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Subject: Chicken Updates

Good afternoon, everyone. I have checked in with those who are keeping chickens, and I wanted to reach out to you all regarding the chicken ordinance and provide some updates and insight for your consideration.

First, let me start by thanking you all again for your help and open minds which made this ordinance permanent here in Poplar Grove. Those of us keeping hens are more grateful than we could ever fully express to you, and we are enjoying our flocks very much. Most of us have kept the maximum of 6 allowed hens since the Pilot began, and as we enter our second year with hens, our learning curve of chicken-keeping continues. Yes, even me, the Crazy Chicken Lady, learns something new every day.

For starters, keeping chickens throughout our Illinois winters is not as awful as we all worried it might be. We have now been through one somewhat mild winter and one brutally cold winter. I can say, these chickens handle the cold far better than we give them credit for. To my knowledge, no one went through with installing electricity for heat lamps or water heaters, and we have all done quite well.

Kitchen waste has been reduced dramatically as chickens can consume just about any food products headed for the trash. Our gardens and composting flourished in the summer months, and many of us saw better yields than ever. One example comes from my own dad, who puts a shared garden in at my grandmother's home. He is constantly fighting a battle against the feral cat colony my aunt feeds. The cats (nearly 20 of them) use the freshly tilled and planted garden as a giant litter box. So for years, he has had a poor outcome in his garden due to the high levels of ammonia from cat waste. That is

until my chickens came along! Last winter, while yard waste pickup was off-duty, I collected my chicken coop shavings in paper lawn bags and transported them to his garden, where we spread the shavings and chicken "gold". Before Spring planting, he tilled everything into the soil, and as a result his garden flourished! We have done the same thing this year and expect another fantastic summer in the garden for him.

Eating eggs from our own flocks has many health benefits as well. Because we know what is being fed to our birds and when our eggs are laid, we are getting healthier eggs for our families. Did you know a commercially farmed egg at the grocery store averages 100 days old by the time you buy it? Not to mention any synthetic hormones fed to boost egg production and inhumane living conditions for commercially farmed birds.

There is however, one question on the minds of us Poplar Grove Chicken Tenders: Is six birds enough for every family? Some of us say no, and I'll tell you why. While six birds does have benefits for many families, being able to keep more birds would play a role in expanding the scope of these benefits for others. Key factors in having a flock size greater than six include the following:

*More abundant egg production: While 6 birds might produce 6 eggs/day, a larger flock ensures a steady, higher-volume supply for larger households that consume many eggs, bake often, and would help off-set periods when other birds are molting (losing and replenishing their feathers) or egg production slows down in the winter months. Those of us who got all of our birds as chicks at the same time, now have birds who all molt at the same time, so some households went all winter with less than a dozen eggs laid throughout our flock from November-February.

*Enhanced Pest Control & Fertilizer: A larger group of chickens acts as a more efficient, natural pest control team, consuming insects like larvae, beetles, and ticks. Their waste provides significant, nutrient-rich fertilizer for gardens.

*Faster Composting: More chickens mean more waste, which accelerates the creation of nitrogen-rich compost from kitchen scraps and garden refuse.

*Increased Sustainability & Self-Sufficiency: A larger flock is part of a broader, more sustainable, and self-sufficient lifestyle, reducing dependence on commercial egg production and decreasing household waste.

Enhanced Social & Educational Opportunities: Larger flocks can offer better, more diverse, and engaging, entertainment and education for families through opportunities

such as 4-H. Not everyone can own a farm, but this gives children more opportunities to show their birds, take pride in their flock, and demonstrate the responsibilities involved with keeping more birds.

Recently, Illinois announced

[House Bill 4764](#), introduced in February 2026, "which aims to establish a statewide right for Illinois residents to keep backyard hens (excluding roosters) for personal, noncommercial use. The legislation, which would amend the 'Vegetable Garden and Backyard Chicken Protection Act,' prevents municipalities from enacting total bans, though they may still implement reasonable regulations regarding coop size and sanitation." While there may be benefits to this bill passing in Illinois, I can also understand where concerns may develop regarding people who may just rush out and get chickens. Guidelines and parameters definitely need to be kept in place.

However, taking all these factors into account, I would ask you as village board members to consider allowing some families to increase their flock size to 10 chickens. This would still be possible with the existing ordinance in place regarding coop/run sizes and all other components. The current ordinance states a minimum of 5 sq ft per bird is required. People with smaller coops, would still have to keep the amount of birds their coop fits comfortably, even if the number of birds allowed increases.

I look forward to hearing from you all and hope this may be added to a meeting agenda for discussion in the near future. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you all for your time!

With much gratitude,

Your Resident Crazy Chicken Lady and the Chicken Tenders of PG





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