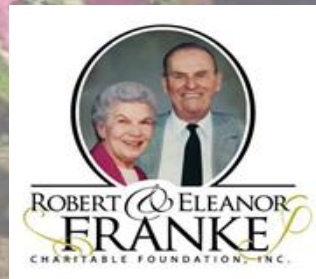


LA CROSSE GROWS FOOD

Engaging citizens in an abundant community food system

In partnership with the City of La Crosse Planning Dept.
Funded by Coulee Food System Coalition
a project of Hillview Urban Agriculture Center and
Franke Foundation



Goals of the Coulee Food System Coalition

- Reduce hunger by promoting food access
- Build an equitable, economical, and environmentally sound community food system
- Connect food with other community issues and promote cultural diversity
- Instill self-reliance by teaching skills in food production
- Encourage participation in the food system

Partners include United Way, YMCA, Western Technical College, CouleeCap, City of La Crosse, Viterbo, Mayo Health Clinic, Hillview Urban Agriculture Center

Project goals

- Make changes to existing ordinances and permitting process
- **Create the La Crosse Food Growing Guide**
- Make presentations, attract media, and encourage education based on new policy
- Engage citizens in urban food production

Food Insecurity in La Crosse

A woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, is focused on preparing food in a kitchen. She is using a white spoon to mix something in a clear plastic container. In the foreground, the arm of another person wearing a purple and white striped shirt is visible, reaching towards the food. To the left, there is a black bowl filled with a yellowish, chunky food item. The background is slightly blurred, showing a kitchen setting with a white wall and a window.

- In the US-50 million people, had difficulty obtaining food in 2013-14, with 6.8 million households experiencing very low food security.
- 36% of the La Crosse County residents reported being food insecure in 2012.
- 13,490 children in La Crosse County are food insecure

Health Impacts of Food Insecurity

- Lack of healthy produce and excess of processed foods leave little choice for consumers who battle poverty, food insecurity, and/or hunger.
- The obesity rate among adults in the La Crosse area has increased by 16% in 5 years. Current rate of 30%.
- Top three causes of death in La Crosse County are: cancer, heart disease, and stroke.

Policy: encouraging or road blocking

- Permits can be confusing and discourage
- Permits and fees block desired progress
- Both cost City of La Crosse and do the opposite of the intent
- Best practices and nuisance abatement

Areas of impact-personal use only

- Residential gardens
- Community gardens, food forest, Community Farms
- Composting
- Native Lawns
- Beekeeping
- Laying Hens
- Rabbits and Roosters
- Livestock

Existing Use guidelines

(2)

Use conditions. Any owner, occupier, or user of property within the City of La Crosse who chooses to own, keep or harbor chickens and any chicken coop permitted under this section shall be limited to the following conditions:

a. One property is limited to the keeping or harboring of up to five chickens.

b. A person may only own, keep or harbor chickens on property being used as a single-family residential dwelling.

c. No person shall keep any rooster.

d. No person shall slaughter any chickens.

e. The chickens shall be provided with a covered enclosure and must be kept in the covered enclosure or a fenced enclosure within the backyard of the property at all times.

f. No enclosure shall be located closer than 25 feet to any residential structure on an adjacent lot.

(3)

Public health and safety concerns.

a. No person shall keep any chicken or other fowl within the City of La Crosse in any unsanitary condition or within such proximity of dwelling houses or in any manner so as to be a nuisance.

b. All chicken coops, yards and other buildings shall be kept in a clean, sanitary condition and free from all objectionable odors and shall be subject to the inspection and approval of the City of La Crosse and the La Crosse County Public Health Department or their agents.

c. The La Crosse County Public Health Department, City of La Crosse and their agents shall have jurisdiction to inspect the premises upon which chickens are kept and ascertain and determine whether the conditions are unsanitary or if for any reason a nuisance is caused thereby.

d. A complaint against any person owning, keeping or harboring chickens in accordance with this section may be filed with the City or the La Crosse County Department of Public Health. If filed with the City, the City shall then be required to forward the complaint to the La Crosse County Department of Public Health. If the La Crosse County Public Health Department, the City of La Crosse or their agents determines that conditions are unsanitary, or if for any reason a nuisance exists, they shall have authority to order the owner or occupant of the premises to abate the nuisance and it shall thereupon be unlawful to keep such chickens on the premises.

e. If an investigation from the City reveals that the use of chickens is in violation of this section or any other section of this Code the City shall have authority to require the owner or user of the property to fix, abate, or alleviate the problem. If the problem is not satisfactorily abated or alleviated the City of La Crosse shall have authority to revoke the license.

(4)

Bird noise. In accordance with this section, it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, corporation, or other entity operating, having charge of, or occupying any building to own, keep, harbor or allow to be kept any chicken which shall habitually by any noise disturb the peace and quiet of any person in the vicinity thereof.

(5)

Rat harborage to be prevented. All chicken yards, coops, pens or houses shall be constructed or repaired as to prevent rats from being harbored underneath the same or within the walls thereof, and all food products or other products, goods or wares likely to attract or to become infested with or infected by rats shall be protected as to prevent rats from gaining access thereto or coming in contact therewith.

ANIMALS

Hens

Chickens are the perfect animal in the world of permaculture (permanent agriculture). They lay eggs, eat scraps, and their waste can be used for fertilizer. The main benefit of backyard chickens are the eggs they lay, providing a healthy source of protein for the family. In addition, chickens eat food waste diverting it from the landfill – in fact, a city in Belgium is giving out hens to reduce landfill costs. A single chicken can bio-recycle about seven pounds of food scraps in a month.* Their waste can then be used to fertilize your vegetable garden. With the help of a chicken tractor to contain them over a garden, they can be used for weed control, soil turning, pest removal, and direct fertilizing of garden. You can also use reclaimed materials—such as kids' play structures—to build coops and runs.

SCALE

Five hens maximum for the purpose of laying; If you live on more than 5 acres, up to 20 birds are allowed.

BEST PRACTICES

- Fresh water must be accessible to chickens 24 hours a day.
- Feed chickens once or twice daily; chickens prefer a diverse diet of greens and organic grains – most kitchen scraps are good; avoid citrus peels, moldy or rotten food, dried beans, chocolate, and junk food.
- Eggshells should be fed back to the chickens; bake for 10 minutes and crush to avoid encouraging egg eating.
- Grit should be provided to chickens to help in digestion.
- Let out and put in each day; this is not necessary if you build an enclosed chicken run.
- Waste can be harvested every 2 weeks from the coop and aged for the purpose of home garden fertilizer.
- Manure should be aged 120 days before application.

*www.organicgardening.com/living/5-reasons-raise-chickens

- Manure must be aged 25 ft. away from neighbor's windows and doors.
- Deep litter methods are allowed if great care is paid to maintaining the system.

SHELTER

- Distance from neighbor's windows and doors should be at least 25 ft. for coops and runs.
- Run must have 5 sq. ft. of dirt floor space per chicken; half of that must be covered to protect from sun and rain/snow, preferably corrugated aluminum roofing that is draining away from the shelter or being captured in a rainwater storage system.
- Coop must be 2 sq. ft. per hen and insulated for winter warmth; coop must have a roost for sleeping and keeping the chickens away from waste droppings.
- Laying boxes with bedding refreshed weekly improve ease and cleanliness of egg production.
- Free-range is allowed on property more than 5 acres, as long as measures are taken to prevent disruption of neighbor's property.

RESOURCES

General Information

www.backyardchickens.com
raising-chickens.org



SAMPLE Changes-Chicken ordinance

Existing policy	Recommended change
Annual Permit from City-renewed each year	Remove permit process
City Clerk charges fee for permit	Remove permit process
5 Chicken limit	Raise limit for 5 acre parcels
No Roosters	Cover under rooster/rabbit
Director of Finance reviews fees and collects	Not needed

Want to Grow Food in La Crosse- Here's how!

- Website link with benefits and best practices
- Informational handouts on specific areas
- Classes in the community explaining guidelines and sharing best practices
- Encouragement to local nonprofits to create models and increase education

Resolution sets intent

- Acknowledges food insecurity impacting citizens of La Crosse.
- Acknowledges the link between insecurity and health impacts
- Dedicates the action of using policy to encourage best practices
- Please support the resolution going to the Common Council