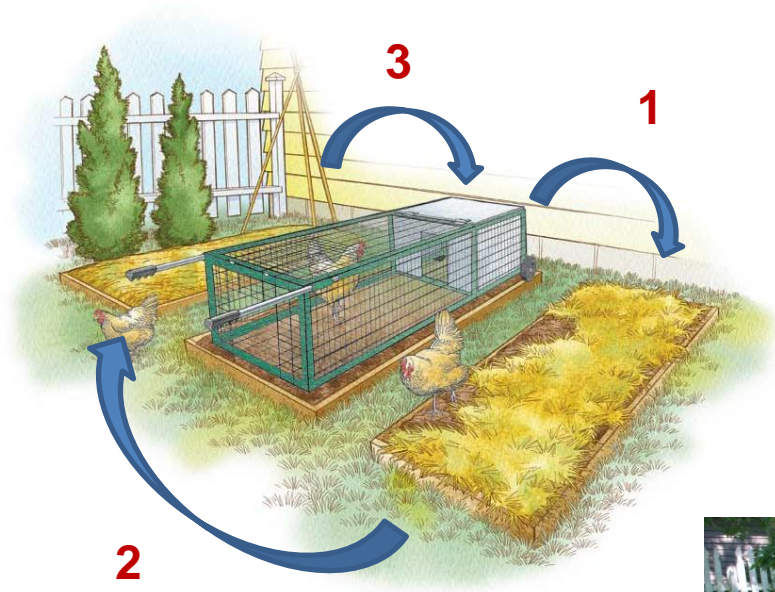
- The owners we visited placed their coops in their back yards.
- The coops were located anywhere from 20 feet to 100 feet from a neighbor's house
- Some municipalities require coops to be located in rear yards and specify the minimum distance a coop must be from a property line or neighboring structure

Toys for Chickens

- Dust boxes to keep them from digging in beds
- Dried herbs in nest to ward-off insects
- Treats to keep them occupied



Farming w/ Chickens

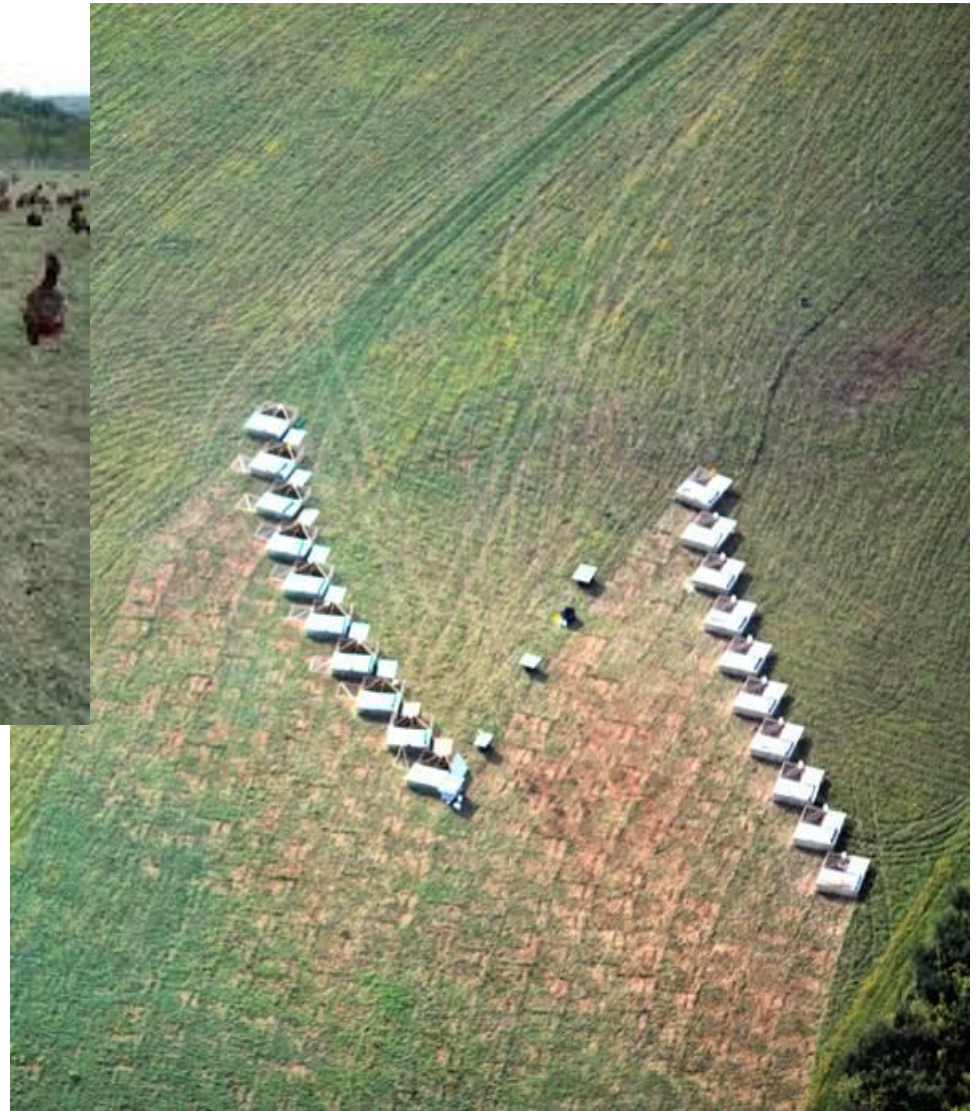


Chickens:

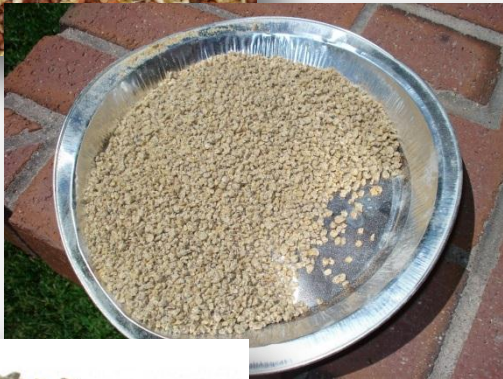
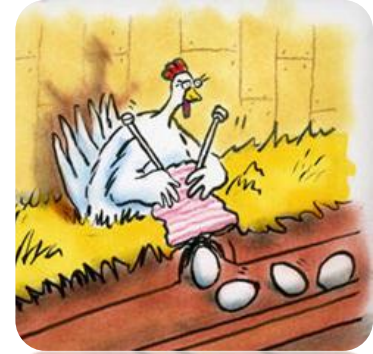
- Eat weeds
- Eat bugs
- Add manure



Farming w/ Chickens



Feeding Chickens



- Commercial feeds
 - General chicken feed
 - High protein laying mash
- Vegetables/fruit
- Grain
 - Cracked corn, popped corn
 - Grits, oat/oatmeal
 - Rice (cooked only)
 - Seeds – sunflower, pumpkin
- Grit - to grind food
 - Crushed oyster shell

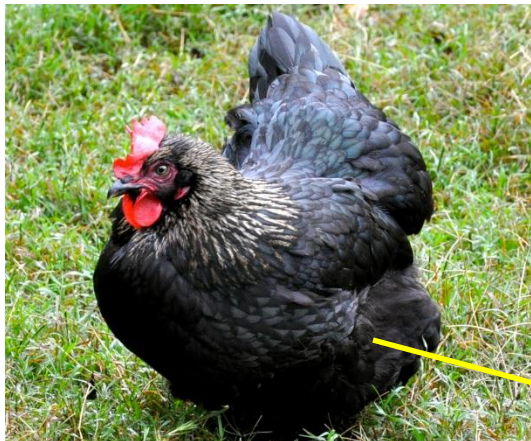
Food - Not for the Chickens

Raw green potato peels	Toxic substance called Solanine.
Anything real salty	Can cause salt poisoning in small bodies such as chickens.
Citrus	Too much citric acid &/or Vitamin C may cause feather plucking in some sensitive chickens
Dried or undercooked Beans	Raw, or dry beans, contain a poison called hemagglutin which is toxic to birds.
Avocado Skin and Pit	Skin and pit have low levels of toxicity.
Raw eggs	You don't want to introduce your chickens to the tastiness of eggs which may be waiting to be collected in the nests.
Candy, Chocolate, Sugar	Their teeth will rot... No, it's just bad for their systems, and chocolate can be poisonous to most pets.

“Breeds for Backyards”



“Breeds for Backyards”



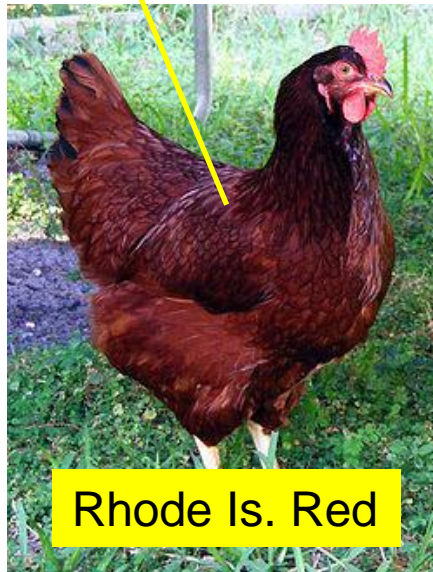
Black Copper Marans



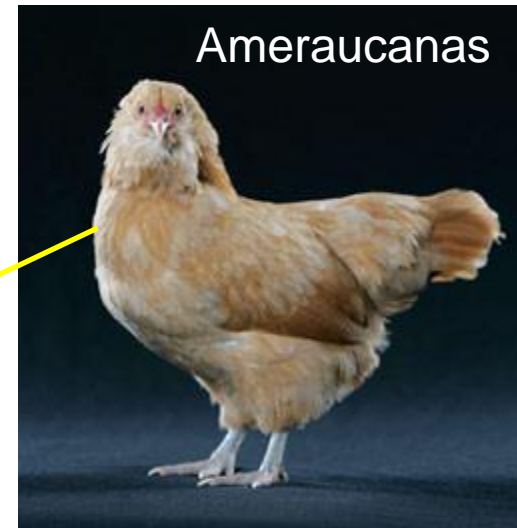
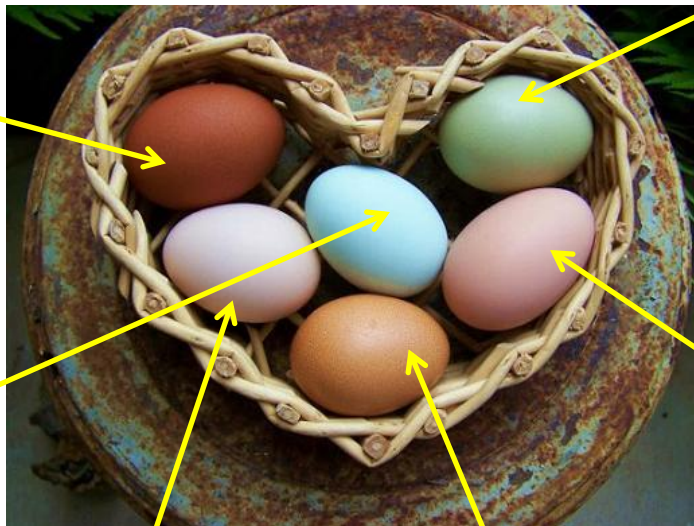
Blue Araucana



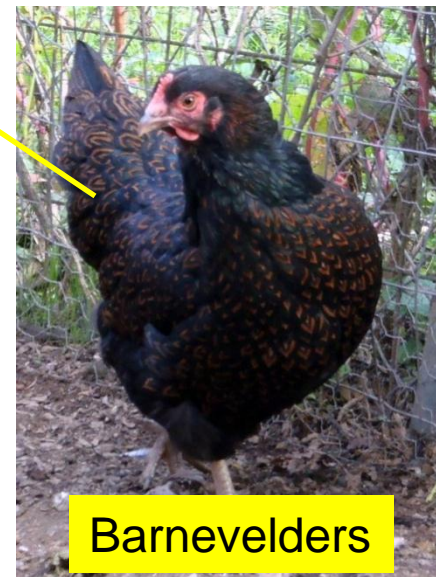
Aseel
or Asil



Rhode Is. Red



Ameraucanas



Barnevelders

“Breeds for Backyards”

- Rhode Island Reds
- New Hampshire Reds
- Golden Comets
- Delawares

These favorites all are known for quick maturity, and egg production begins at the ages of 18-24 weeks.



Exotics



Silkie

Appenzeller Hobenfitzer



Flying Cambodian



The Bantams



Getting Started – the egg comes first!

- Fertile eggs – if you have an incubator “setting” your own eggs is fun, cheap and educational
- Young chicks – purchased from a local feed stores, mail-order or on the web
- Pullets (young chickens that haven’t started laying
- Mature hens – purchased from farmers, 4H/FFA youth, or even from animal shelters

What Neighbors Think - Informal Survey

(7 “urban chicken” families interviewed in the
Batavia Community of Illinois)

Results Summary:

- Average number of chickens: 8
- Average number of years: 4
- Distance to the nearest neighbor: 20'-100'
- Average noise rating: 3
(stalking cat = 1, yapping dog = 10)
- Average distance that any smell was detected:
2'. The range was 0' – 7'.

Informal Survey Results

- In general, neighbors liked having chickens next door.
- No one complained of odor or smell.
- No one complained of sound yet most mentioned they could, at times, hear them.
- Two neighbors were strongly opposed. Their concerns were:
 - It is illegal in urban areas
 - They felt chickens should not be in an urban setting.
 - One woman said she did not like to see them and was concerned about possible health risks.
 - In both situations, the chickens were new to the neighborhood & the neighbors anticipated that problems *may* arise.
- **Not one neighbor of a chicken owner of one year or longer had a complaint.**

Sounds of Hens

- Hens are quieter than most dogs or large pet birds. Normally, noises are not audible past 25 feet.
- Batavia owners reported a sound level, pertaining to hens, of “3” with “0” being silent and “10” being a yappy dog.
- Only one neighbor mentioned the chicken clucking.
- Many municipalities limit the raising of poultry to hens in residential areas. Some municipalities have dealt with perceptible chicken noise that is loud enough to be heard at the property boundaries and is found to be disturbing to a reasonable person to be a possible Code violation.





Caring for your Girls

- Most urban chickens are treated as pets and cared for in a similar fashion.
- Chickens do not smell if the coop and surrounding areas are properly tended.
- We interviewed 7 chicken owners . The average distance where odor was detected was less than 2 feet from the coop.
- None of the neighbors interviewed reported noticing any smell at all.
- Municipalities may include in their ordinance a requirement that chicken coops and runs be cleaned regularly and refuse disposed of in a sanitary fashion.



Protecting your Girls



- Responsible chicken owners ensure that their chickens are kept in a secure chicken coop and run



- Local chicken owners reported to us that they have not had significant problems with predators.
- During rainy summer periods the coop may attract flies

Protecting your Girls

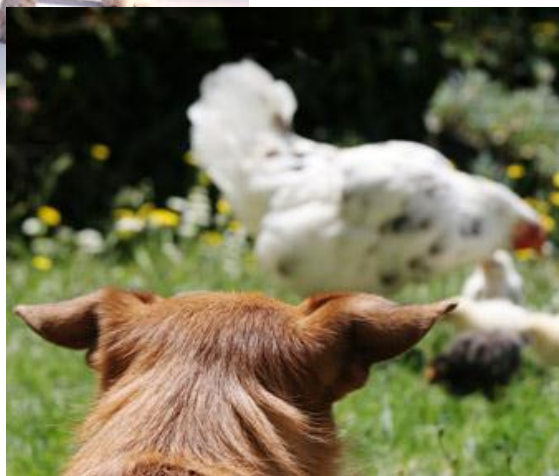


- Maintaining free range chickens may actually help to reduce the number of small rodents and insects



- Municipalities often require chickens to be kept in a sturdy, well designed enclosure and secured in a henhouse during non-daylight hours. During daylight hours, the chickens are often permitted to be outside of their pens in a fenced area if supervised

Predators of Hens



- Foxes
- Coyotes
- Hawks
- Bobcats
- Dogs

Predators of Eggs

- Snakes
- Opossums
- Raccoons
- Skunks
- Dogs
- Weasels



Diseases of Chickens

- Avian Pox – virus

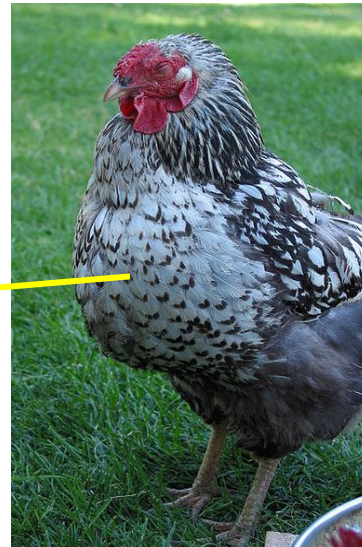
- No control
- Vaccination used

- Impacted Crop

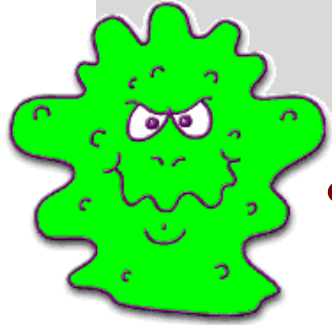
- Undigested food
- Operate!

- Respiratory

- Caused by viral, bacterial and parasite infections
- Proper diagnosis is needed prior to treatment

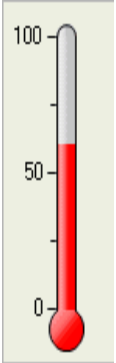


Protecting the Health of Your Family and Flock

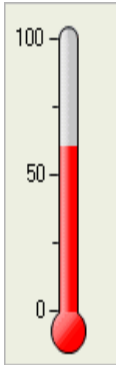
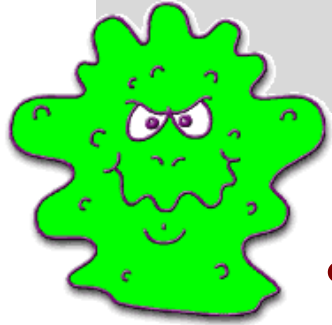


- **Salmonella**

- may be spread by pet chickens as well as pet birds, reptiles and
- supermarket foods such as eggs, peanut butter, tomatoes, peppers, etc.
- Remember the organic spinach from California.
- The Center of Disease Control recommends that all persons follow good hygiene and food handling practices at all times in order to prevent salmonella.



Protecting the Health of Your Family and Flock



- Avian flu
 - Avian flu is not in the United States.
 - There is no need at present to not raise chickens or remove a flock of chickens because of concerns regarding avian flu
- No municipality in the US has reported a public health outbreak relating to backyard chickens

Your Request to Municipality

Permission to have backyard laying hens.

- Up to 8 laying hens
- No roosters
- No slaughter
- Must be kept in contained coop and run
- Food must be in rodent proof containers
- Waste must be disposed of safely
- Coop at least 20' from nearest neighboring residential building



Nutritional Benefits

Pastured eggs from chickens fed garden scraps and allowed outside to peck produce healthier eggs:

- 1/3 less cholesterol
- 1/4 less saturated fat
- 2/3 more vitamin A
- two times more omega-3 fatty acids
- three times more vitamin E
- seven times more beta carotene



Questions ?



*Thank
You!*



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