

## [Comments \(74\)](#)

Would you want to live next to a chicken? Maybe you already do. We meet the people who say that raising urban chickens should be legal all over Canada.

For more information on chicken raising, check out the website of the family featured in this report, at <http://torontochickens.com>

### Comments

I live Conception Bay South, Newfoundland on a half acre property in a rural community. I am currently appealing a decision by my town council that refused my application to raise 20 broiler chickens on my property. I found that my council was not even willing to look at the issue. Our community is a rural community with a lot of farming/agriculture ties. They should be more receptive and open to the idea, especially in these times of bird flu and rising costs of food.

thank you

Posted by: darren neary | Mar 29, 09 09:45 AM

I think this is a very good idea to have a chicken or two in your backyard and even in apartments. you can use fresh eggs. the good part is that leftovers recycles by them (for example: rice, bread, vegetables and many other.

i have a good experience from my country in south Asia where our family had about 10 chickens and we could afford the food and even sale eggs and sometimes chickens as well. i wish it could be legal so me any my wife could have some chickens and fresh eggs in the mornings .

Posted by: tom | Mar 29, 09 10:31 AM

Evan mentioned that he and his family love chickens. they love them so much that if allowed in Toronto he would keep some. i really appreciate the notion from city folk about keeping livestock for pets. there is one thing they never mention in their considerations, WHAT TO DO WITH THEIR PETS WHEN THEY DO NOT DO WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO. Who is going to kill the pet????? Evan, are you going to kill your spent hen and boil it?? or do you leave that to the humane society???

All you need to do and look at the pets and where they land up when un-wanted. before people allowe the furthering of the backyard farm that question needs to be answered by those that advocate the backyard farm.

Posted by: ryan | Mar 29, 09 10:32 AM

I support the urban chicken movement. City dwellers are no less capable than their rural counterparts of caring for animals in a way that is humane and sanitary. Hens are quiet, compared to dogs, and are gentle and friendly. Their droppings pose no more a health hazard than do the droppings of the thousands of wild ducks and geese that poop all over my favorite park every summer - and you don't see people giving up their picnics out of fear of avian flu. Keep chicken coops clean and their food covered (as you should do, for ANY pet), wash your hands, and health or pest concerns should be alleviated.

Posted by: Laura | Mar 29, 09 10:36 AM

For the last 8 years, I have been growing vegetables in the backyard. I keep expanding the veggie patch and the composting corner. We're still eating homegrown vegetables stored last summer and fall. Adding chickens to our yard would be great, because as organic food becomes more industrialized, it is difficult to

find organic eggs in stores that come from an easily traceable local source. Chickens would also supply a welcome source of on-site manure.

As the financial crisis drags out and merges with the energy crisis, and as the effects of climate change interfere more frequently with growing and shipping industrial food, backyard livestock will start to make sense to more people.

Posted by: ls | Mar 29, 09 10:52 AM

Yes, I would love to have chickens.

Posted by: Kathleen Costain | Mar 29, 09 11:01 AM

Loved this report. The interview with the egg blocking the "perpetrator" was priceless. I LOL and couldn't stop...almost layed an egg!!

I am glad chicken's rights prevailed, but as always the responsibility rests with the human owners. Good work. (But where do they winter, cabin fever is bad enough, wouldn't want to be couped up with them)

Posted by: Roy Watson | Mar 29, 09 11:21 AM

Great Show..

Thank you for this topic, i think it is unfair for the government to make it illegal for chicken lovers to have chickens in their backyard, while they allow others to have dogs, cats, hamsters,snakes, pot bellied pigs , birds, etc.

You mentioned a group in Alberta that is fighting for the right to have chickens as pets. Please e-mail me the name.

I am interested in joining a group of chicken lovers that want to have the right to raise chickens. Feel free to give my e-mail to chicken lovers all over Canada. He have to write to our MPs and city counsellors to let them know how we feel.

Thanks for a fabulous program...The chicken on the head story was funny..

Posted by: Elaine B | Mar 29, 09 11:29 AM

I sat riveted to my TV as this segment aired, and called everone in the house over to watch as well. I am finally going to raise chickens this summer only AFTER I found an easy to maintain coop, permission from neighbours, feed source and someone willing to slaughter them. I will be raising them fresh from the egg which adds extra work as well as entertainment. I can't wait.

Posted by: LarGer | Mar 29, 09 11:41 AM

Hi,

I think urban chickens is an excellent idea. It reminds me of going back to the olden days where everyone had a farm and lived off of their land. We need to be seeing more of this. People have to wake up and realise that we can no longer ignore the fact that the earth has a decrease in resources and buying them from other countries is not environmentally friendly.

By allowing chickens in cities, people are taking a step in decreasing their ecological footprint. To be able to have eggs come from your own backyard, as well as other vegetables would be a very intelligent idea. It's one more step in the right direction for a cleaner and more responsible future.

Thanks,

-Ria from Peterborough, ON

Come on Dean Del Mastro and Stephen Harper, do something environmentally friendly. Allow chickens in the city of Peterborough.

Posted by: Ria Wood | Mar 29, 09 11:43 AM

Chicken shit stinks, especially on a hot humid day! There's nothing romantic about that! Yes, I have experienced chickens next door. Next was a couple turkeys... not cute, not clean! Yuk! Fortunately the people moved to a rural property, where they should have gone long ago. There are good reasons why those no farm animals by-laws were created!

Posted by: Molly K | Mar 29, 09 11:59 AM

I think having chicken's in our yard would be nice you know like having fresh egg's in the morning with a coffee and news paper. And I think that having chicken's and getting the egg's would be a good chore for the kids or even your'self.

Posted by: jasmine | Mar 29, 09 12:25 PM

I have been keeping chickens in Vancouver now for 18 months and its been a very positive, learning experience. I worried at first whether they would be warm enough in the winter, but they are little duvets on legs. Just fluff themselves up to keep warm and they huddle together. They can wreck the garden, established plants are ok, but tender new shoots too delicious to resist. They seem to know instinctively what to eat and what not.

We have wonderful fresh eggs, no problems with my neighbours, who are both amused and interested. Children love them and come and visit. We have racoons crossing the garden at night, and skunks have lived under the next door garage for years, but no problems there.

Like any bird or animal they need care, fresh water, food, shade, a clean coop and somewhere to take a dust bath to keep mites at bay. They need to be secure at night or will become very agitated.

Most people are not aware that you do not need a rooster (too noisy) to get fresh eggs all the time. The eggs will be fine, just not fertile. Am vastly relieved keeping chickens will be legalised and recommend keeping a few as long as you can be responsible for their well being. Once you've tasted their eggs, store bought are not nearly as good.

Posted by: Mary O'Donovan | Mar 29, 09 12:54 PM

I live in Vancouver and have been working to support the change in bylaws here so we can keep chickens (legally). We are almost there! I can't wait to add these creates to our ever expanding urban gardens.

Posted by: Justin Tilson | Mar 29, 09 01:06 PM

It is great to see these supportive comments.

In answer to Roy's question regarding the winter, the hens do just fine. They add fat and feathers and continue to lay eggs all winter. They have the option to free range in the snow, but prefer to hang out in the coop most of the time.

Toronto Chicken  
[www.torontochickens.com](http://www.torontochickens.com)

Posted by: Toronto Chicken | Mar 29, 09 01:37 PM

Like other animal, chicken should be registered (licensed?, chipped), insured (to pay for damage to neighbours/city) and minimum requirements (cage size, fence type, removal of waste, smell, etc.) then it should be OK. A minimum backyard size might be another idea, but pigeon racers keep pigeons on the top of buildings in NY.

Posted by: J. Rogers | Mar 29, 09 01:38 PM

I have 5 wonderful outlaw chickens in my back yard. I'd like to correct a misconception from the story. Our oldest hen is 7-8 years old and still produces 1 to 2 eggs a week even in winter. Commercial flocks get rid of the hens at age 2 because they don't lay as frequently as younger hens, not because they suddenly stop producing any eggs.

Claiming that there is a risk of avian flu is simply fear mongering. The true risk of avian flu is in commercial operations and wild birds, neither of which have contact with backyard chickens.

Posted by: Supertwist | Mar 29, 09 01:39 PM

I loved this report! I would enjoy being able to raise chickens in cities and towns. I enjoy gardening and am happy that community gardens have been increasing. Adding small hen houses would provide a natural insect repellent (as the hens would eat the bugs) as well as providing compost for fertilizer and fresh, nutritious eggs. If I am able to locate a garden plot, I plan to Plant a Row, Grow a Row, to help the homeless and poor with some healthy food. Being able to include eggs would be appreciated by them as well.

I would find it helpful if I was able to contact some of the organizations you mentioned that are advocating back yard hens. I expected to find links on your website.

Posted by: Ann Hazlett | Mar 29, 09 01:41 PM

There is a funny guide to thinking about Urban Chickens, first parts here:

<http://www.thenervousbreakdown.com/ccameron/2009/03/a-guide-to-thinking-about-urban-chickens-introduction/>

Posted by: dave | Mar 29, 09 02:24 PM

I agree that anything would help in today's economy. BUT, Did anyone think that with the diverse mix of ethnic groups living in Toronto, or for that matter , any large city, that if a couple of chickens are ok, then why not a few pigs, a goat and maybe a dairy cow. You know it would be abused! The big city is no place for "farm " animals.You want to have farm animals , then move to the country!

Posted by: Bob Vrooman | Mar 29, 09 02:45 PM

My wife came up with the idea to get lay hens 11 years ago. I thought this sounded crazy at the time.

We have a large unfenced lot in the center of a residential area in the Greater Victoria district. We started with 6 hens and they layed so many eggs that we gave the surplus to friends and family. We are down to 3 older hens that collectively lay 2 eggs a day. From time to time we purchase commercial eggs but they aren't nearly the same quality.

We have never had anyone complain about our hens. They make less more noise than our neighbours dogs. They stay in our yard even though our yard is unfenced (a little conditioning was needed on our part). We garden and compost so feces does not accumulate and cause odor. Our hens have never harmed anyone nor have they damaged neighbouring property (but a couple of our neighbours dogs have come onto our property and killed our hens). They are surprisingly low maintenance, and take care of themselves. We

provide a hen house, grains and protein pellets. They also eat insects, worms, grass, and wild seeds.

I take it for granted now, but most folks see our hens as a novelty and get a kick out of them.

Our dependence on commercial and imported foods is huge. There is nothing more local than our own backyard! If there is anyway we can reduce our impact on the environment we should do it.

Posted by: James | Mar 29, 09 03:03 PM

We live in Surrey BC, and moved here from Portland Oregon. Chickens are legal in Portland, are very popular, and have not been problematic. The city even helps put on an event called "Tour de Coops" which is a tour of the more unique chicken coops and gardens in the city.

Chickens are extremely easy to care for properly, we have already begun teaching local chicken keeping classes, and we now have an educational website: [www.chickensinvancouver.com](http://www.chickensinvancouver.com) . We also have a list of local Veterinarians who are ready to see chickens, although chickens tend to be very healthy and rarely if ever need medical attention.

We have also been in contact with BC Government Veterinarians who have told us that the government does not see small backyard flocks as a threat to the spread of Avian Influenza.

Chickens are friendly, beautiful, and make great pets. Hens will lay eggs for about half of their lifetime, and they contribute fertilizer, pest reduction, and aeration services for your gardens.

Chickens should definitely be legal in all cities, with simple and reasonable bylaws to outline their proper care.

Posted by: Heather | Mar 29, 09 03:17 PM

This is nothing new. Chickens have been kept in cities for as long as cities have existed. They are extremely quiet, don't smell a bit and pose a microscopic Avian Flu risk compared to, say, the Canada geese that run rampant across city parks. Keeping a handful of chickens in your yard is a great way to connect with your food, teach young children where food comes from, and enjoy the company of animals all at once.

Posted by: N.S. | Mar 29, 09 05:12 PM

I'm thrilled that the issue of urban livestock has appeared on CBC Sunday (and right after the week NOW Magazine featured urban farming, too). Very opportune. I wholly support animal and agricultural farming in cities as an exercise of independence for individuals and communities, but more importantly as a way to become a little less dependent on transported foods as we enter the post-oil age and fuel scarcity. As Peak Oil nears, we should become more self-sufficient and produce as much of our food at home as possible. This issue should extend to raising rabbits and goats, as well.

Posted by: Claudia Davila | Mar 29, 09 08:28 PM

Thanks for doing a show on this. I hope Toronto passes a by-law soon to make this legal. Regardless, my family is inspired and looking forward to having our own chickens and fresh eggs! Thanks to the person who clarified that older hens also lay.

Posted by: Julia | Mar 29, 09 09:53 PM

I believe urban chickens to be a good idea. Its important for Canadians to become more sustainable in their lifestyles and raising chickens in backyards is a good way to do that.

Posted by: Melanie | Mar 29, 09 10:04 PM

DECIDING NOT TO FEED OUR FAMILIES PESTICIDE FOODS, SHOULD NOT BE ILLEGAL. EVERY CANADIAN WHO WISHES TO RAISE CHICKENS, SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO SO. PEOPLE WHO ARE AGAINST IT, CAN CONTINUE EATING PROCESS FOODS, BUT SHOULD KEEP THEIR NOSE OFF THOSE WHO CHOSE OTHERWISE.

Posted by: LUCY COSTA | Mar 29, 09 10:04 PM

I live in Laval, Quebec and used to have 3 hens that is...until I made the mistake of trusting my neighbour and telling him about them. That same week the city sent an inspector and I had to remove them (given to a friend with a farm). Obviously, I was upset but I had a lot less work on my hands. Anyone who wants to raise and maintain chickens hygienically has to be prepared for a lot of work every single day. I now have a dog and he's a lot less work...but alas no more fresh eggs.

Posted by: Joe | Mar 29, 09 10:08 PM

Hello, Chickens are great to watch, listen to, they provide tasty eggs, and fertilizer for the veggie garden. Remember those? That was when I lived in Sechelt. Now it is time to call the city of St. Albert to see if they will come on board.

Posted by: Kelly | Mar 29, 09 10:12 PM

Chickens should be just as legal in any Canadian city as cats and dogs. As a matter of fact, dogs can be far more of a nuisance than chickens could ever be. Chickens make wonderful pets and they provide their owners with healthy food, such as organic eggs. In my opinion, people who are anti-chickens in the city have a chicken-phobia and they should get over it.

Posted by: Abe Fehr | Mar 29, 09 10:12 PM

chickens would be awesome

Posted by: Adrian | Mar 29, 09 10:22 PM

by the way chickens love to eat mice ,no joke

Posted by: Adrian | Mar 29, 09 10:23 PM

Interesting concept. Maybe regulations for urban chicken raising limiting the number to three at any one time along with other rules, much like any other pet.

Posted by: Ian McCumber | Mar 29, 09 10:29 PM

I agree with being able to keep chickens on your property, why not wares the harm and look at the amount of insects and ants, June bugs, mosquitos, not to mention the amount of weeds and dandelion seeds etc, I could go on forever, that they consume and keep under control. I guess there are people out there that would rather pollute with insecticide and weed killer, then have a natural alternative. I have 5 chickens and have had five for quite awhile and plan on not getting rid of them no matter what, my yard is not fenced so I built a run for them and keep them locked up my neighbour ask me to let them roam free because one of them watched them digging his lawn up and not creating damage but eating about 10 grubs in every couple of feet he was amazed and is thinking of getting a couple himself. Sure saves on spraying and reseeding against grubs. Four houses over the neighbour buys one or two bags of feed yearly and I give him eggs weekly. We live where we are on well water and pesticides, and weed killers go directly to our water supply. Chickens take care of your

lawn are enjoyable quiet, and fairly clean animals who do become social over time. And of course the fresh eggs are enjoyable as well. Anyone want an omlette? Lets ask what is the difference for someone that has pigeons in larger numbers that make noise do smell or the guy that has a dog run full of urine and fecese that he cleans twice a year with his garden hose. What smells more. Come on Toronto we can't walk in our parks thanks to our over population of Canada geese and the mess they leave behind its a total smelly mess kids have nowhere to go, soccer fields are a total health hazzard and we are wasting time and tax payers money to worry about 3 chickens, we pay our taxes we are asked to conserve, reuse, recycle, don't use pesticides or weed killers, lets all live with Canada geese and pollen and allergies. Read my next post as a continuation of this post;

Posted by: John Stevic | Mar 29, 09 10:36 PM

Lets waste decent tax dollars on this issue and not worry about something that is causing pollution in our waters, lands, and creating health problems to all those kids on soccer fields who are rolling around in our ignorance, whats next dog, cat, fish, reptiles, maybe we should just ban Toronto as uninhabital, filthy, over sprayed for everything and over spent on our tax dollars, lets live in glass houses and breath out of oxygen tanks. I think you get my point and if you don't take a walk on our lovely center island or board walk, go play some soccer and remember this post. Then tell me who is wrong and what we should be able to do. John

Posted by: John Stevic | Mar 29, 09 10:37 PM

I have been waiting for this for so many years, if they are kept in very sanetized place. and is not more dangerous than doges, and snakes.

Posted by: sl | Mar 29, 09 10:48 PM

Allowing chicken would be great for the economy because then we'll need more butchers!

Posted by: Kev | Mar 29, 09 10:57 PM

They sure should be able to keep their chickens. With today's toxic food we buy at the store, no wonder some people became more aware of the poisons we are forced to ingest by the big money food processors. I am fed up with all the hormones, antibiotics and other chemicals we get from dairy, fish, meats fruit and vegetables.

Posted by: odnase | Mar 29, 09 10:58 PM

Yes, Chickens should be legal in all cities in Canada, they are like any pet, thanks

Posted by: Tom | Mar 29, 09 11:00 PM

This entire country was founded on the backs of hard working farmers who lived and raised families with all kinds of farm animals in the "back yard" including chickens. Me and my wife have grown up with "backyard chickens" and never had a problem. For all those retarded city people that have an issue with any backyard animal I have two words for them..... CRY MORE!!! keep the eggs comming!!!

Posted by: James | Mar 29, 09 11:03 PM

Having chickens is an OK idea but they do stink. Perhaps there should be a limit on a number of birds anyone can keep based on the amount of GROUND one has, not balconies, to be fair to the birds and neighbors.

As well, bird owners should be required to install rat restistant fencing, an NO ROOSTERS!

Posted by: Jim | Mar 29, 09 11:03 PM

I think having chickens is a great idea. Better and quieter than dogs. And not as smelly. They stay in their own yards and do not do their business in other people yards as neighbor dogs do. I say, less cats and dogs and more chickens

Posted by: Juliette Mostoway | Mar 29, 09 11:04 PM

I completely agree with keeping Urban Chickens.  
There are so many stupid bylaws in our Canadian cities.  
Lets get rid of some of those and together live better and healthier lives.  
We all need more freedom in today's world.  
I see much more positive reasons to keep urban chickens then negative.  
Most of the negative reasons are based on nonsense and ignorance.

Posted by: Randy L | Mar 29, 09 11:05 PM

Licensed, registered and insured...are you nuts? They're chickens...I don't want another gun registry, thanks.  
yes, absolutely they should be allowed in urban settings.  
As for chicken sh\*\* stinking, yes, if you have 1000 chickens, but 4-5...not at all.  
Anyone with any property should be allowed to keep them.

Posted by: Al | Mar 29, 09 11:06 PM

It's funny, that municipalities break their back to get on the Earth Hour bandwagon, yet simple solutions like this (properly regulated) would help everyone so much more.

Oh, and I have no problem serving the chickens up for a healthy meal after they stop producing eggs. It's really not that different from catching a fish after all. Unlike other pets, I don't think I would develop a lifelong relationship with a chicken.:-))

Posted by: Les | Mar 29, 09 11:08 PM

Give me a break! If you want to have chickens, then live on an acreage!!! I know this first hand, they are extremely smelly with strong amonia, not even considering what it would be like on a scorching hot day. People think they are such cute things that produce fresh eggs. What's next? They slaughter them in the back yard when they want Stewing hens for soup???

I can almost bet on the fact that the people that want chickens in their back yard have never lived on a farm and have always lived in the city!

Posted by: Childhood Chiken Farmer | Mar 29, 09 11:09 PM

I also love the idea - nothing like a fresh egg you know was laid only hours ago - better yet, duck eggs! Some of you have brought up intelegent points such as where the city draws the line on livestock, what happens after they stop laying, etc.

As for the city, they would have to specify it is ONLY for chickens, or only poultry under a certain weight (I would want to see them not allow Turkeys and Geese, as they can be quite agressive in protecting their territory!). There are many more valid reasons for not having backyard sheep, goats, or cows within city limits!

As for what to do with "Spent" chickens, that would have to be a decision that owner would have to make.

Why not have a limit of how many chickens are allowed per household? Depending on your normal egg consumption rate of course - 1 chicken per person will normally suffice. My friend's poultry ( 5 hens, 5 ducks, 1 turkey) laid enough eggs over the summer to keep 2 households in a steady supply of eggs, with many to give away to friends and neighbours! But I digress - for the limit, the owner would have to choose whether the Chicken is a valued member of the family and should be kept as a pet, and if not the other option should be to take the chicken to someone who can humanely slaughter and clean the chicken for use as food, which could either be used for the family, or donated to one of the many food banks in our country. I would honestly have no problem with eating an animal I raised and cared for (i've done it before). It should also be made clear that this will be the fate of any poultry that is abandoned at a shelter.

Posted by: Renee | Mar 29, 09 11:11 PM

I had chicken in the city of Hamilton Ontario. I started with one white chicken that was abandoned when the farm it was raised on was demolished for a housing project. My neighbour thought that was a good idea because I was getting an egg a day. He had several children and he got 4 chicken so he didn't have to buy eggs. Eventually I purchased his property and inherited his 4 chickens. The by-law office arrived at my home and said I had to get rid of the chickens because they were farm animal. I told him when he had every person who owned a dog or cat which are also farm animals, I would get rid of my chickens. I eventually sent the four chickens I inherited to a farm in the country but kept the white chicken. She quit laying eggs after a while for one year but then started producing again.. guess she went into henapoz. Anyway this hen lived for eleven years. Those who say chicken waste stinks are correct but the rain disipates the waste from ranging chickens so there is no odour.

Posted by: clark | Mar 29, 09 11:13 PM

I'm glad you did this show on backyard chickens since I've been reading about them on the web. I would love to have a couple or so of chickens in my backyard when I retire. I'm not going to move to the country when I'm old, I'll need a subway and everything close. I'll need fresh eggs for my health that haven't sat on a supermarket shelf for a week. Or cost big dollars from an organic store. I'll enjoy the hobby as keeping chickens will be a good pastime along with growing the healthy food I probably won't be able to afford in a few years due to the price rises in supermarkets already with rising fuel costs etc.

Posted by: malcolm cross | Mar 29, 09 11:14 PM

To see some people up in arms about banning chickens from back yards to me is ridiculous. It's not illegal to own 19 cats in the city, so what's wrong with a few cluckers? I understand the far-fetched argument that chickens pose a risk with respect to 'avian flu', but that's a relatively new phenomenon. If in the near future there were to be a break out of 'feline flu', would we ban cats from the city? I'm pretty sure that would result in riots.

Unlike cats, chickens give more than they take. Why can't people be allowed to take an active role in the foods they choose to consume...especially in light of recent outbreaks of listeriosis and salmonella from 'legalized' food bought in stores. I'm sure you face a greater risk of falling ill to a product bought from your local grocery store than from a neighbor with a few hens.

Also, chickens are excellent at helping keep the bug population down...think about it!

Posted by: John | Mar 29, 09 11:24 PM

Health benefits, organic food, lower food-miles, knowledge of food source, etc., are all in favour of domestic food-growing; but the bigger issue is getting Government out of my face.

The item was closed with the question "Should we be allowed to keep chickens". In this over-governed country, the question should be "why should we NOT be allowed to keep chickens?"

Posted by: Steve Young | Mar 30, 09 12:18 AM

As with any other pet in any other household. If they like it, care for it appropriately, then it is their business. Personally I put out bird feeders and enjoy the birds within my back yard. Others have indoor birds as pets. So why not allow someone to enjoy their chickens and fresh eggs.

Dogs are among the most lovable of our furry friends, and can also be the noisiest. They are constantly leaving their "mark" within our environment. Yet dogs are welcomed in our society - with small by-laws for the owners to abide by. Most of us seem to be happy with that...

Posted by: Natalie Parker | Mar 30, 09 12:24 AM

I would love to keep hens in my backyard. A great source of food and enjoyment. Bees would be great too - nothing beats raw honey!

Posted by: Nick Tyler | Mar 30, 09 12:31 AM

Great to see this segment on urban chickens! I'd humbly suggest there's another resource for those interested in getting their own chickens or working with their local government to get the laws changed to allow urban chickens: check out the blog <http://urbanchickens.net>

Posted by: Thomas | Mar 30, 09 01:02 AM

URBAN CHICKENS - are you kidding me? with everyone losing their jobs, and you are worrying about chickens? My husband just lost his job after 20 years and believe me that last thing i'm going to worry about is chickens. but what do i know, maybe chickens are more important than family welfare. maybe they can go out and get us some jobs. why don't the news report on the poor ordinary working man trying to feed his family, trying to get a job.

TRY REPORTING WORTHY NEWS INSTEAD OF FRIVOLOUS IDIOTIC STORIES ABOUT CHICKENS.

Posted by: Micheline | Mar 30, 09 01:03 AM

Growing / raising certain food of your own should be encouraged in the city. In times where costs are rising, and environmental damage is occurring, we need to rethink the path on which we are headed and bring back into our lives traditional ways of accomplishing certain things. Urban chicken you have my vote!

Posted by: zerbert | Mar 30, 09 01:06 AM

I would like our municipality to change its' bylaws and allow urban backyard chickens also. I live in Langford, BC.

Posted by: cbistric | Mar 30, 09 01:06 AM

I would absolutely be horror stricken to have hens strutting around in my neighbor's yard. Along with pigs, goats, cows, etc. these creatures belong on a farm. They smell, leave droppings and are noisy - not necessary in our cities. I think this idea is the very worst - we are not living in a third world country!

Posted by: Cherry Williams | Mar 30, 09 01:20 AM

Give me chickens for neighbors and please ban the noisy dogs! Seriously, not only are chickens quiet neighbors they provide lovely fresh eggs daily. I hope the laws will be changed to accommodate domestic chickens and ducks in our cities. Since I can't catch the wild rabbits maybe domestic rabbits should be allowed too!

Posted by: lyn | Mar 30, 09 01:30 AM

I have been talking to my husband about getting a few chickens for some time now but they are not allowed in Saskatoon. I am very much pro chicken but I would hope that - at least to start with, until potential problems could be dealt with - the number of chickens per home should be limited to a manageable number like the three in the news story. This would allow for fresh eggs for the owners as well as a learning curve for all involved and hopefully limit some of the concerns of the anti-chicken people. The idea that allowing a few chickens would lead to yards full of pigs, goats and cattle is almost (but not quite) funny. The "no chickens allowed" bylaw is not abused so why would the "three chickens allowed" bylaw be abused to the extent that it would lead to a yard full of animals? The statement was made in the news report that "where you have chickens, you will have rats." What is the connection? I grew up on a farm and we always had chickens. It was my job to feed the chickens and gather the eggs and I NEVER saw a rat and my Dad never used rat poison. My husband and I are currently living at the edge of the city in a new area and two years ago we had 28 mice in our garage in a period of 3 months. We don't have any pets. A responsible pet owner keeps the yard tidy, the food covered and whatever else needs to be done to be a good neighbor. If you can not winter the birds I am sure it wouldn't be hard to find a farmer who would take the birds and you can get some new ones the next spring. I really hope that chickens will be allowed in our neighborhood real soon.

Posted by: Deb | Mar 30, 09 01:44 AM

I grew up in England and our household was grateful that we were able to have chickens. We had nice brown eggs every day, we were a family of eight and we were still able to share with seniors on our street. I think some of the people on Council who do not agree have certainly missed out. Chickens are not noisy. (unless you own a cockerel and those should be on farms) with our economic situation this is one way of helping families eat healthy.

Posted by: Robbie | Mar 30, 09 02:10 AM

If you want organic eggs buy them from the farms locally, do NOT expect to have chickens in a city environment. Chicken are farm animals and nothing less or more. They belong on a farm. I raised chickens on a hobby farm outside Nanaimo, I know of what I speak. Chicken poop is EXTREMELY pungent and it takes very little of it to make disgusting odors. And if these people who are "environmentally aware" want these chickens for food, are they going to raise them when they are past their egg laying prime and slaughter them for food too? I bet not!!! If you say you are raising animals for food then you go all the way!! To say a chicken is a pet, is utter stupidity. Of course a chicken will run to you if you supply it food, anyone heard of pavlov's dog?

Most people have enough trouble with barking dogs never mind crowing roosters !!!!!!!!!!!

I say allow up to 20 chickens on any lot over an acre and leave it at that!

Posted by: Dawn | Mar 30, 09 02:14 AM

I've been complaining and or commenting in editorial subjects about the urban chicken prohibition for years, Nice to see people finally going against it, When living in a rural environment back in the 70's they installed a chicken prohibition, sign of the times, demeaning to the status quo to maintain them, As far what to do with them when they are finished laying, Probably makes for equally delicious chicken dinners,

Get the children involved in the process somehow. No sense sheltering them from the process and say a prayer for their sacrifice.

Starve the barren chicken for a few days, tie the chicken up side down, cut the the artery at the back of its throat and then drive the knife through the cleft at the top of its mouth into its brain. No chopping off its head!

The manual plucking process involves dunking them in hot water to loosen up the roots of the feathers. Was using a machine with rotating rubber fingers to pluck them so didn't have to do it by hand. If you have lots of chickens maybe a good investment.

Gut, pluck, cook and serve.

Posted by: Rob Van | Mar 30, 09 02:16 AM

i am in favor of any movement that allows or encourages people to be responsible for themselves in any way. i am planing on growing a garden this summer, i finally have a yard to do it in :) salad not sod!

Posted by: cameron mcsorley | Mar 30, 09 02:17 AM

CLUCK: Calgary Liberated Urban Chicken Klub  
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=68948494632>

Posted by: Paul | Mar 30, 09 02:50 AM

Why stop with chickens? Haha.

Posted by: Christy | Mar 30, 09 05:23 AM

Recently I learned from my 90 year old mother in law that they raised chickens in their backyard during the Depression era. Perhaps we could learn from our elders and practice sound, organic "100 mile," diet practices. M.J.More

Posted by: mary jane more | Mar 30, 09 06:06 AM

For far too long people have been steered toward put their faith in other people suggesting they 'know better' or are in a better position to look after our spiritual needs and our common need for food and shelter in the form of global governments. The evidence time and time again has proven that we continue to be exploited and manipulated by all those various establishments that have throughout history identified their role as a service to the populace.

The proof the words are garbage continue to be evident by the actions of religious leaders of every kind and government of every kind throughout the world .

People should never have had to pay house tax on their home.

You can have no morgage on your house and yet if you lose your job and cant keep giving the government money for the basic human rights we should all expect including being a ble to flush the tiolet, they can come in and take your house.

This results in not even owing our own homes.

People own very little nowadays- the banks own most of us- they own our homes and vehicles and the clothes and shoes we wear.

Our government tells us we dont have the right to own a few chickens or a cow but we are expected to just GIVE them the right to spend billions and billions of dollars of every day citizens to bale out the same big business owners that are laying off workers and giving themselves big year end bonuses.

Insanity has become the standard in North America.

Not being able to own a chicken or two is just the tip of the turd pile.

Posted by: Michael | Mar 30, 09 06:18 AM

Not a novel idea. As a child many people in my town kept chickens, goats, rabbits, pigeons. Why the fuss? Why the laws? Who legislates where we obtain our food. Such laws benefit the grocer no doubt but sanitation, noise and confinement concerns(?) should be no more of a problem than the geese, robins, sparrows etc. that roam freely or the cats that destroy millions of them every year.

So come on legislators; we don't live in a sterile world and no need to worry back yards will become stock yards or Al Capps dogpatch.

Posted by: R. Ayre | Mar 30, 09 07:45 AM

Not in my neighbourhood. As it is, we have to make several calls to by-law officers about the by-law infractions our neighbours break already. What a waste of by-law officers time (we've had to call the police too). Chickens are meant to be farmed, city limits is no farm environment. Besides, too many eggs can bring about high cholesterol problems. C'mon folks, smarten up!

Posted by: pka | Mar 30, 09 11:04 AM

I am thrilled to witness the outpouring of support for urban chickens in Vancouver. It is a great chance for the skeptically-minded to see just how vastly the positive aspects of keeping a few chickens can outweigh the imagined negatives.

I plan to get a coop up and running as soon as the bylaw is written, and you know what? In the process I have made great friends with my neighbours who are keen on collaborating to raise chickens together.

The fear and hesitation around chickens may be as simple as a fear of responsibility. Some of us are very, very afraid of the prospect of becoming independent of the industrial food system. And very, very afraid of saying hello to our neighbours, or relying on each other.

Well, thank heavens that these fears will become realized, because keeping chickens in the city is just one more kick in the pants that will put us face to face with our fears of community and self-sufficiency, and I can't wait!

Posted by: Julia Hilton | Mar 30, 09 11:12 AM

Thanks for raising the profile of back yard chickens, and back ward councillors in this country. People should worry less about town councils. We were born free. Then what happened?

I've enjoyed chickens in my back yard for years, turning my compost into farm fresh eggs every morning. While the politicians waste time and money on how to deal with compost, green box or pink box or blue box or what ever, we the liberated live happily ever ignoring them, and doing the obvious.

Years ago I bought this weedy property with the intention to build my home here. The town wouldn't let me keep the weeds, I had to spray them. Today I wouldn't be allowed to spray the weeds. Town won't let me. Today town won't let me keep chickens (but I know better so I keep them anyway) I predict that some day soon we won't only be allowed to have chickens, we must have chickens and some politician will take credit for his or her bright idea. We'll just keep leading the people we elect to lead us.

Here are a few corrections to the errors in your report.

Chickens lay eggs almost their entire life once they get started at 16 weeks. They live 5 or 6 years at the most, not 15.

Chickens don't attract rats, sloppy people do and garbage dumpsters at restaurants do.

Chickens are fun to have around, are very curious, great with other pets particularly dogs and great with kids, as opposed to neighbours. I would trade all my neighbours for as few as one chicken.

Enjoy each day! We do!

Posted by: Jack | Mar 30, 09 11:50 AM

I have chickens for about 6 yrs now. We are not suppose to, however, no body complains. My children loves them and has learned so much in caring for them. We have two older hens that we had from the start are still laying eggs. They don't stink and are not destructive. Its time that we should be able to legally have them. As for Rats, people who feed wild bird has feeders that attract them. We keep their food in the house and lock it up at night. There is so many positive reasons to have chickens. Education is key and there is so many resources now a days to help people learn about keeping chickens. Here is a great link for those interested in learning about keeping chickens, great place to connect with others for questions and answers and lots of resources. <http://www.backyardchickens.com>

Posted by: Emily | Mar 30, 09 01:29 PM

I listened with much interest to your piece about "urban farming" yesterday morning (March 29th). The way municipalities are planning things nowadays, even those living in rural areas aren't "allowed" to have chickens. I live in a hamlet that is designated rural residential and I discovered I can't legally have farm animals in my backyard. I actually have had guinea fowl for over 12 years now (they roam all around the Village of Welcome) and I had no idea that I was going against a bylaw. In fact, I live adjacent to my brother's farm - he now cash crops but had a dairy herd up until 2000 and I learned recently (he didn't even know!) that if he hadn't had any farm animals on site for two consecutive years, he would lose his ability to have any animals at all (in fact an old bylaw still exists within the urban Port Hope limits allowing chickens in back yards!). So, unknowingly because my guinea house has been in his barnyard for around 8 years he has remained "legal". I have the guineas for their eggs and compatibility to my garden, but I've also discovered that I would miss comparing their personalities to politicians and the queen if I couldn't have them. I have "Harper", "Ignatieff", "May" (for Elizabeth), "Obama" who is different from all the other birds (as he's white) and "Hilary" . Then, there's Tony "blair" (the only one left from the beginning of the Iraq war days as "Geo. W." was done in by a racoon !) and "queen" Elizabeth as she's a royal purple variety (all the others, except Obama are pearled birds).

Things are changing as the rural areas become more urbanized .....and definitely, not for the good!

check out my column in a local newspaper (Port Hope/Cobourg and area) about the subject of urban farming - if interested. Here is the link..... <http://www.northumberlandtoday.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=1443650>

Posted by: Kathryn McHolm | Mar 30, 09 02:30 PM

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