

Backyard Flock Production

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Rise of the Backyard Chickens



Definition

No accepted definition

Less than 3,000 hens

Less than 20,000 broilers
processed/year

Less than 50 birds, no sales of
products



Why Backyard Chickens?

Local food movement

- 95%

Breeders

- 6%

Pets

- 57%



Elkhoraibi et al. (2015) Poultry Science

Issues

Noise

Odor

Manure/compost

Pests/Predators

Abandonment

Vet Access

Disease

Euthanasia/ Slaughter



Disease and Public Health

From two surveys:

- 59% of flock owners said no health problems in last year
- 56% of flock owners reported health problems in last 6 months

Over 5 years (1300 chickens), 60% of mortality due to infectious agents

- Marek's disease (viral)
- E.Coli (bacterial)

Why the discrepancy?

Disease and Public Health

Biosecurity poorly utilized in these populations

-program of actions designed to reduce transmission of disease agents

Majority of flock owners wash hands, most never use designated clothing (or only for cleaning) or footbaths/shoe-covers

50% of flocks exposed to wild birds

Food Safety and Public Health

Salmonella spp. Generally most prevalent zoonotic organism

January to September 2016:

CDC report found 8 outbreaks

895 people infected from 48 states

209 hospitalized (28% 5 or younger), 3 deaths

January to September 2017:

10 outbreaks

1120 people in 48 states

249 people hospitalized, 1 death

Salmonella

Found on 92% of layer flocks (10.5% SE) in CA

Only 2.4% (1 bird with SE) in CA backyard flocks (discrepancy?)

Only 5 deaths attributed to *Salmonella* from 1990-2014, so why worry?



Lead

Hens consume lead (esp. urban)

Deposit lead in eggs

Hens can show clinical signs of lead toxicity

However, hens do not typically shows signs, even with clinical levels



Housing Considerations

Nesting

Perching

Foraging

Dust-bathing

Cleaning

Disposal of Manure



Feed and Water

Starter diet (higher protein ~ 20%)

Clean fresh water at all times

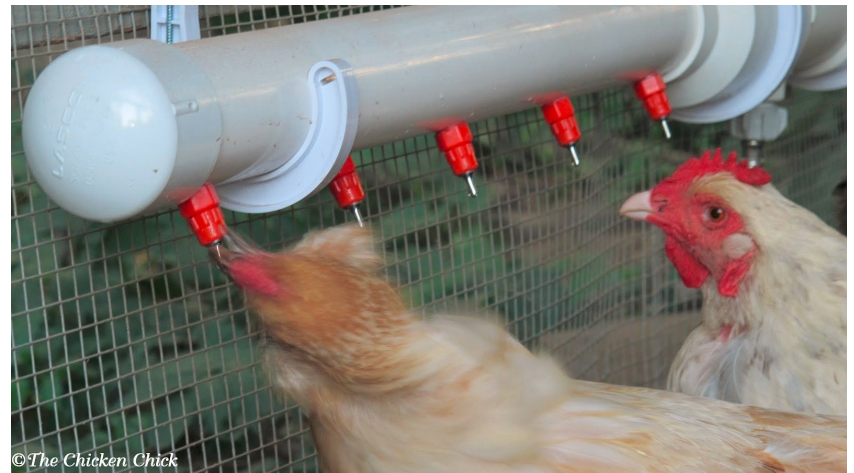
Mash vs Crumbles

Marbles in waterers (for young chicks)

Feeders

- Bell or Trough
- Metal vs Plastic

Be Consistent with Type



Predation Protection

Everything likes to eat chicken

Important to ID predator

Cover run area, provide cover
for range

Close in birds at night

Inspect coop for damage



Predator Protection - Fencing

Use of fence aprons



General Rule – 1 foot down,
3 feet out

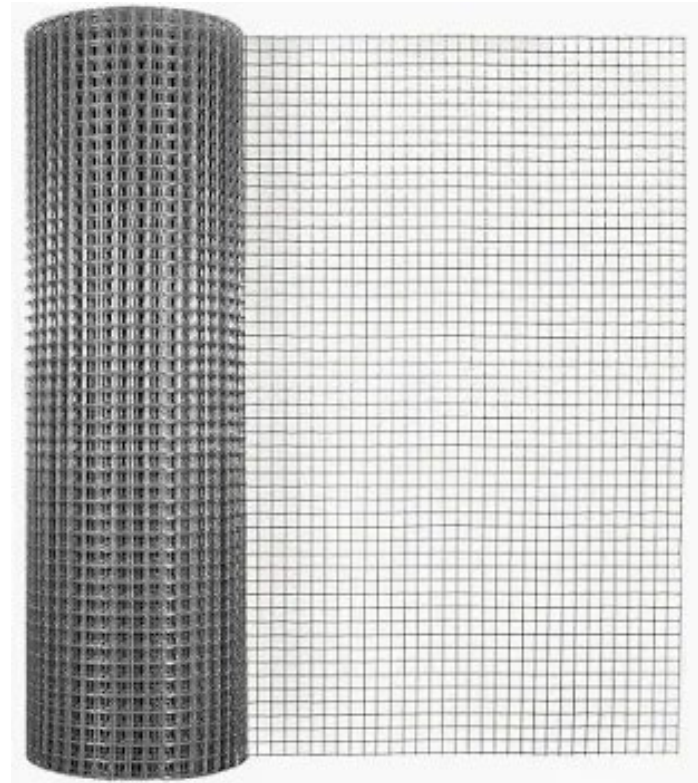
Can bury apron

Cover with large gravel for
extra protection

Predator Protection - Fencing



X



✓

Slaughter for sale

No restrictions if for self consumption

Most Backyard Flocks exempt from federal regulations

Check CDFA for state-wide regulations

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/MPES/Meat_Poultry.html

Very important to check county/local regulations as these can vary

Note About Mites/Lice



Northern Fowl Mites



Chicken Body Lice

Treat with Diatomaceous Earth (food grade)

Questions

UCCE Advisors and Specialists are here for you!

Poultry Health:

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