



A proposal for the cooperative production and distribution of poultry and poultry resources

RECESS: Surviving the End of Your World
9/27/2010



Step 1: Assess the situation

Raising chickens is a low-cost, low-risk introduction to animal husbandry. Chickens are easily obtained, inexpensive to house and feed, and provide a reliable and sustainable supply of local and safe eggs and meat.

Before attempting to raise chickens, you should check with city officials to see if doing so would violate local laws or ordinances.

INSERT LOCAL LAW SUMMARY HERE:

Albuquerque allows its citizens to raise chickens with a few key restrictions (see below): You can keep up to 15 birds per household; You can only have 1 rooster (subject to noise ordinance); Its ok to slaughter your birds for food; You cannot use your property for commercial farming practices unless it is properly zoned.

ABQ Code of Ordinances, chapter 9, article 2, part 4, § 9-2-4-3, c-3:
"The Poultry limit is 15. No Person shall have more than one rooster in a household."

§ 9-2-4-7 ANIMAL NOISE:
"No person shall allow an Animal to persistently or continuously bark, howl or make noise common to its species to the extent that it causes a nuisance or as otherwise prohibited by this Chapter".

§ 9-2-4-2 the following exemption applies to animal cruelty ordinances:
"Killing a bird if such bird is Poultry owned by that Person and will be used for food"

Research local chicken laws in other cities here:

<http://www.backyardchickens.com/laws/search.php>

Step 2: Preparing the Brooder and Coop

Chickens require a coop (enclosure) for safety and containment, and ideally, a yard. Chickens will require about 2-3 square feet per chicken inside the henhouse and 4-5 sq/ft per chicken in an outside run. We propose to retrofit and share an existing coop with capacity for up to 20 hens. The proposed coop and yard resides on private property, but all members of the COOP will be granted access during daylight hours.

Baby chicks will require an additional brooder pen of adequate size with a heat lamp. The brooder could take many forms (see: <http://www.backyardchickens.com/chicken-coop-brooder.html>) Brooder design will be discussed and agreed upon by all COOP members.

Planning, construction costs*, and labor required to construct the brooder and retrofit the coop should be shared equally by all members. Additionally, members may choose to contribute personal resources (e.g. lumber, existing feed, or chicks) to the common resource.

Design will be finalized by _____(date). Construction will commence
_____ (date).

*Estimated costs will be collected from COOP members prior to construction date. Cost under runs or overages will be re-distributed to the group equally following completion.

Step 3: Selection and Ordering of Chicks

Egg production will vary with weather, feed and seasonal fluctuations. On average, 3 hens are supposed to produce 2 eggs per day. With this rule in mind we expect 18-20 hens to lay one dozen eggs per day, or 7-dozen eggs per week on average.

A population of 20 hens (our coop capacity) should reliably sustain 5 members at one dozen eggs per week (with overage to be divided equally).

Chicks should be purchased from a local hatchery or feed store supplied by a local hatchery. Baby chicks range from \$.50-3.00 each *on average* in New Mexico. Each member is responsible to choose and purchase 4 chicks/hens at their individual expense. Sourcing all birds from a single supplier may save on shipping or auxiliary expenses.

Step 3: Brooding and Raising Chicks

Baby chicks require 60 days of temperature-regulated care before feathering out. The newly hatched need a temperature between 90-100 degrees. Each week this can be reduced by approximately 5 degrees. It's best to keep the brooder in a heated building, if possible. This cooperative agrees to divide the cost of brooding (materials, feed, electrical) equally among the participating members.

Most hens begin laying eggs after 4-6 months (often in Spring) and will continue to do so for Up to 10 years or more. However, young hens (known as pullets) are the most productive, declining with each year of age. The first season of laying is often the best. After 3-4 years, a hen often eats more than the value of eggs she produces.

Many chicken farmers choose to slaughter hens before this decline is realized. One rule of thumb is 18 months after production begins, or at approximately 2 years of age.

If chicks are ordered by _____ (date), we could be producing one dozen eggs per day by _____ (date)

Step 4: Caring for Chicks and Chickens

Chickens require a modest amount of regular care. Daily food and clean water is essential. The bedding (straw or pine shavings) in the brooder and coop will need to be changed regularly. Members should expect to spend ~one day per week tending to the flock. This, ideally, could be done in the space of a lunch hour.

Feed for chicks (during brooding) is estimated at \$_____ per week for 8-10 weeks.

Feed for hens is estimated at \$_____ per week

Feed costs should be distributed across the group equally. This cooperative agrees to divide the cost of brooding (materials, feed, electrical) equally among the participating members. Members may elect to make an exception for the owner of the property housing the coop (to offset the cost of water, emergency maintenance, and land.)

Each member will be responsible for a distributed share of labor to maintain the flock and coop. This is expected to be a commitment of no less than _____ hours, _____ days per week.

The primary task will be to collect eggs. This will be a daily activity once production begins. Eggs will be distributed across the group based on total count to be tallied every _____ days.

Commercial egg cartons should be collected, saved, and re-used. Each member is responsible for the safe transportation of their own eggs.

Auxiliary tasks: buying feed, cleaning, feeding, and watering should be tended to immediately by the member on duty in a given day, as those needs arise. If one of those tasks is deemed an unfair amount of work for an individual, the group will convene to accomplish it.

Step 5: Members and Membership

The following members agree to execute this proposal as drafted. Additionally, they agree to contribute to this co-op with fairness, respect for property (shared and not), and to treat the poultry humanely with the ultimate goal of sustaining the flock indefinitely.

Agreed Upon: _____(date)

Agreed by:

_____ member name _____ member signature

_____ member name _____ member signature

_____ member name _____ member signature

_____ member name _____ member signature