

Hens for Houston

A movement to keep Houston current by allowing the raising of hens on city lots.

Why get left behind? Many cities allow their citizens to have 4-6 hens on city lots, including...

- New York, NY
- Los Angeles, CA
- Chicago, IL
- Baltimore, MD
- Charlotte, NC
- San Francisco, CA
- Dallas, TX
- San Antonio, TX
- Bellaire, TX

Why hens?

Hens make excellent pets which provide tasty eggs to those who care for them. There are many reasons why Houstonians support urban hens:

- Economic, high-value eggs
- Entertaining pets
- Sustainable local food
- Education about nature and food
- Stronger, healthier communities
- Green way to diminish food deserts
- Diminished waste stream
- Pest and weed management
- Organic fertilizer
- Animal welfare
- Preservation of heritage breeds
- A smaller carbon footprint

Healthy hens

Don't smell if their coops are maintained. Chicken manure is highly compostable, unlike dog and cat waste.

Aren't loud. Only roosters crow. Hens only make noise briefly when laying an egg, which never happens at night.

Don't need a rooster. Well fed hens will lay tasty eggs just fine without a rooster present.

Aren't space hogs. A hen needs only 5 - 10 ft² of space. Unlike dogs or cats, they don't roam into the street or in front yards. Most backyard coops go completely undetected by neighbors and neighborhood visitors.

Don't attract pests any more than dogs or cats do. Chickens actually love to eat the bugs, ticks and garden pests that plague vegetables and other pets. Larger pests, like rodents, are only attracted to coops when owners leave chicken feed outside, the same as they would with dog or cat food.

Are healthy! Backyard hens are at much less risk of diseases than factory farmed birds. Things like bird flu (which has never been found in North America) is a industry problem as opposed to backyard. Salmonella is actually better prevented by properly cleaning backyard eggs than depending on factory farmed eggs.

Current Houston ordinance

The Houston city code functionally prohibits hens on most city lots. Up to 30 (roosters or hens) can be kept on 65x125 ft², as long as the coop is 100 ft from any building, school, residence not owned by the chicken keeper. It is also prohibited to compost the manure. The only exception is for a medical condition requiring unfertilized eggs, and then up to 7 hens can be kept. *Code of Ordinances, Chapter 6, Sections 31-38*

A new direction

We propose reducing the distance restrictions, and encouraging a hen-only ordinance, adapting the best practices of codes used in other cities to the needs of the Houston community.

Like hens? Want to know more? Get involved! Visit hensforhouston.wordpress.com today!