

From an Animal Control Officer's Perspective

“I am the Animal Control Officer for Bridgeton and we are NOT banning them. We are just re-writing the ordinance. In the 14 years that I have been the ACO here, I have had less than THREE complaints; two of which involved roosters which are not allowed under our noise ordinance, but will be made clear when the new ordinance is re-written. I have very few problems from my chicken owners and virtually NO "chickens at large" calls.”

Chris Walters, Bridgeton Animal Control Officer

314-739-7557

aco@bridgetonmo.com

Comments from the residents of St. Ann

www.change.org/p/mayor-michael-g-corcoran-allow-the-residents-of-st-ann-mo-to-raise-chickens-on-their-property

Carrie Chapman ST ANN, MO

I believe that chickens are a great way to help control bugs and help fertilize your yard. Plus it will allow families to better feed their families with healthier more organic food.

Keely Scott SAINT ANN, MO

We should be able to raise chickens in St. Ann.

Victor Graffigna ST. ANN, MO

I think this a progressive idea whose time is now

Linda Edison SAINT ANN, MO

I'm signing because I believe our residence should have the choice as long as they don't impede on others' rights.

Joy Thorpe SAINT ANN, MO

I love chickens!

Linda Henning SAINT ANN, MO

I think Saint Ann residents would benefit from having their own free range eggs. I would love to see my grandkids have the fun of caring for chickens and collecting their eggs

Jamie Crawford ST. ANN, MO

I grew up with a couple of pet chickens, and I loved playing with them and collecting their eggs in the morning! I would really like to be allowed to have chickens in St. Ann, so that we can have fresh eggs & so my 4 kids can experience the fun of raising chickens as well :-).

Vanessa Rebottaro SAINT ANN, MO

The city ordinance is so outdated!

Annie Burkard SAINT ANN, MO

I know many people who raise chickens in IL and enjoy the benefits

Jay Qandah SAINT ANN, MO

I love chicken

John Selby SAINT ANN, MO

I want to raise Chickens...!!!

Catherine Burkard SAINT ANN, MO

Fresh eggs are a whole different food than store bought!

Kevin Mann SAINT ANN, MO

This is the right thing to do!

Michele Hulsey SAINT ANN, MO

I think people should be allowed to have chickens. Know people in Overland that were forced to get rid of their chickens and they were not harming anyone.

Scott Jamison SAINT ANN, MO

I want hens, and the ability to teach my son some valuable lessons.

Bethany Jones ST. ANN, MO

Raising hens will not cause disruption to neighbors. They can be registered like other pets and a limit can be set to each household. This should be limited to hens only to keep noise levels down. I don't think a clucking chicken would be any more bothersome than a barking dog.

Mamie Clark SAINT ANN, MO

I live in St. Ann & would like to raise hens

William Hammond SAINT ANN, MO

It's a great idea.

Ellen Forrest SAINT ANN, MO

There is nothing better than fresh eggs and with the cost of eggs in the store this could help cut food costs. Chickens would not be any noisier than a dog as long as there is a limit on the number a house can have.

Tom Price ST. ANN, MO

I want the free eggs. I will take the utmost care to not be a nuisance to my neighbors.

John Worley SAINT ANN, MO

I want to raise my own chickens have fresh eggs and be more self-sufficient.

Jodee Worley SAINT ANN, MO

I believe St. Ann residents should have chickens

Eric Dufrenne ST ANN, MO

I'd like to raise hens

Abigail Price SAINT ANN, MO

Families should be allowed to raise chickens for eggs.

Teresa Stark SAINT ANN, MO

I want to be more self-sufficient and my teenagers eat tons of eggs!

Sam Ellis SAINT ANN, MO

I would like to have a few chickens myself.

Tonya Lucz ST ANN, MO

Chickens are a good responsibility for kids & I see no harm in adults or kids raising chickens in St Ann, Mo.

Kylie Baty SAINT ANN, MO

I've always wanted to raise a couple chickens (not roosters)!! Please allow that to happen!

Daniel Jacobs SAINT ANN, MO

More backyard chickens means smaller factory farms, which are a major source of pollution. There aren't any good reasons to prohibit raising chickens.

Ashley Butrimavicius SAINT ANN, MO

I want to be able to have fresh healthy eggs for my family. I actually asked for this from the Saint Ann government a few years ago as well.

Heather Lankford ST. ANN, MO

I have wanted this for a long time in our city.

SHARON POLSTER SAINT ANN, MO

I believe that we should be able to be more sustainable by raising chickens and having gardens.

James Nichols ST. ANN, MO

I wish to have healthy eggs!

Paul Pollard SAINT ANN, MO

i agree with this as St. Ann needs change.

Leslie Zumwalt ST ANN, MO

Fresh eggs are great. We garden and would love fresh eggs too!

Amanda Wilson ST. ANN, MO

I live in St. Ann and want to be able to provide fresh eggs and a learning opportunity for my girls.

Sherry McGhee SAINT ANN, MO

It's a good idea.

Adam Tabers SAINT ANN, MO

I think all Americans should have the right to raise chickens.

Wendi Stock SAINT ANN, MO

I want to raise chickens for eggs that I know right where they came from and what is being fed to the chickens and how they are being treated.

Why Backyard Chickens in Richmond Heights?

There are three main reasons for Americans' growing interest in raising backyard chickens:

- A) Eating locally grown food has become popular because it is fresh, naturally ripened, exposed to fewer (or no) commercial chemicals, and has higher nutritional values. Chickens, one of the smaller protein producers, fit well into back yards.

- B) Rising energy and transportation costs cause concerns over increased food expenses. Raising food in the backyard can help ease those costs.

- C) Citizens have increased concern over food safety due to meat recalls and other animal industry issues in the news. Raising their own chickens for eggs offers families an alternative solution to those problems.

While some residents have questions and concerns about backyard chickens, one thing is certain ... **Richmond Heights residents can feel comfortable knowing that our neighboring cities would have already repealed their city code ordinances allowing chickens if those issues were causing major problems.** All of these neighboring cities have been allowing backyard chickens for years, some for decades.

Clayton (at least 17 years)

Ladue (at least 10 years)

Maplewood (since 2009)

Rock Hill (since 2009)

St Louis (20+ years)

University City (since 2009)

Webster Groves (at least 12 years)

Each of these cities report very few complaints over the years. (For a spreadsheet with this information, contact Linda Lieb at LHLieb@att.net or 314-646-8818.)

In addition, several families here in Richmond Heights have been raising chickens for many years and there have been no significant problems.

AND

1) Noise -- Roosters are not allowed in most cities, and they will not be allowed in Richmond Heights (per the current chicken permit). Roosters are not needed for hens to lay eggs; they are needed only if you want the eggs to hatch into chicks. Hens make very little noise. They are loudest when they lay an egg; the sound is the same decibel level as human conversation. Our barking dogs and children at play can make much more noise.

2) Waste/Smell -- Chickens do not smell; it is their waste that has potential to smell – which is true of waste from dogs, cats, rabbits or any other animal that is outside. Chickens produce a relatively small amount of waste. Ten chickens produce less waste in a day (.66 lbs) than a 40 pound dog (.75 lbs). Chicken waste is compostable for the garden, unlike dog and cat waste which are toxic. Chickens won't be walked around the neighborhood leaving waste in others' yards.

3) Property Values -- There is no evidence that having backyard chickens negatively affects a neighbor's property values. Looking at this locally ... if it did hurt values, would Clayton and Ladue still allow backyard chickens? They have been allowing them for decades. This reasoning also goes for Los Angeles, New York City, San Diego, and 500+ other cities around the country which allow them.

4) Disease -- According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC), Avian Flu is not an issue with small flocks. Salmonella is not unique to chicken. It can be spread to humans from waste produced by all kinds of common pets including dogs, cats, chickens, turtles, snakes, etc. (<http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/diseases/salmonellosis.htm>). Hand washing after handling animals or their waste is an important way to protect human health. The human/chicken

interaction is also addressed in a recent USDA report “Poultry 2010: Reference of the Health and Management of Chicken Flocks in Urban Settings in Four U.S. Cities, 2010.”

5) Rodents/Predators -- Predators and rodents are already in *all* neighborhoods because they go after trash, dog and cat food, bird seed, gardens, fruit trees, fish ponds, etc. Therefore these are not a chicken issue. And, chickens will actually eat mice, small rats and baby snakes, along with fleas, ticks, stink bugs, and other insects.

6) Chickens as compost-ers -- A chicken can consume about seven pounds of food scraps a month, or about 84 pounds a year. What they eat is diverted from landfills which can save cities money on trash collection.

7) Keeping chickens is not for everyone -- A general rule of thumb is that 5% to 10% of households might be interested in raising chickens.

8) Number of chickens -- Richmond Heights citizens were raising backyard chickens decades ago, we would like to return to that tradition. A practical limit for the number is 10 chickens per household since some families have ravenous teens to feed. (This is up from the limit of three chickens in the current permit.) We expect that most families will raise a lot fewer than 10 due to their smaller family size and appetite.

9) Chicken coop vs. Privacy fence – The current Richmond Heights chicken permit already includes provisions for chicken owners to have a pen around the coop that keeps chickens from roaming free and keeps predators out. However, the permit also requires the family to build a privacy fence around the backyard. None of our neighboring cities that allow chickens require a privacy fence (Clayton, Ladue, Maplewood, Rock Hill, St Louis, University City and Webster Groves). Our research shows that privacy fences are also not required in other cities across the U.S. These fences are not a practical prerequisite since building one would cause undue expense to families. Requiring a privacy fence could even hurt our property values as potential buyers, who want to raise chickens, learn that they must spend the money to build such a fence if they

buy within Richmond Heights. In addition, if no privacy fence is required for other structures such as dog houses, dog pens, etc., then it should not be required for a chicken coop.

10) Places to take roosters/hens when not wanted -- Roosters are not allowed in Richmond Heights per the current permit. There are businesses and organizations that will take chickens when a family does not want them. This includes Fenton Feed; Poultry Swap gatherings held in Illinois and Missouri; and Long Meadow Rescue Ranch (part of the Humane Society of Missouri). Families can also post information on online forums like St Louis Backyard Chicken MeetUp and Craigs List to find homes for their chickens.

11) Resources for prospective chicken owners -- There are lots of books, websites and online forums (local, national and international) available for prospective chicken owners to research supplies, chickens, coop options, etc. The Missouri Botanical Garden offers chicken workshops at least twice a year. St Louis Community College offers a class on backyard chickens, as does Gateway Greening. Our local community organization, Friends of Richmond Heights, will also be active in educating our residents about backyard chickens.

12) Grandfathering in current chicken owners – For many years, Richmond Heights residents were told by the city to go ahead and raise chickens while the city would "look the other way." Therefore, it would be fair to "grandfather in" those residents especially since those residents have not caused major problems for their neighbors. Those "grandfathered in" would still need to comply with rules about keeping their chickens from running free and keeping the area clean.

13) Backyard chickens; not factory farm chickens -- Please note that we are talking about backyard chickens -- NOT factory farm chickens. People want to raise their own eggs because of the horrendous conditions chickens are subjected to in many factory farms.

14) Costs of raising chickens -- Families can make a significant initial investment to raise chickens – buying or building a coop; setting up a pen around the coop to keep the chickens from roaming free and predators out; buying chickens; purchasing feed; etc. Therefore, the cost of

raising chickens can often be as much as or higher than what they would pay for the same amount of eggs in a store. However, many families find that the peace of mind that comes from raising their own food is worth it. Chickens are also a great source of education and entertainment for family members of all ages.

15) Good neighbors -- Being a good chicken owner includes being considerate of our neighbors by keeping the area neat and clean. (The same goes for outdoor dog and cat owners.)

16) Nuisance issues -- It is unfortunate that some chicken owners may not be good neighbors (like some dog and/or cat owners). Our current city ordinances address nuisance issues, should they arise from raising backyard chickens or other animals.

OTHER CITIES' EXPERIENCES

As more and more U.S. cities allow backyard chickens, they have experiences from which we can learn. By exploring how other cities have successfully set up chicken ordinances, we can create our own fair and practical guidelines for residents of Richmond Heights. A good and very readable report about other U.S. cities' chicken ordinances is:

"Residential Urban Chicken Keeping: An Examination of 25

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

The report findings provide useful suggestions on forming an urban chicken keeping ordinance. The city of St Louis was included in this study.

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For more information, contact:

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The 7 False Myths about Urban Chickens

by Patricia Foreman

The local foods movement is not only gaining ground, it is here to stay; and that includes family flocks of chickens. Chickens are the mascots of local foods because of the many talents and skill sets they innately bring to small scale food production. These skill sets include being pestociders (eating mosquitoes, ticks and fleas), herbociders (by eating and clearing unwanted vegetation), and organic fertilizer generators (that can help create and enhance garden soil). The trend for backyard flocks is so strong, that in the past 2 years, over 500 towns and cities have revised their laws to allow urban folks to keep their own chickens.

With the reemergence of backyard chickens across the country, there have been tremendous amounts of misconceptions, false beliefs and downright prejudice surrounding the keeping of micro-flocks of chickens. As the co-host of the Chicken Whisperer Backyard Poultry and Sustainable Lifestyles Talk Show, we have heard it all.

There are seven main concerns that routinely surface when the topic of city chicks is discussed. These are: 1. disease, 2. noise, 3. waste, odor and flies, 4. predators & rodents, 5. property values, 6. appearances, and 7. what will neighbors think? Let's look at the facts behind each of these concerns.

Myth 1. Chickens Carry Diseases Communicable to Humans. Fact: the truth is that small flocks have literally no risk of avian flu transmission to humans. The 2006 Grain Report states: “When it comes to bird flu, diverse small-scale poultry is the solution, not the problem.” Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states on their website: “There is no need at present to remove a (family) flock of chickens because of concerns regarding avian flu.”

Avian flu has been in the press as concern to commercial poultry production where birds are raised in monster-size flocks that are confined in over-crowded environments. This causes high stress and compromised immune systems in the birds. Any sign of disease, including a sneeze, could result in a huge number of birds getting sick; and this puts at risk a large amount of profit. As many experts have stated publicly, the solution to avian flu is in small-scale poultry.

Myth 2. Chickens are too Noisy. Fact: laying hens — at their loudest — have about the same decibel level as human conversation (60 to 70 decibels). Hens are so quiet that there have been cases of family flocks being kept for years without the next door neighbors knowing it.

To some, noise is a concern with roosters and their pre-dawn heralding of sunrises. Many urban codes ban roosters, or only allow them to be kept with special permits. The noise level of a rooster's crow is about the same as a barking dog; 90 decibels. But there are ways to keep roosters quiet throughout the night. Many folks regard crowing as a pleasant sound.

Myth 3. Waste and Odor. Fact: a forty pound dog generates more solid waste than ten chickens. To be more specific, one 40 pound dog generates about $\frac{3}{4}$ (.75 pounds) of poo every day. Ten chickens generate about two-thirds (.66 pounds) daily poop.

The advantage to chicken manure is that it can be used as valuable, high-nitrogen fertilizer. Unlike dog or cat poop, chicken poo can be combined with yard and leaf waste to create compost. Just as valuable, about 40% of the chicken manure is organic matter which is necessary for building fertile, healthy top soil.

Chicken manure is so valuable that there is a product called Cockadoodle Doo®. What Cockadoodle Doo is made of? You guessed it; dried chicken manure. A 20 pound bag sells for \$15.00. That's 76 cents a pound for chicken manure! Let's take the stakes even higher. Where does most commercial fertilizer come from? Think oil. Can chickens' services and products help us decrease our dependence on oil? Yes, in many ways and on many levels.

Myth 4. Chickens Attract Predators, Pests & Rodents. Fact: Predators and rodents are already living in urban areas. Wild bird feeders, pet food, gardens, fish ponds, bird baths, trash waiting to be collected all attract raccoons, foxes, rodents and flies. Modern micro-flock coops, such as chicken tractors, arks, and other pens are ways of keeping, and managing, family flocks that eliminate concerns about predators, rodents and other pests.

Indeed, chickens are part of the solution to pesky problems. Chickens are voracious carnivores and will seek and eat just about anything that moves including ticks (think Lyme disease), fleas, mosquitoes, grasshoppers, stink bugs, slugs, and even mice, baby rats and small snakes.

Myth 5. Property Values Will Decrease. Fact: there is not one single documented case that we know of about a next door family flock that has decreased the value of real estate. On the contrary, local foods and living green is so fashionable, that some Realtors and home sellers are offering a free chicken coop with every sale. An example of this at www.GreenWayNews.com.

Myth 6. Coops are Ugly. Fact: micro-flock coop designs can be totally charming, upscale and even whimsical. Some of them are architect designed and cost thousands of dollars. Common

design features include blending in with the local architectural style, matching the slope of the roof and complementing color schemes. For examples go to www.MyPetChicken.com.

Myth 7. What Will Neighbors Think? Fact: you can't control what anyone thinks, much less your neighbor. Once folks gain more experience with the advantages and charms of chickens, most prejudice and fear evaporates; especially when you share some of those fresh, heart-healthy, good-for-you eggs from your family flock.

There is one huge advantage to family flocks that is often overlooked during chicken debates. That is their role and value in solid waste management systems. Chickens, as clucking civic workers, are biomass recyclers and can divert tons of organic matter from the trash collection and landfills.

Chickens will eat just about all kitchen "waste". They love people food, even those "gone-by" leftovers that have seasoned in the refrigerator. Combine their manure with grass clippings, fallen leaves and garden waste, and you create compost. Composting with chicken helpers keeps tons of biomass out of municipal trash collection systems.

All this can save BIG TIME taxpayer dollars, which is especially valuable in these times of stressed municipal budgets.

There is precedence for employing family flocks as part of trash management. It is being done very successfully in some European towns. One example is the town of Deist in Flanders, Belgian. The city buys laying hens to give to residents who want them. The chickens' job is to divert food waste from the trash stream and not having to be pickup by workers, transported, and then disposed. The savings are significant.

You can learn more about employing family flocks as both civic and garden workers in *City Chicks: Keeping Micro-flocks of Chickens as Garden Helpers, Compost Creators, Biomass Recyclers and Local Food Suppliers*.

May the flock be with you!

...and to quoth the Chicken: "evermore".

-Patricia Foreman