CITY OF PORTAGE PLANNING COMMISSION

F I N A L A G E N D A

February 17, 2011
(7:00 p.m.)

Portage City Hall Council Chambers

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 3, 2011

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

1. Final Plan – Greenspire Retail (Phase I), 3201 West Centre Avenue

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

* 1. Final Report - Ordinance Amendment #10-A, Keeping of Hens and Other Animals

PLATS/RESIDENTIAL CONDOS:

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

ADJOURNMENT:

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED

Star (*) indicates printed material within the agenda packet.

Christopher Forth - Re: Portage Chicken Debate--Katie Drenth

From: K Drenth <crazyhawaii2004@yahoo.com>
To: Christopher Forth <forthc@portagemi.gov>
Date: 2/17/2011 1:50 PM
Subject: Re: Portage Chicken Debate--Katie Drenth

Christopher Forth,

Wonderful! Unfortunately, I have not been able to resolve my scheduling conflict as of yet, so please don't go through the trouble of setting up the equipment. Thank you again for your hard work. I hope I will be able to attend the meeting, but if not please let any of the members know that they can contact me with any comments and questions. Also, as with the other letters and items concerning the chicken debate, you have my permission make the presentation document available to read through the Portage website. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Katie Drenth
katie.e.drenth@wmich.edu
crazyhawaii2004@yahoo.com

From: Christopher Forth <forthc@portagemi.gov>
To: K Drenth <crazyhawaii2004@yahoo.com>
Cc:
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2011 1:08 PM
Subject: Re: Portage Chicken Debate--Katie Drenth

Ms. Drenth:

Got it! Will print it and provide hard copies to the Commission members before the meeting begins tonight.

Have you been able to resolve your conflict so you can attend the meeting tonight? Since you didn't note in your e-mail message below that you plan on attending the meeting, I won't set up the projection equipment. If this changes, please advise ASAP.

Sincerely,

Christopher Forth, AICP
Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services
Department of Community Development
7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002
Telephone: (269) 329-4474
Facsimile: (269) 329-4506

www.portagemi.gov

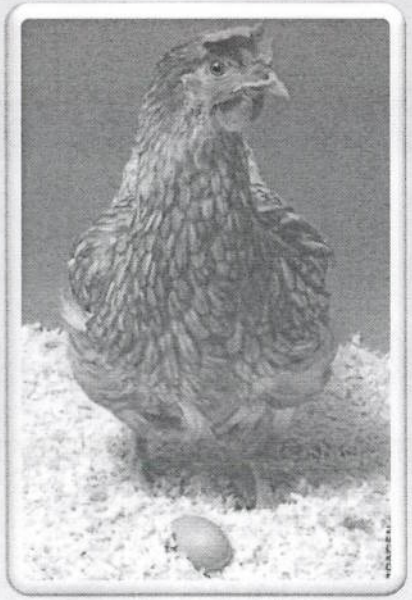
>>> K Drenth <crazyhawaii2004@yahoo.com> 2/17/2011 12:37 PM >>>
Christopher Forth,

I have also saved the PowerPoint presentation as a pdf in hopes that you are able to open the document. Thank you again.

Sincerely,
Katie Drenth
katie.e.drenth@wmich.edu
crazyhawaii2004@yahoo.com

Eggs Come From Chickens?

How You Can Sustainably Raise Your Own Urban Micro-flock.



Presented by
Katie and Emily Drenth

Drawbacks and Benefits

Drawbacks

- **Scratching.** Chickens have a propensity to scratch, which can create a minimal amount of dust in dry areas and can also cause newly planted seeds to be disrupted in garden areas.
- **Droppings.** Chickens create droppings that, "if not properly managed, will smell bad and attract flies" (Madigan 223).

The Backyard Homestead

Benefits

- **Fresh Wholesome Eggs.** "Having chickens provides the ultimate source of truly fresh eggs. You know what the chickens eat and how they live while producing eggs.
- **Soil Producers.** Chicken manure provides valuable nitrogen to mix with kitchen and yard residuals to make rich compost.

City Chicks

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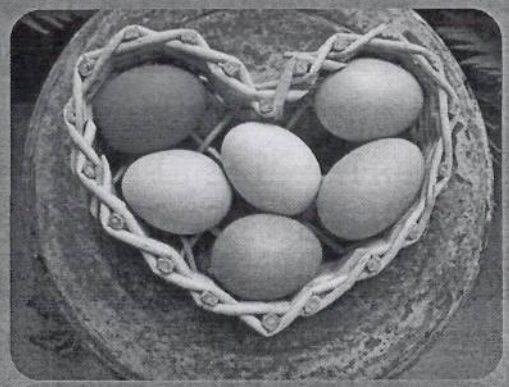

Benefits, continued

- **Personal Ecological Act.** Most people who keep chickens view it as part of living "green" and treading lightly on the Earth. Eggs from a backyard flock save fuel, electricity, and reduce air pollution by reducing the demand for egg transportation and the accompanying cool storage needed to move eggs from factory farms to your home.
- **Health and Safety.** Assuming you don't give antibiotic-laced feeds to your hens, there's little risk of antibiotic resistant bacteria or infectious salmonella lurking in home-laid eggs.
- **Humane Egg Production.** Dr. Temple Grandin, the internationally acclaimed animal scientist and autism advocate states in her book *Animals Make Us Human*, that: "Laying hens have the poorest welfare of all the farm animals...they suffer a lot of FEAR throughout their lives". Keeping backyard micro-flocks can provide humane egg production from well cared for hens.

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Benefits, continued

- **Educational.** Because chickens are smaller, cleaner, cheaper, and easier to raise than cows, pigs, or goats, urban 4-H kids can participate in poultry projects to learn about animal husbandry. By raising chickens, children learn that food does not spontaneously appear in cartons, cans and jars.
- **Easy, Quiet Pets.** Hens are quieter than dogs, don't have to be walked (although they can be leash trained), and require only a few minutes of daily care.
- **Agricultural Involvement.** Not long after getting your first hens, you'll find yourself at county fairs and poultry shows, meeting new people and having conversations you never dreamed of before.
- **Gene Pool Preservation.** Purchasing and keeping small flocks helps preserve rare and minor chicken breeds by providing income to the heritage breeders.

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Benefits, continued

- **Fashionable.** No matter how you dress or what you do, keeping chickens is "in;" just ask Martha Stewart. Upon learning that you are a chicken aficionado, people will regard you with new respect, and the topic of keeping chickens will often crop up in conversations. [Even Julia Roberts raises chickens. She's named them all and exclaims, "they come running just like puppies."] Giving the hosts of a dinner party a dozen fresh eggs can be more meaningful than a bottle of fine wine. Backyard eggs are becoming status symbols.
- **Engaging Hobby.** There comes a point when all you think about is chickens. You check on them at night, shining your flashlight to make sure they are sleeping. You notice your friends' eyes glaze over as you describe the antics of your incredible frolicking feathered flock. Their ungainly grasshopper-chasing athleticism becomes as addictive as football. You become eccentric even by extreme standards. CA (Chickens Anonymous) groups form where you can tell your stories to people who actually care, and want to hear them. 'Hi, I'm Pat. I have 23 chickens'" (Foreman).

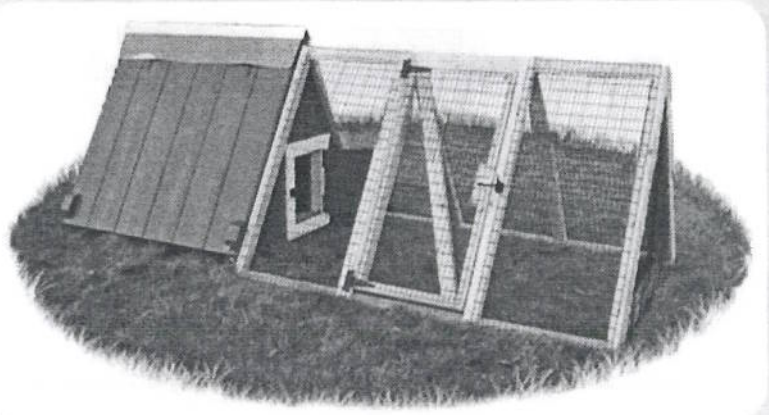
Getting Started

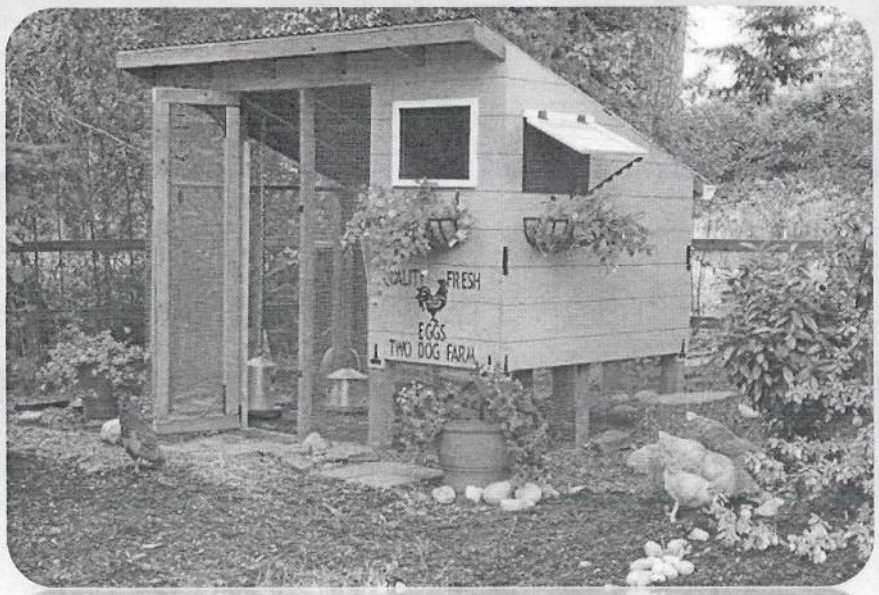
- Chickens are "easy to raise, they don't need a lot of space, and they don't cost a lot of money to buy or to feed" (Madigan 222).
- The cost of starting your own micro-flock depends on such factors as:
  - What kinds of chickens you want and how common they are in your area.
  - How simple or elaborate the chicken coop will be and whether you have existing facilities you can use or modify.

The Backyard Homestead

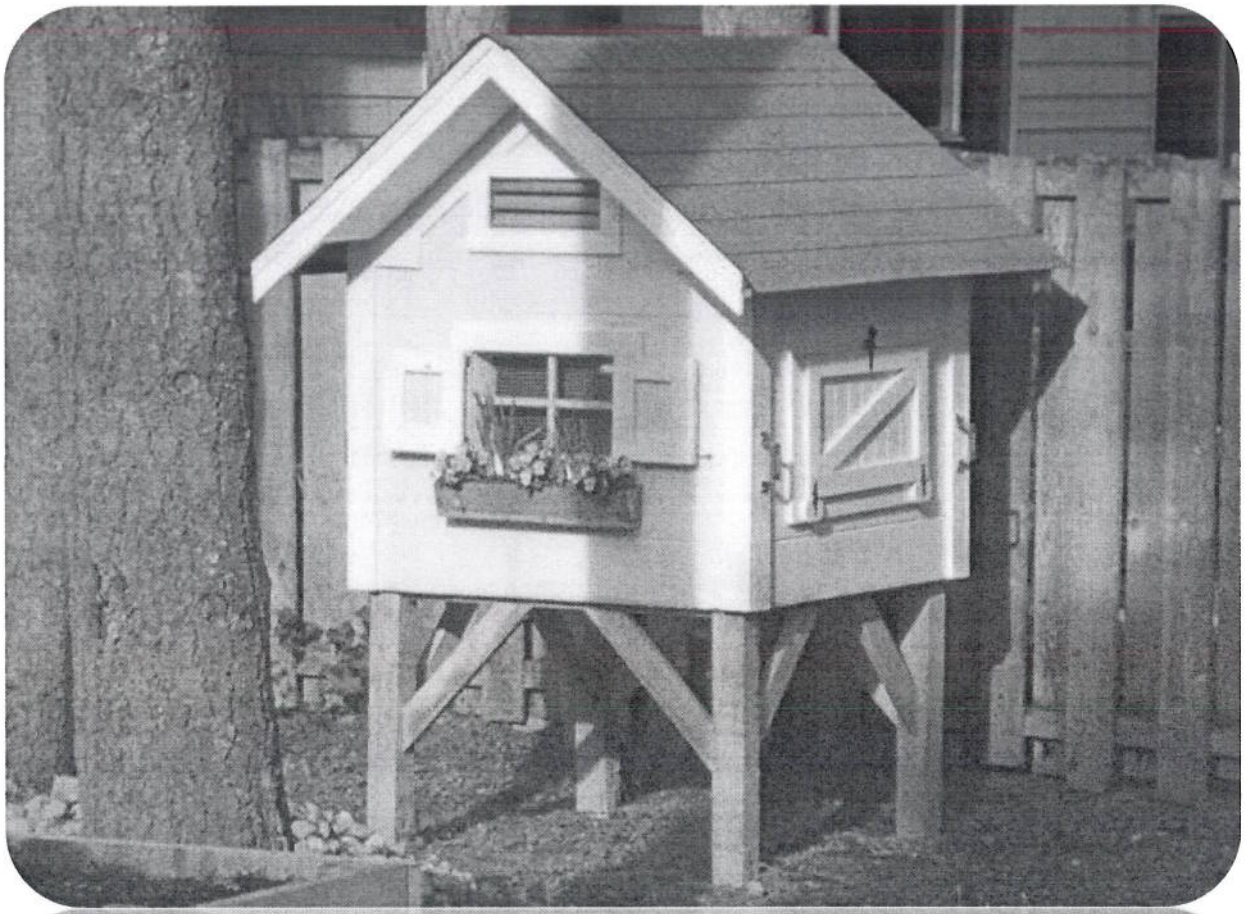
Chicken Coops

- Chicken coops come in all shapes, sizes and styles that are safe, functional and attractive.
- Many sites and books provide detailed building instructions on how to build your own coop, such as backyardchickens.com. Designs range from simple A-frame chicken runs to decorative coops of all sizes.



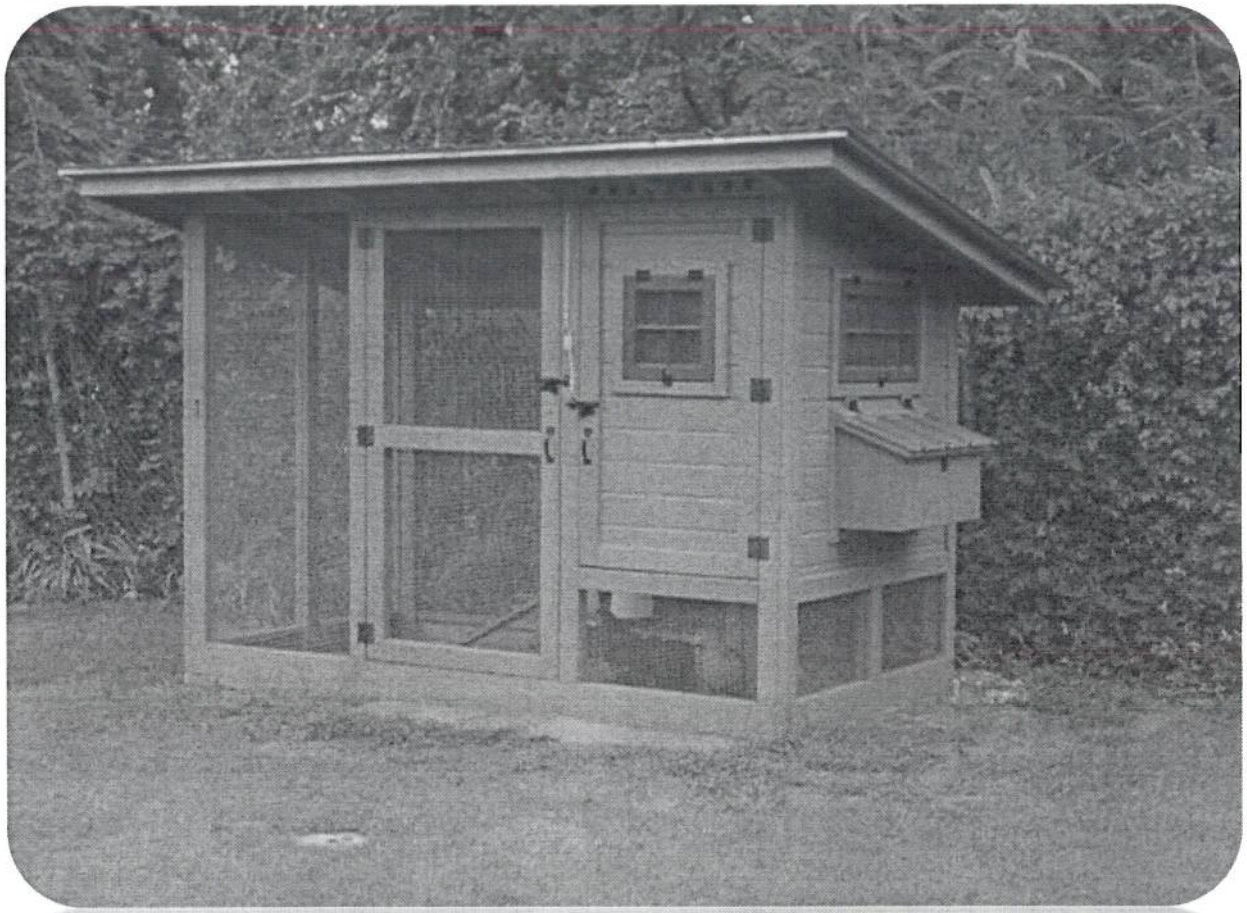


Chicken coops come in many sizes and styles and can be constructed to fit any environment.



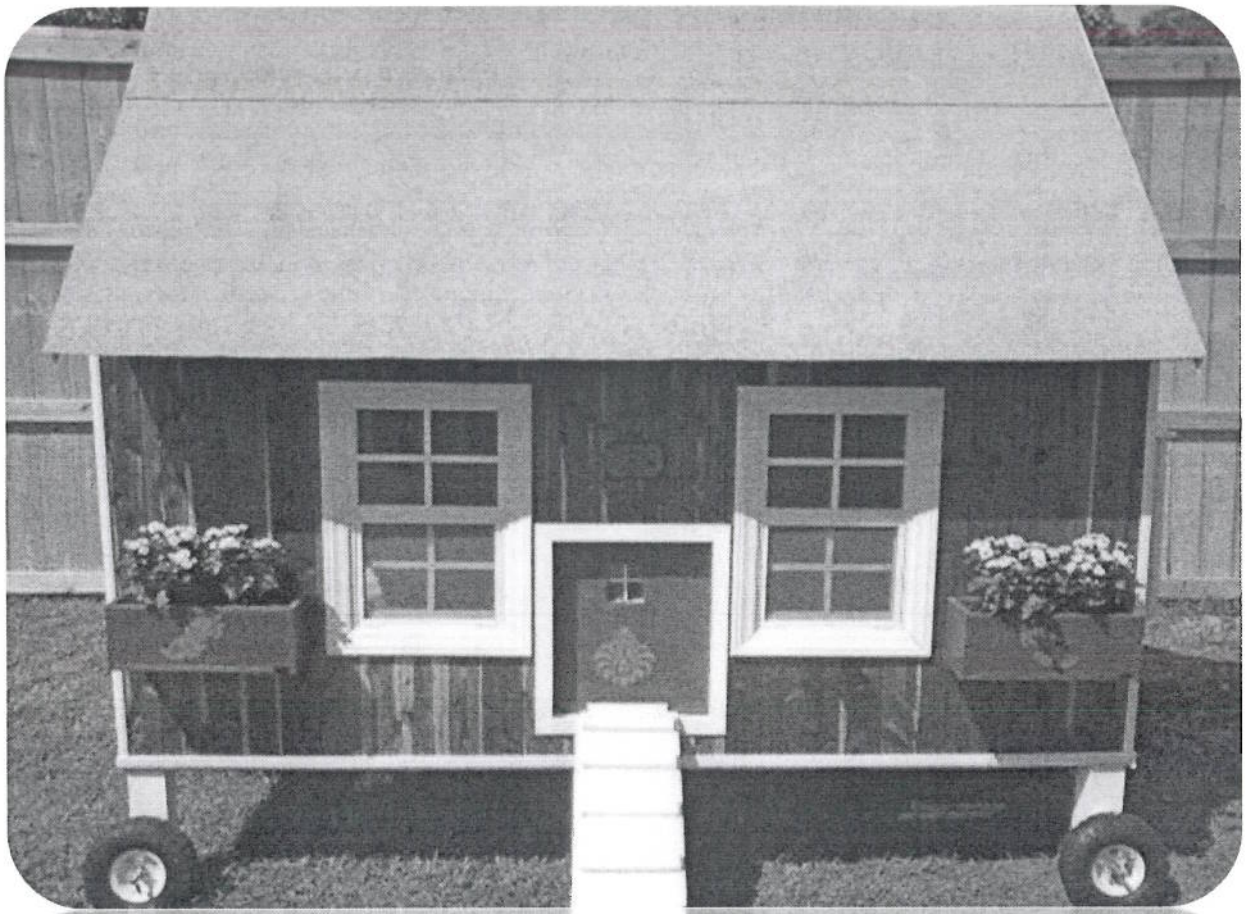
Chicken Coop Designs

There are design plans—ranging from small to large coops—that are simple for all skill levels to follow.



Chicken Coop Designs

Coops can even be placed on wheels, turning them into chicken tractors that can be moved to any location around the yard.



Chicken Coop Designs

Choosing the Right Breed

- **Egg Breeds**
  - "All hens lay eggs, but some breeds lay more eggs than others"—the best yielding about 24 dozen eggs a year (Madigan 223).
  - Egg breeds originate from Minorca, Ancona and Leghorn breeds.
- **Meat Breeds**
  - While egg layers are small and scrawny—they put all their energy into egg production—the best meat breeds grow plump quickly.
  - Meat breeds originate from Australorp, Orpington and Cornish breeds.
- **Dual-Purpose Breeds**
  - Dual-purpose breeds are kept for both meat and eggs. They don't lay quite as well as egg breeds or grow as fast as meat breeds, but they lay better than meat breeds and grow plumper than egg breeds.
  - Most are classified as American because they originated in the USA, hence names like the common dual-purpose breeds: New Hampshire, Plymouth Rock and Rhode Island Red.
  - Dual-purpose breeds have not been bred for factory-like production, hence they have retained their ability to survive harsh conditions, their desire to forage and their resistance to diseases. (Madigan 227).

Dual-Purpose breed.

Lay blue to blue-green eggs.

Very cold-hardy.

Friendly and easily handled. Non-aggressive.

Quiet and adaptable.

Bears confinement well and suited to free-range.

Araucana—a great dual-purpose breed for our Portage community

Dual-Purpose breed.

Lay light-blue to blue-green eggs.

Very cold-hardy.

Mostly calm and non-aggressive.

Well adapted to confinement or free range.

Ameraucana—a great dual-purpose breed for our Portage community

Dual-purpose breed.

Lays light-brown eggs.

Very cold and heat-hearty.

Friendly and easily handled.

Calm and docile.

Adaptable. Bears confinement well and suitable to free-range.

Listed under "Watch" on the ALBC—American Livestock Breeds Conservancy – Conservation Priority List.

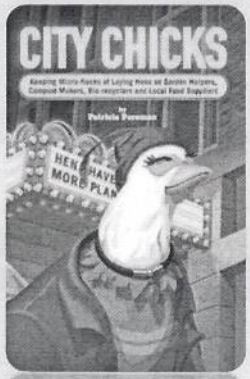
Brahma—a great dual-purpose breed for our Portage community

Noise Level

"Although the rare persnickety neighbor may complain about hen sounds, the loudest noise a hen makes is a brief cackle after she's laid an egg. Contented hens 'sing' to themselves by making a soft, pleasant sound to which only a grouch could object" (Madigan 223).

Resources

Print



Foreman, Patricia. *City Chicks: Keeping Micro-Flocks of Laying Hens as Garden Helpers, Compost Makers, Bio-Recyclers and Local Food Suppliers*. Good Earth Publishing, 2009. Print.

Madigan, Carleen. *The Backyard Homestead*. Storey Publishing, 2009. Print.

Web

- *BackyardChickens.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 8 Feb 2011. <http://www.backyardchickens.com>.
- Henderson, John R. "Henderson's Handy-Dandy Chicken Chart ." *An Alphabetical List of More than 60 Chicken Breeds With Comparative Information*. N.p., 14 December 2010. Web. 16 Feb 2011. <http://www.ithaca.edu/staff/jhenderson/chooks/chooks.html>.
- "ALBC Conservation Priority Heritage Chicken Breeds." *American Livestock Breeds Conservancy*. American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, n.d. Web. 16 Feb 2011.
- <http://albcusa.org/heritagechicken/cpl_chickenbreeds.html>