



Raising Fowl and Small Animals in Urban Areas

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Raising birds like pigeons, ornamental fowl and small laying flocks becomes increasingly popular in urban areas. Bird owners in urban areas need to keep in mind their neighbors, not causing nuisance due to odor, pests, noise, or unwanted visits from their birds in neighbor's yard. We have provided some guidelines for owners of birds and small animals in urban areas that can help avoid a good deal of conflict within the 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 welfare 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 without consent, if you cannot contain them to your own property.
- 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 and odors. 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 Leonie Jacobs, Assistant Professor, Animal and Poultry Sciences