

Re: Backyard chickens rejected in SF

I appreciated Wilma Kenny's news from South Frontenac Council last week. What more important issues could there be but raising food and creating laws that regulate the lives of chickens. After all, many of your readers get up every morning to a breakfast of wholesome eggs.

On Friday morning I took the newspaper out to my six chickens to see what they thought about South Frontenac's discussions. They first wanted to know just what it was that a planning coordinator did for scratch. They were also a little perplexed about the idea of holding a council to make your mind up about such an indispensable thing as food. They were baffled why some humans would hold it against their neighbors for having less land to sustain themselves. But when I read them the part about a by-law defining what a hen was they began to laugh out loud. One smart aleck shouted out, "What do they think this is, the Indian Act?" Another boasted that if someone wanted to consider her domesticated, they had better take down the wire and see just what happens to those nice tender victuals in the garden.

I must say that instead of putting up much of an argument about the disposal of dead chickens, I was pretty hush-hush. After all, we disposed of 15 dead chickens and a rooster this winter. First we put them in the freezer and later, one by one, we cooked and ate them. I just wasn't ready to go over that again with them.

On a lighter note, my chickens wanted to know if Council had discussed roosters. As far as they were concerned roosters were only good for one thing; were generally ill tempered, too loud, ate too much and wanted too much attention. They wanted to know if there were any roosters (men) on council. When I said I thought the council was all men (roosters), they wanted to know why then were they discussing hens. One really bright hen perked up and exclaimed, "They may have eaten an egg but they seldom ever cook one". The quiet hen who usually doesn't say much commented dryly, "I'll bet none of them has ever hatched one either."

They got serious and asked me to read on. I knew that this next part would meet with severe ridicule so I cleared my throat and read in a steady voice, "No hen shall become a public nuisance through persistent clucking". Again uproarious laughter. "I guess the old roosters have never laid one either," was the chorus accompanied by defiant and sustained clucking. And, I began again, "No hen

shall be permitted to be at large in the community." There was silence. Their sometimes tragic eyes looked this way and that. They looked down self-consciously at those yellow feet with unkempt nails. They examined each other's rough complexions after a long, cold winter. And then the giggling started. Finally one of the smarter chickens said, "We want our rights. We want to be able to travel on the bus like those chickens you see in Ecuador, you know, where humans really do know something about how to raise food and feed themselves."

- Robert Lovelace