

# Backyard Chickens

*All properties over 2 acres, all rural properties and some residential properties are allowed more chickens than can be authorized by the Backyard Chicken Ordinance. See Section 2-512 of the Zoning Ordinance or the Pets and Livestock brochure for more details.*

## FAUQUIER COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
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FAUQUIER COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

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## Backyard Chickens

In 2013, the County adopted regulations allowing homeowners on lots as small as 20,000 sq. ft. to keep backyard chickens by-right if certain standards and limitations are met. No permit is required for chickens kept under this provision, but all requirements set forth in Section 2-512(1)(c) of the Zoning Ordinance must be met. These requirements are summarized below.

- Only hens allowed; no roosters.
- Maximum of 6 hens allowed if property is less than 40,000 sq. ft. in size; 10 hens allowed if property is 40,000 sq. ft. or larger.
- Hens raised on-site from eggs or chicks are not counted until they mature to become laying hens.
- Hens are for personal use only; no commercial use.
- Hens must be confined in pens meeting the following standards:
  - The pen must be located outside the front yard, and at least 25 feet from each adjoining property line;
  - The pen must include a coop (enclosed structure) containing a minimum of 1.5 square feet per hen and an open run area containing a minimum of 8 sq. ft. per hen (pens may be portable “tractor” style pens);
  - All pens must be designed to provide protection from predators; and

- All pens shall be kept in a dry, well ventilated and well maintained condition.

- All feed must be kept in a secure container in order to discourage pests and predators.
- Waste must be properly managed to prevent off-site migration of odors, waste or waste by-products.

For more information about Backyard Chicken restrictions or the general rules for



keeping of pets, livestock and fowl, contact Zoning Staff at 540-422-8220.

## Helpful Information & Tips:

- Chickens are social animals; don't plan on getting just one!
- Most hens start laying at about six months old and will lay with the greatest frequency for the first year, giving four to seven eggs a week. The number of eggs she will produce will reduce by about 10% each subsequent year and most backyard chickens live 8-10 years.
- Check with your Homeowner's Association (HOA) before buying chickens; they may be prohibited by your HOA bylaws.
- The Virginia Cooperative Extension publishes a helpful guide on small-scale poultry housing. It is available on their website at: [http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/2902/2902-1092/2902-1092\\_pdf.pdf](http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/2902/2902-1092/2902-1092_pdf.pdf).
- Be vigilant about cleaning your hands and shoes after handling chickens and their eggs in order to avoid potential health concerns.
- The internet provides a rich variety of helpful sites on backyard chickens; go to your favorite web browser and start searching.