

Common Chicken Myths

Myth #1: Chickens are loud

Fact: Laying hens, at their loudest, have about the same decibel level as human conversation (60 to 70 decibels) and cannot be easily heard from more than 10 feet away. They are much quieter than other common suburban noises such as barking dogs, playing children, car stereos, and lawn mowers. Hens are so quiet that there have been cases of family flocks being kept for years without the next door neighbors knowing it. It is roosters who crow, and they are not permitted by HB 175.

Noise Origin	Average Decibel Level
Normal Conversation	60dB
Hens (2 ft from hen)	70dB
Vacuum	80dB
Dog Barking	70-100dB
City Traffic	80dB
Lawnmower	90dB
Motorcycle	95dB

Myth #2: Chickens cause odor

Fact: Chickens themselves do not smell. Any possible odor would come from their droppings, and a forty pound dog generates more solid waste than ten chickens. To be more specific, one 40 pound dog generates about $\frac{3}{4}$ (.75 pounds) of poo every day. Ten chickens generate about two-thirds (.66 pounds) daily poop. The advantage to chicken manure is that it can be used as valuable, high-nitrogen fertilizer. Unlike dog or cat poop, chicken poo can be combined with yard and leaf waste to create compost.

Myth #3: It would be difficult to manage potential nuisances

Fact: Virtually every municipality already has nuisance ordinances in place that could be used for chicken issues just as it is currently used for other issues. Who would you call if someone is not cleaning up after their chickens? The same person you would call if someone were not cleaning up after their dog. Who would you call if someone's chickens were somehow being loud and obnoxious? The same person you would call if their dog were barking incessantly. The policies and protections that are currently in place to shield the public from other nuisances would function equally from potential chicken nuisances.

Myth #4: Chickens will lower property values.

Fact: There is no evidence at all that the presence of backyard chickens lowers property values. On the contrary, there appears to be an inverse relationship between the value of homes in communities and how restrictive their ordinances on backyard agriculture. In fact, 8 of the top 10 cities on *Money Magazine's 2016 Best Places to Live* list permit backyard chickens. Attached is a table of communities in SW Ohio organized by average property values and whether they allow or prohibit backyard chicken keeping. You will notice that the areas with the fewest restrictions on the keeping of chickens tended to have the *highest* property values.

Myth #5: Chicken coops are ugly

Fact: Chicken keepers take great pride in building attractive, quaint homes for their birds. Many cities host annual Tour De Coops, like a tour of homes, where people travel the city admiring beautiful chicken coops and the gardens that generally accompany them. Dog houses are much more of an eyesore in backyards than chicken coops are. Here are examples of typical backyard chicken coops.



Myth #6: Chickens spread Salmonella

Fact: Of the 1.2 million cases of Salmonella in the US each year, well over 99% of them are due to mishandling of factory farmed meat or eggs. Less than 1/10 of 1% of cases are attributed to contact with live birds. According to the CDC, Salmonella is purely a safe food handling issue, not an issue with a specific type of animal. While there have been cases of Salmonella occurring from mishandling backyard chickens, similar outbreaks have occurred from mishandling alfalfa sprouts, mangos, and pet turtles. The key, as with any food item, is proper handling.

Property Values and Chicken-Keeping Ordinances

Suburb	Chicken-Keeping Ordinances	2007 Ave Home Sales Price*
Indian Hill	Permit	\$1,019K
Terrace Park	Generally permit	\$ 400K
Wyoming	Generally permit	\$ 326K
Symmes Twnshp	Permit	\$ 313K
Montgomery	Generally permit	\$ 297K
Evendale	Generally permit	\$ 288K
Glendale	Generally permit	\$ 274K
Mariemont	Generally permit	\$ 274K
Mason	Essentially prohibit	\$ 213K
Madeira	Generally permit	\$ 212K
Blue Ash	Case by case	\$ 202K
Loveland	Generally permit	\$ 174K
Fairfield	Essentially prohibit	\$ 166K
Sycamore Twnshp	Essentially prohibit	\$ 165K
Milford	Generally permit	\$ 152K
Springdale	Essentially prohibit	\$ 144K
Reading	Restricted	\$ 131K
Deer Park	Generally permit	\$ 130K
Silverton	Essentially prohibit	\$ 127K
Norwood	Prohibit	\$ 119K
Mt Healthy	Essentially prohibit	\$ 116K

*From www.city-data.com

“Generally permit” indicates chicken-keeping is allowed under minor restrictions intended to prevent chickens from becoming a nuisance

“Restricted” indicates chicken-keeping is nominally allowed, but ordinances will prevent a significant number of residents from keeping chickens

“Essentially prohibit” indicates chicken-keeping is nominally allowed but under such profound restrictions as to prevent most residents from keeping chickens