

LEGISLATIVE #

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future of farming. "With hydroponics, you can precisely control the nutrients that the plant receives as well as the conditions that the plant grows in. And because of the precision you're able to provide optimal conditions for the plant, which results in ultimately a better crop. It's harvested every three days and sold to local restaurants. Seth Hendrickson of Going' Coastal says the flavor texture is much more vibrant. "Not only is it fresh, it's local. Not local 300 miles, not local 600 miles, but local 15 minutes down the road. That means a lot for the product, means a lot for the environment. Imagine the carbon footprint bring lettuce all the way from California," said Seth Hendricks of Going' Coastal. So in one trailer you're getting more than an acre and a half worth of farming. That means you're doing a lot more with a lot less - you're using less water, virtually no pesticides and of course, a lot less land.

"The UN expects that we'll have 15 percent less arable land in the next 25 years. So we really need to be able to divorce growing food from land," said Liotta. "When we hire people, we're able to train them in a couple of hours on how to actually run one of these. The actual work that humans do is very easy to understand and very easy to do." A simple idea that takes a little thinking outside the box. "I think overall, it's not only a better product for the consumer, but a better product for the planet," said Liotta. Liotta says anyone can have a hydroponics farm. Online you're able to buy home hydroponics kits. For more information visit podponics.com

Fort Lauderdale asked to allow chickens at home

September 13, 2010|By Scott Wyman, Sun Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE — Big dogs are OK. So are turtles, rabbits and tropical fish. But don't try to keep a chicken coop in your backyard.

Renee Rung has launched a campaign to persuade Fort Lauderdale City Hall to change that. She wants the right to have a couple of hens so her family can eat fresh eggs for breakfast just like a farmer in Iowa.

She's not alone. An urban farming movement has sprung up across the country in recent years. City dwellers have been questioning the logic behind ordinances that ban them from keeping poultry on their property.

A Hollywood family has been fighting the city in court to keep pet chickens, arguing they are part of their cultural heritage. A Delray Beach man pitched the case in favor of chickens in May to officials and neighborhood groups in that city.

Rung now has a vegetable garden where she and her three sons grow green beans, tomatoes, herbs and cucumbers. They pick mangos, blueberries and bananas from trees in their yard. She believes pet chickens would be the natural next step in an effort to go green.

"This is Fort Lauderdale, and no one wants to become a full-out farmer," she said. "That's not what we're talking about. I like the idea of the chickens laying fresh eggs. It would be an extension of our vegetable garden. It would give our family a better connection to the food that we're consuming and putting in our bodies."

Chickens fall in a fine line between pets and livestock in the world of law and order. Cities created ordinances against livestock to avoid having a quasi-farm in the middle of neighborhoods, but a number of major metropolitan communities consider chickens to be pets, including New York City, Chicago and San Francisco.

The movement is so widespread that it has inspired magazines and web sites that offer advice on raising chickens in an urban environment.

Fort Lauderdale's law dates back decades.

The ordinance makes it unlawful for a person to keep any animal in a residential area unless they are "animals capable of being kept as pets within a home" and are species that "generally are kept as pets and live in or about the habitation of humans." The city's list takes into account "dogs, cats, birds (excluding chickens, roosters and geese), rabbits, turtles and tropical fish."

City zoning administrators said the ordinance was crafted to limit nuisances such as sanitation problems and animal noise. They get five to six complaints a year about chickens running loose.

After hearing Rung's pitch last week, city commissioners promised to research the issue further. "I'm not ruling anything out, but I'm not making any promises either," Mayor Jack Seiler said.

Genia Ellis, a longtime neighborhood activist and former president of the city's Council of Civic Associations, takes a similar stance. She said the city must be mindful of a more ecologically-oriented populace and consider such ideas as pet chickens and community gardens.

"As the community changes and people's interests change, city ordinances need to keep pace," Ellis said.

Rung is not some Midwest farmer's daughter, but grew up in Broward County. She said her family's interest was piqued during a trip to Long Island where neighbors of some relatives had pet chickens.

Like others around the country championing urban chickens, Rung believes the eggs will be fresher and healthier to eat than their store-bought counterparts. She balks at arguments about noise and sanitation.

She said a couple of hens would be no more noisy nor create any more manure than a big dog. She had to educate city commissioners about the birds-and-the-bees when it comes to poultry. She noted a rooster is not necessary for a hen to lay an egg and thus city officials shouldn't be concerned about the loud crowing of a rooster.

"I would think most people would prefer to hear a few clucking hens than a jackhammer," Rung said.

One of the state's leading poultry experts – Gary Butcher at the University of Florida – said he is constantly fielding inquiries about whether cities should allow chickens as pets. He urges communities to keep an open mind to the idea.

Butcher, a professor of veterinary medicine, said pet chicken advocates are wrong in their belief that the eggs are more healthy, but he said cities should not blow concern about noise and waste out of proportion. He suggests allowing chickens with some restrictions – such as no roosters and a limit on the number of hens based on the size of the property.

"We are so urbanized now and there is a desire by some people to get back to nature," Butcher said. "No one can give a really good, sound reason not to allow chickens if they are handled properly. You might as well not allow dogs and cats."

Urban farm animals get city OK

Michelle Mcniel Wenatchee World

Despite some concerns that rural activities don't belong in urban areas, Wenatchee City Council members agreed Thursday to allow chickens and other small farm animals in all city neighborhoods.

The new rules will be reviewed in one year to determine whether they are working or if there are any problems.

Susan Ballinger, who helped initiate the rule change with her letter to city officials nearly a year ago, told council members she plans to start building her chicken coop this weekend.

Under the new rules, residents will be able to keep up to four small farm animals on a half-acre or less. City lots a half acre or larger can have 12 small farm animals per acre and one large farm animal per 10,000 square feet of maintained pasture.

No peacocks, pigs or roosters will be allowed.

While the rule change covers all farm animals, the focus has primarily been on chickens. Most of the letters and calls to the city have been from people who either want to raise chickens or don't want their neighbors to.

City Council members Karen Rutherford and Tony Veeder were outspoken in their thoughts on the issue – Rutherford supporting the change and Veeder strongly against it.

However, Veeder voted in favor of the new rules on Thursday after asking for the one-year review.

"I grew up with chickens. I understand the importance of raising children with farm animals," he said. But, he added, "I'm trying to maintain the image of urban living (in Wenatchee), and not the image of chickens running down our roads."

Councilman Jim Bailey said he also has reservations about relaxing the city's farm animal rules.

"My greater concern is the expectation of being able to do rural things in an urban setting," he said.

Urban Livestock / Animal Husbandry Information from the Department of Planning and Development's CAM 244 For more info, contact the Seattle City Clerk's Office at (206)684-5175, or by email at clerk@seattle.gov.

Animal Husbandry

Animal Husbandry is a use where animals are reared or kept in order to sell the animals or their products, such as meat, fur or eggs, but does not include pet daycare centers or animal shelters and kennels.

Residential Zones: Not permitted, except through specific regulations related to the keeping of small animals and domestic fowl.

Commercial Zones: In NC1, 2, 3, C1 zones, permitted as an accessory use. Can be a primary use in C2 zone.

Industrial Zones: Not permitted.

Keeping of Animals

In addition to animal husbandry regulations, the City has specific regulations for the keeping of small animals, which is not considered animal husbandry. The keeping of small animals, farm animals, domestic fowl, and bees is permitted outright in all zones as an accessory use to any principal use permitted outright or to a permitted conditional use subject to the standards of Section 23.42.052. Small animals, domestic fowl, farm animals and bees have specific regulations as follows:

Small Animals

Up to three (3) small animals are allowed (cats, dogs, rabbits, goats, etc.), accessory to each dwelling unit or business establishment. On lots of 20,000 sf. ft. or more, up to four (4) small animals are allowed. One additional small animal is permitted for each 5,000 sf. ft. of lot area in excess of 20,000 sf. ft.

" In no case is more than one (1) miniature potbelly pig allowed. Miniature potbelly pigs may be no greater than 22 inches in height at the shoulder or more than 150 pounds.

- “ Goats may be kept if they are Miniature, Dwarf or Pygmy. Goats must be dehorned, and male goats must be neutered.

Domestic Fowl

Up to eight (8) domestic fowl may be kept on any lot in addition to the small animals allowed. On lots greater than 10,000 sf. ft. that include either a community garden or an urban farm, one (1) additional fowl is permitted for every 1,000 sf. ft. of lot area over 10,000 sf. ft. in

community garden or urban farm use.

- “ Roosters are not permitted.
- “ Structures housing domestic fowl must be located at least 10 feet away from any residential structure on an adjacent lot.

Farm Animals

Farm Animals: Cows, horses, sheep and other similar farm animals are permitted only on lots at least 20,000 sf. ft. On these lots, one farm animal for every 10,000 sf. ft. of lot area is permitted. Farm animals and structures housing them must be 50 feet from any other lot in a residential zone.

- “ In Single-Family zones, commercially operating horse farms in existence before July 1, 2000 on lots greater than 10 acres are considered a permitted use

Bees

Bees are allowed outright when registered with the State Department of Agriculture. No more than four (4) hives, each with only one (1) swarm, are allowed on lots less than 10,000 sf. ft. Hives may not be located within 25 feet of any lot line, except when hives are 8 feet or more above or below the grade immediately adjacent to the lot on which they are located.

Albuquerque:

Source: Albuquerque's Comprehensive City Zoning Code

Residential Zone (R-1): The raising of agricultural animals for noncommercial purposes is permitted in zone R-1. Rabbits and similar animals, poultry, and pigeons are allowed – as are cows, horses, goats, and sheep, provided the number of animals does not exceed one cow or horse for each 10,000 square feet of open lot area, or one sheep or goat for each 4,000 square feet of open lot area (or the equivalent combination). The lot in question must be at least 21,780

square feet. Animals must be controlled so that they cannot graze on any other premises.
(Animals under four months old are not counted.)

Raising Fowl and Small Animals in Urban Areas

Virginia Cooperative Extension (May 2009)

Phillip J. Clauer, Poultry Extension Specialist, Animal and Poultry Sciences

Raising hobby fowl like pigeons, cage birds, ornamental fowl and small laying flocks is an increasingly popular pastime for urban residents. While at the same time, city limits and subdivisions seem to advance further into the rural countryside.

Most of us can appreciate the pleasures and benefits of raising birds and small animals. It is a relaxing activity that offers an insight into other forms of life and basic life processes. People enjoy the companionship of their birds and the social activities which come from club activities and competitions.

The urban animal hobbyist must try not to infringe on his neighbor who may be sensitive to noise, odor, flies, rodents and unsightliness due to inadequately designed and maintained facilities. People differ in their tolerance to the same conditions. Just because you let your chickens run free for years doesn't mean the new neighbor will enjoy them in their yard or garden.

The following are some guidelines for owners of birds and small animals in urban areas. By following the guidelines you can avoid a good deal of conflict with others in your community and avoid the development of ordinances banning the raising of certain animals in your community.

1. Health and Safety: The important factors to consider are the location of animal enclosures in relation to residences, storage of feed to avoid rodent problems, fly control, sanitation, and disposal of animal waste in a safe manner. The health and well being of the animals should also be taken into account. The animals must be given adequate space, proper nutrition, sufficient attention and a place to seclude themselves. The enclosure should also provide protection from the environment and predators.

Provide a minimum of 1 sq. foot per pound of body weight for permanent indoor confinement areas.

Provide 3 cubic feet of air (total enclosed space) per pound of body weight for permanent indoor confinement quarters.

DO NOT place outdoor enclosures within 150 feet of the property line of another property owner.

DO NOT place any permanent detached structures within 100 feet of the residence of another property owner.

Never allow animals or birds to roam free.

Store feed in rodent proof containers.

Clean litter and animal waste on a regular basis and dispose of promptly and properly.

2. Appearance and Property Values: The appearance of all types of equipment and housing, particularly external runs that are visible to the neighbor, should not detract from the overall appearance of the surroundings. Exteriors of sheds and other structures should be kept painted and well-maintained. Weeds and trash should be removed from around the facilities. Proper landscaping can provide screening and also help muffle sounds. Old, unkept structures surrounded by weeds and piles of trash are not acceptable. Provide a sight fence or shrub screening to a minimum height of 4 feet around any outdoor enclosure.

3. Noise and Odors: All animals and birds have characteristic noises and odors. Owners are obliged to house animals so the odors are not offensive and noises are no louder than the normal speaking voice of an adult human. Owners can do this by insulating quarters, providing adequate ventilation and using good sanitation practices.

Finally, diplomacy and cooperation can help avoid conflicts. If you are raising animals or birds in an urban environment, follow some of these suggestions and you can prevent yourself and others raising animals in your community from unnecessary conflict and ordinances.

(Some materials in this article were taken from "Raising Small Animals and Fowl in Urban Areas" by John Skinner, University of Wisconsin, Extension Division.)

Reviewed by Audrey McElroy, associate professor, Animal and Poultry Sciences
