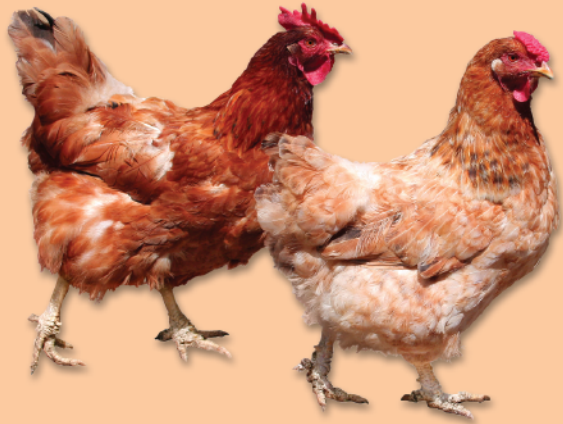


# *Suggestions for* **ORDINANCES**



## *Allowing* **Backyard POULTRY**

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**K**eeping small flocks of chickens in cities is dramatically increasing. Unfortunately, there is a large gap between these new urban audiences and their knowledge of poultry husbandry. Numerous websites, books and Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) publications can provide materials to educate individuals on proper poultry management. Issues of animal welfare, neighbor annoyance concerns and environmental impacts must be considered before legislation is passed allowing these small poultry flocks to exist. The following suggestions will provide guidance on creating an environment, urban or rural, where it is reasonable for any individual to produce his or her own food or enjoy a new hobby.

- Limit the raising of chickens to single or two-family residences only and the number of chickens to 4 to 6 per site.
- No roosters (male adult chickens) may be kept.
- Poultry should not be allowed in a residence, porch or attached garage. Chickens must be confined in a house or coop in the backyard of the residence with a minimum of 1 square foot per bird (144 square

inches). An outside, enclosed run may or may not be allowed. The run should be no larger than 8 feet by 8 feet, and it should be attached to the coop. The facilities should be built to keep dogs, cats and wildlife from gaining entry.

- The poultry facility should be 5 to 10 feet from any property line and at least 10 to 20 feet from a neighboring residence.
- The owner should dispose of waste materials (feed, manure and litter) in an environmentally responsible manner. The materials can be composted or bagged and disposed of in the trash. Piling waste materials on the property is not acceptable.
- Both the process of weeding out inferior animals known as culling and mortality (death) are common occurrences when raising live animals. Poultry owners will need to deal with unwanted males, old hens or sick birds. An animal care program involving euthanasia of birds should be made available. Owners should bag and dispose of dead birds in the trash.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ORDINANCES ALLOWING BACKYARD POULTRY



- The coop should be designed to discourage rodents and wild birds from entering. Owners should store all feed supplies in rodent-proof containers. They should take steps to avoid the buildup of flies and maggots by keeping litter and feed dry and promptly disposing of dead birds or waste eggs.
- The owner should control rodents by eliminating nearby hiding places (trash, weeds, and debris), trapping and baiting rats and mice on a regular basis.
- The owner must feed and water the chickens on a daily basis.
- Sales of eggs should not be allowed. Keeping hens should be for personal use and not for running a business.
- The ordinance may simply allow the keeping of laying hens if the conditions are met. A permit may be required depending on the municipality. If a permit is required, any fees should be nominal.
- The impact and spread of a disease can be reduced if households with poultry can be identified. A permit requirement will generate a list of all households with poultry allowing for a quicker response to a disease outbreak.
- For the protection of Michigan's commercial poultry industry, no such poultry holdings should be allowed within four miles of a commercial poultry operation.
- Contact Michigan Department of Agriculture to investigate the proximity to the commercial poultry industry.
- To review ordinances that have been passed in Michigan related to keeping poultry in urban and suburban settings, contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture at 517-335-5713.

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