

Backyard chickens? Toronto thinking it over

Last Updated: Tuesday, June 16, 2009 | 2:45 PM ET [Comments 68](#) [Recommend 32](#)

[CBC News](#)



Allowing residents to raise chickens on their property would provide families with fresh eggs, say supporters of the idea. (Canadian Press)

New York and Chicago already have it — now Toronto is considering joining those cities and allowing residents to raise chickens in their backyards.

Toronto's park and environment committee is considering a pilot project that would permit people to keep the poultry on their property.

Ian Aley, with the non-profit group FoodShare, says it has plans to rent half an acre at Downsview Park in north Toronto where it will grow vegetables, keep bees and raise chickens.

"Chickens lay eggs all the time, so if you're feeding a family of six you would have a source of eggs that were fresh, healthy and right on your doorstep," he said.

Aley said most cities don't allow growing chickens for their meat — just for eggs.

Any pilot would also have to have strict rules about where and how the chickens are kept, especially given the number of raccoons always on the prowl in Toronto.

Coun. Paula Fletcher, who chairs the parks and environment committee, says local food production and urban farming are priorities. But, she says, there are all kinds of issues surrounding chickens.

"We are looking at criteria, looking at where we could do a pilot, so there will be no egg production in local backyards, just yet," said Fletcher.

FoodShare is offering to conduct the pilot project for the city — but only with chickens, no roosters. Neighbours would be allowed to keep sleeping without the annoying, early morning, cock-a-doodle-doo.

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[Jackonell](#) wrote: Posted 2009/06/17

at 1:24 PM ETThe article clearly says no roosters, so that's not a problem.

Toronto bureaucracy should have a leg up on cities in Mexico and Asia in controlling the manner in which chickens are raised. People in those cities have always kept animals without regulation, Toronto would be starting fresh and in a different culture.

Simply living close to animals does not mean disease; there is no canine flu or feline flu in humans (is there?)

Neighbours call the SPCA on cat houses, I'm sure the same would happen with out of control chicken pens.

A good portion of the best farmland gets developed into housing so it seems reasonable to bring the farm back into town.

It makes sense to be cautious about this sort of thing, but no need to shout it down before actually exploring the idea. The talk is of a pilot project after all...

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[SendThemToJail](#) wrote: Posted 2009/06/17

at 12:35 PM ET Oh yeah now this idiot Mayor wants to bring Bird Flue to Toronto. Why don't you concentrate on cleaning the sidewalks, keeping the parks and pools open and usable and stop waisting money on all this (bird) s***.

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[riteofcenter](#) wrote: Posted 2009/06/17

at 12:24 PM ET You want to raise chickens BUY A FARM !!

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[Rob366366](#) wrote: Posted 2009/06/17

at 11:09 AM ET I think a big deal here is that a City-slicker has never really tasted a REAL EGG.

Those chemical force-fed balls that come from chickens strapped into cages with no chance for exercise or normal diets are nasty. Chickens are Omnivores and eat all kinds of things to get proper nutrition for themselves and for their eggs.

Imagine how healthy you would be if you ate nothing but chemical loaded grain and were strapped to a lazyboy.

Vegetarians know that even with a vegetarian diet you still need a balanced diet. All they get to eat are grain and chemicals. That's not healthy for them or for you.

I hope it does go through. maybe for once people will know what real food tastes like. If nothing else, they'll get out the grubs in your lawn!