



Dr. Colleen Crozier joined the staff of University Animal Hospital of Greensboro in June. She received a double major in Zoology and Poultry Science (summa cum laude), followed by her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from N. C. State. While she was attending school, Dr. Crozier participated in several veterinary mission trips to the Navajo Nation and the Yup'ik tribes of Alaska. Her

interests include small animal physical therapy and rehabilitation, developing urban poultry medicine, training her poodle puppy Ollie and baking. She makes coop calls upon request.

The Urban Chicken

It may surprise you to hear "cluck-clucks" coming from your neighbor's backyard but more and more people have backyard chicken flocks. With the rise in awareness of where our food comes from and eating locally grown food, it has become popular to keep chickens in order to have fresh eggs.

Top 5 Concerns for Backyard Poultry

HOUSING

Proper housing for your chickens is important for their health and laying status. Chicken coops should provide shelter from predators. Coops should have good quality litter that is changed regularly. Nest boxes should be low to the ground and in a dark area of the coop. Chicken coops should also have perches so that your chickens can perch off the ground.

FOOD AND WATER

As with any animal, chickens need fresh food and water. Fresh water should be given every day. Chickens should be fed a well balanced diet that has been formulated by a poultry nutritionist.

AIR

Like humans, chickens need fresh air. It is important to have plenty of air circulating throughout your chicken coop in order to keep your chickens healthy. Decreased air can cause ammonia levels to build up in the coops, which causes birds to have difficulty breathing. It can also cause the humidity to rise in the coops, which may allow mold to grow.

BIOSECURITY

Biosecurity is one of the most important ways to keep your flock healthy and free of disease. There are three categories of biosecurity we should remember:

1. People: We can unknowingly transmit diseases between poultry. Wearing different shoes when working with your chickens and having visitors disinfect their shoes can help prevent our bringing in diseases.
2. Poultry: When introducing new birds into your flock, it is important to quarantine the new birds for at least 30 days. Quarantine means that the new birds have absolutely no contact with your established flock.
3. Wildlife: Wildlife can transmit diseases to your chickens and can also be predators so it is important to protect your flock from them.

DISEASE

- Zoonotic diseases are diseases that can be transferred from one species of animal (ex. chickens) to humans. Chickens can transmit Salmonella and Campylobacter so it is important to always wash your hands carefully after handling your chickens, eggs or manure.

- There are many infectious diseases (viruses, bacteria, and fungi) that birds can transmit to each other. Make sure to look at your chickens daily in order to find birds that may be sick. If you think your chickens are sick, it is important to have your chicken seen by a veterinarian.

- Chickens can get external and internal parasites.

Chickens should be dewormed about twice a year to prevent infestations of parasites.

Belle, the chicken, enjoying a stroll around the yard. More and more people are keeping backyard chicken flocks today.



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