



DATE: Wednesday, March 9, 2011

TO: Denver Planning Board

FROM: Sundari Kraft, Organizer of Sustainable Food Denver

RE: Outreach Efforts; Proposed "Food Producing Animals" Ordinance

Dear Chairman Buchanan and Denver Planning Board:

I am the organizer of Sustainable Food Denver, a group that advocates for sustainable food systems within our city. I would like to share information about the outreach efforts that have been made in order to communicate with Denver residents about the proposed Food Producing Animals (FPA) ordinance.

Sustainable Food Denver was formed in December, 2009. The group currently has an email list of 250 Denver residents who have opted in to their council district "action team" so they can assist with advocating for the FPA ordinance. Sustainable Food Denver's Facebook page has over 1,100 members.

I, along with CPD and DEH staff, attended the INC meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup>. At that time we presented the draft outline of the FPA ordinance to the INC members. This group also attended the February 26<sup>th</sup> INC ZAP meeting, to continue the discussion about the proposed ordinance.

Sustainable Food Denver spoke with City Council aides in each district for the purpose of compiling a list of the most active RNOs within our city. Based on that input, we compiled a contact list of 26 RNOs. We have sent 4 general email "blasts" to our RNO list between January 20<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>, and have had numerous subsequent email interactions with RNO members. Within the email blasts we included copies of the draft outline for the proposed ordinance, requests to attend an RNO meeting to discuss the proposed ordinance and get feedback from community members, additional information about urban FPAs, an invitation to an open house to see FPAs in a Denver backyard, and an invitation to a community forum with city officials to discuss the proposed ordinance.

At the time of this writing, Sustainable Food Denver has attended or is scheduled to attend eleven RNO meetings. At each of these meetings we share information about the proposed FPA ordinance, answers questions, and solicit feedback from the community. Some RNOs (like Stapleton United Neighbors and La Alma/Lincoln Park) have expressed an interest in writing a formal letter of support for the proposed ordinance. Other RNOs are still in the process of forming opinions and have asked several questions, but none of the RNOs we have visited up to this point have demonstrated strong opposition to the proposed ordinance.

Sustainable Food Denver participated in a community forum on the proposed FPA ordinance, which was held on March 7<sup>th</sup>. The forum was hosted by Grow Local Colorado, Slow Food Denver, and Campus Raised Organic Produce (Auraria). The forum consisted of presentations by myself and Tina Axelrad (Principal City Planner), plus a question and answer period that also included Doug Kelley, director of Animal Care and Control.

Sustainable Food Denver has hosted three open house events over the last year. The open houses gave community members the opportunity to see FPAs (chickens and dwarf goats) that are being raised in a Denver backyard. Participants in the open houses included RNO board members, mom's groups, and interested members of the sustainable food community.

A Denver backyard with chickens and goats was also the site of a City Council breakfast, which was held in September 2010. Five City Council members attended the breakfast, plus CPD staff (Zoning Administrator, Principal City Planner, head of Neighborhood Inspector Services), DEH staff (Director of Animal Care and Control), and Mayor Hickenlooper's chief of staff. Outside of the City Council breakfast, two additional Council members have visited the "backyard barnyard" to see how FPAs can be raised in an urban setting.

Sustainable Food Denver has been working for the past 16 months to actively engage members of the community in the process of crafting a new FPA ordinance for our city. We plan to continue our outreach efforts as the proposed ordinance moves through the city process.

For a summary of basic information about urban FPAs, some frequently asked questions, the benefits of backyard FPAs, and a brief overview of successful FPA ordinances in other cities, please see the attached powerpoint presentation.

Thank you,

Sundari Kraft  
Sustainable Food Denver  
[www.sustainablefooddenver.org](http://www.sustainablefooddenver.org)  
[sustainablefooddenver@gmail.com](mailto:sustainablefooddenver@gmail.com)

## Food-Producing Animals in the City



Sustainable Food Denver  
[www.sustainablefooddenver.org](http://www.sustainablefooddenver.org)

## Chickens & Ducks



## Chickens & Ducks

- Female (hen) fowl only
- Size: “Standard” hens weigh 4-6 pounds, and “bantam” hens weigh 1-2 pounds. Duck weight varies based on breed, but is typically between 2-6 pounds.
- Diet: Kitchen scraps, most garden wastes, commercial feed mixture, and grain.
- About 2 eggs per 3 fowl each day (will vary depending on age of birds, time of year. Chickens will lay regularly for 2-3 years; ducks a little longer. Fowl can live for 8+ years.

## Chickens & Ducks

- Space requirements: At least 4 square feet of permeable land per bird. Yard fence should be at least 4 feet tall. Wings can be clipped if necessary. Predator proof nighttime enclosure.
- Waste: Fowl manure is not toxic and can be safely composted.
- Risk to Humans: Female fowl do not bite or act aggressively toward humans. Fowl do not carry any diseases that are not also carried by pigeons and other outside birds.

## Dwarf Dairy Goats



## Dwarf Dairy Goats

- Nigerian Dwarf or African Pygmy breeds
- Female or neutered male (wether) goats only
- Size: Goats grow to 24 inches tall, and 55 pounds (wethers are 65 pounds).
- Diet: Kitchen scraps, most garden wastes, hay, and grain.
- Will produce an average of a quart of milk per day during a 300 day lactation cycle.

## Dwarf Dairy Goats

- Space requirements: At least 15 square feet of sheltered space per animal, 130 square feet of fenced outdoor space per animal. Fence should be at least 4 feet tall.
- Waste: Goat manure is not toxic and can be safely composted.
- Risk to Humans: Female and wether goats do not bite or act aggressively toward humans. Colorado goats are at risk of a couple of diseases (CAE and enterotoxemia), but they do not transfer to humans.

## Frequently Asked Questions



## Will FPAs attract predators?

- Small mammal predators are a fact of life in the city. Outdoor cats, squirrels, birds, and – most especially – our garbage all ensure that predators will continue to stick around.
- There are currently dead chickens on every block in Denver.
- For the chickens' safety it is important that they be secured at night. Chicken owners can use biological deterrents (available through Amazon) to keep predators away.

## Will backyard chickens & goats smell bad?

- It's all about scale, and how the animals are cared for.
- When chickens have adequate space and proper bedding, their manure does not build up or cause odor issues. The manure that does exist can be easily removed and composted with straw or dead leaves.
- Female (doe) and neutered male (wether) goats do not smell. That “goaty” smell is caused by un-neutered male goats (bucks). Bucks do smell tremendously bad, and they're not suitable for the city.
- Goat urine is less odorous than cat urine, and it is easily absorbed into the ground or straw bedding. Goat manure is “dispensed” in small, compact pellets. Goat manure does not smell or attract flies the way that cow and horse manure does. The pellets are easy to clean up, and can be safely composted.

## Are FPAs noisy?

- Goats bleat occasionally, but the average goat bleat is quieter than the average dog bark. Also, remember that goats are a prey species. Their response to any threat or curiosity is to become very still and quiet.
- Hen chickens are almost always silent. They are a prey species (just like goats) and find it safer to stay quiet. Roosters are the noisy ones, and are not appropriate for the city.
- Well cared for ducks are also quieter than a barking dog.

## What's going to happen if a family needs to get rid of their fowl or goats?

- Not only are there many Denver residents who would like to own food-producing animals, there are also lots of people in the rural areas surrounding the city who raise fowl and goats.



If everyone raised their FPAs the way you do, I wouldn't have a problem with it. I'm worried about "other" people.

- Most urban FPA owners take very good care of their animals.
- We don't make our laws based on the lowest common denominator.
- We have rules in place to deal with noise, odor, nuisance, and abuse/cruelty issues.

If you want to live this way, why don't you just move to the country?

- There are many reasons why people live in the city – for jobs, for schools, because they own their home and can't move.
- Scale is everything. It doesn't make sense to raise 500 chickens or 200 head of cattle on a city lot – that's better left to folks in the country. But can a small flock of chickens and a couple of dwarf goats have a clean, safe home in a Denver backyard? Most definitely.
- The idea that city-dwellers should not have the right to produce food on their small piece of land is unfair, and it leaves city folks entirely dependent on people in the country to provide 100% of their food.

## Why Raise FPAs in the City?



## Health Benefits



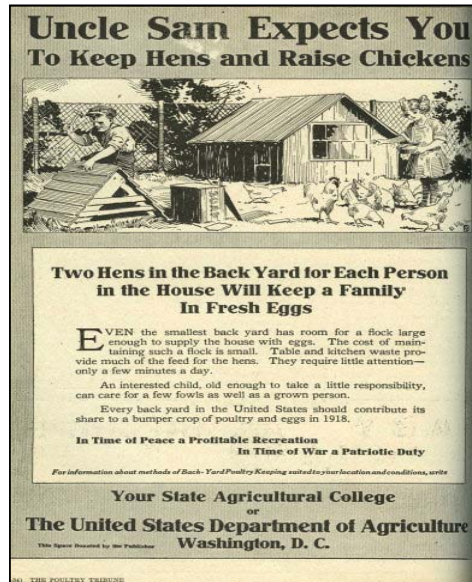
## Health Benefits – More Good Stuff

- Dairy animals raised on grass (or grass hay) produce milk that:
  - Is high in CLA (conjugated linoleic acid)
  - Provides the ideal balance of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids
  - Is high in beta-carotene and vitamins A and E
- Plus, goat milk:
  - Has small fat molecules, making it easier to digest than cow milk – many people who are lactose-intolerant can consume goat milk
  - Is also better tolerated by asthmatics and those with allergies
- Free range fowl that are allowed to eat a varied diet, including plants, produce eggs that:
  - Have 3-6 times more vitamin D than conventional eggs
  - Are high in folic acid and vitamin B12
  - Are high in omega-3 fatty acids

## Health Benefits – Less Bad Stuff

- Conventional milk contains:
  - Numerous antibiotics
  - Bovine growth hormone (rBGH or rBST), which causes higher levels of pus and bacteria in milk, and may pose other risks to humans
- Conventional eggs:
  - Come from chickens that were fed antibiotics
  - Contain more cholesterol and saturated fat, compared to pastured eggs

# Economic Benefits



## Economic Benefits

- Chickens and goats used to be a staple of family life, right alongside the kitchen garden. It was common knowledge (not to mention common sense) that raising one's own milk and eggs was cheaper than buying them from the store.
- For a family of four:
  - Chickens (eggs) = save \$92 - \$170 per year
  - Goats (milk and cheese) = save \$200 - \$1000 per year
- See [sustainablefooddenver.org](http://sustainablefooddenver.org) for full spreadsheet

## Environmental Benefits



## Environmental Benefits

- Raising backyard animals to provide some (or all) of a family's dairy and eggs is beneficial in large part because it helps the family step back from the **industrial food system**. A few facts about our food system:
  - Each food item in the American diet travels an average of 1,300 miles. In the case of eggs and dairy, the energy use of transport is increased because the food must be refrigerated.
  - Concentrated Animal Feed Operations (CAFOs) pollute surface and ground water.
  - CAFOs contribute significantly to greenhouse gases through methane emissions, and release other hazardous gasses into the air.
  - Animals raised in CAFOs are fed disproportionate amounts of grain, which is produced using large quantities of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

## Food Safety & Security Benefits



## Food Safety & Security Benefits

- Dairy and eggs produced in CAFOs are extremely vulnerable to food-borne bacteria like E coli and salmonella.
- Backyard food-producing animals can provide a reliably secure (and inflation-proof) source of protein for families.
- Less than 1% of the food consumed in Denver was produced in Colorado. This leaves our residents vulnerable to disruptions in the food system. Food-producing animals can help to reduce the dependence on outside food sources.

## FPA Ordinances in Other Cities



## FPA Ordinances in Other Cities

- Seattle, Chicago, and Portland allow hen fowl and dwarf dairy goats without any sort of permit
- New York City and Los Angeles allow unlimited number of fowl without a permit
- Colorado Springs and Littleton allow a limited number of fowl (10 and 4, respectively) without a permit
- Fort Collins and Longmont allow chickens with a simple Animal Control permit

## How's It Working Out?

- FPAs and property values, plus other concerns
- DePaul University study – all 23 cities rated chicken ordinances as either “positive” or “neutral” for the city
- Fort Collins first year – 14,314 total calls to Animal Control; 6 were about chickens
- Fort Collins and Longmont did not choose to revoke their ordinances after the first year
- Seattle recently expanded its FPA ordinance, from 3 chickens/3 goats (no permit) up to 8 chickens/3 goats

## What Can We Do in Denver?

