

Urban Chickens

Community Package



Growing Forward 2 
A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

Alberta  Canada
Government

URBAN CHICKENS

In recent years, there has been increased interest from individuals and communities on keeping backyard chickens. Several communities across Alberta currently allow residents to raise backyard chickens or are considering amending their bylaws to allow it. Residents may be interested in keeping chickens for various reasons including for fresh eggs, as an educational opportunity for children, compost, pest control, or the desire to know more about how their food is produced.

Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) is a multi-species livestock welfare organization and aims to ensure continuous improvement in animal care and welfare. In 2017, AFAC created an Urban Chicken/Small Flock Care Manual and resources for current and potential chicken owners. This suite of learning materials includes a comprehensive, user-friendly manual that focuses on urban chicken care, training video resources, and workshops that include hands-on training. These resources are available to interested residents and communities by contacting us at info@afac.ab.ca or 403-652-5111. You can find more information on our website: www.afac.ab.ca.



CONSIDERATIONS

If a community is considering permitting residents to keep urban chickens, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Is there a local veterinarian who can provide support and treat poultry?
- Are there trained municipal representatives who can process applications and licenses, deal with concerns that may arise, conduct coop inspections, etc.?
- Does the area have a high number of wildlife and predators?
- Does the municipality have a designated area where poultry owners can dispose of chicken manure/bedding material and any mortalities?
- Is there a poultry professional nearby who can provide an educational workshop to residents on keeping urban chickens, and provide ongoing expertise and support? (*Highly recommended*)



RESPONSIBILITIES

Backyard chickens can be successful in an urban municipality, provided chicken owners fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Provide basic needs such as food, water, shelter, light, and ventilation
- Keep the coop in sanitary condition, with regular disposal of manure and bedding material, and in good repair
- Ensure the coop provides adequate protection from vermin, wild animals, and predators
- Provide the chickens with opportunities to perform essential behaviors such as dust-bathing, roosting, and scratching
- Follow basic biosecurity procedures to keep the chickens and themselves safe
- Be knowledgeable about proper food safety practices
- Know how to act accordingly if one of their chickens gets sick or if there is a disease outbreak
- Be cognizant of the time and financial commitment required to care for the chickens
- Have a plan for what to do with the chickens once they quit laying; it is not uncommon for backyard chickens to live 8-10 years
- Have an emergency contact who can provide care for the chickens in case of an emergency.



SAMPLE BYLAWS

The following are examples of bylaws from communities across Alberta that permit residents to raise backyard chickens:

- Any person wanting to keep urban chickens must obtain a Premises Identification (PID) under the Alberta Animal Health Act
- An application must be submitted and approved
- An approved license is required to be renewed annually
- In order to be approved for a license, each urban chicken keeper must take urban chicken training or equivalent, designed to provide adequate information regarding the successful keeping of chickens in an urban area.
- Only hens will be allowed to be kept; no person shall keep a rooster
- Maximum number of hens is 3 to 8 per household.
- Hens must be a minimum of 16 weeks of age
- Provide each Hen with at least 0.37m² of interior floor area, and at least 0.92m² of outdoor enclosure, within the coop
- Provide at least one nest box per every 4 birds
- Locate the coop in a place that is mindful and considerate of neighbours
- Have a town representative inspect the coop prior to approval
- No hen shall be slaughtered on the property
- Residents cannot sell eggs, manure, meat or other hen related products
- Follow procedures recommended by the Federal and Provincial Governments to reduce potential disease outbreak.

AFAC ALERT LINE

The ALERT Line is an anonymous help line. If residents or town representatives see backyard chickens that are in distress or neglected, or have a question about backyard chicken care, they can call 1-800-506-2273. The ALERT Line will send out an individual knowledgeable in the keeping of chickens who can offer solutions to improve care and provide knowledgeable counsel.