A “One Health” Approach to Regulating Backyard Chickens

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UConn CLEAR Webinar Dec. 3, 2025

CLEAR

UCONN EXTENSION

Upcoming CLEAR Webinars

- 3D Hydrography: Modernizing the Nation's Water Data Infrastructure
  December 4 (tomorrow!) @ 1pm
- Connecticut's Lidar and Orthoimagery Revisited
  December 11 (next week!) @ 12pm
- Red Flag Warning: Understanding CT's Wildfire Ecology, Forest Health, and Planning for a Changing Future
  January 15, 2026 (next year!) @ 1pm
- LIS Watershed Land Cover Change 1985-2023
  Date in February TDB

Registration & Recordings at:

https://clear.uconn.edu/webinars

Today's Clucking

- What is One Health?
- Why allow Chickens?
- Addressing common concerns
- Chicken regulations in CT - WestCOG

Speakers

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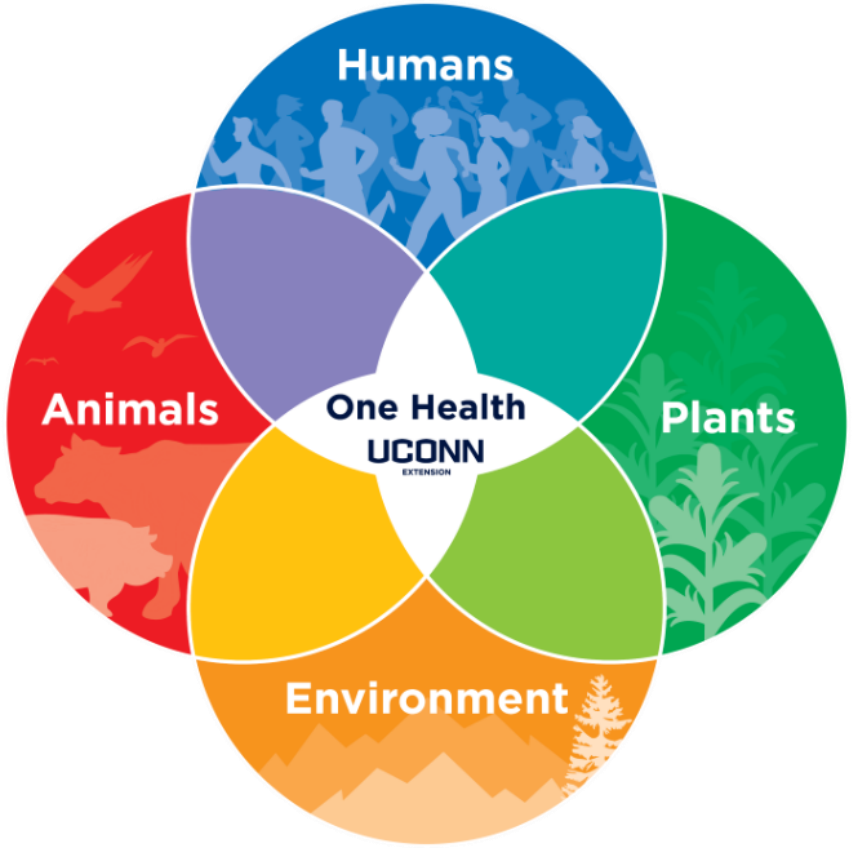
What is a One Health Approach?

- Global framework
- Emphasizes interconnectedness of human, animal, plant, and environment al health
- Goal: Optimize health of all species and environment
- Uses a “systems perspective”



Why ONE HEALTH is Important

As Earth's population grows, our connection with animals and the environment changes:

People live closer together

Changes in climate and land use

More global travel and trade

Animals are more than just food

These factors make it easier for diseases to spread between animals and people.

A One Health approach tackles shared health threats by looking at all angles—human, animal, plant, and environmental

www.cdc.gov/onehealth

CDC

What is a One Health Approach?

Emphasis on working *across* disciplines

- Scientists
- Farmers and practitioners
- Doctors, including veterinarians
- Municipalities
- Decision-makers
- Community members

High priority One Health issues:

- Zoonotic (ex: *Salmonella, E. coli*) and vector-borne diseases (ex: Lyme)
- Antibiotic resistance
- Food insecurity and safety
- Ecosystem degradation, including water, air, and soil quality concerns
- Climate variability and extreme weather events

Benefits of Backyard Chickens

- Food security
- Environmental benefits of local food access
- Improvements in agricultural literacy
- Youth development potential
- Composted manure as fertilizer
- Enjoyable activity

Common neighbor concerns

- Noise
- Manure issues
  - Smells
  - Disease
  - Water quality
- Public health
- Wandering chickens (i.e. containment)
- Animal health
- Property values?
- Egg sales

POTENTIAL RESTRICTION ON CHICKENS

Tonight there is an item on the PZC agenda to discuss a limit to the NUMBER of chickens on each parcel and a BAN on roosters. The current East Hampton Zoning Regs already establish lot requirements for livestock for resident safety and animal welfare.

East Hampton is a country town and regulations like this will continue to progress the town away from that which we all love.

Please contact Zoning officials via email, and/or speak up at the meeting either in person or via zoom TONIGHT 7PM and express your opposition to this. Links below.

Noise!

Concerns

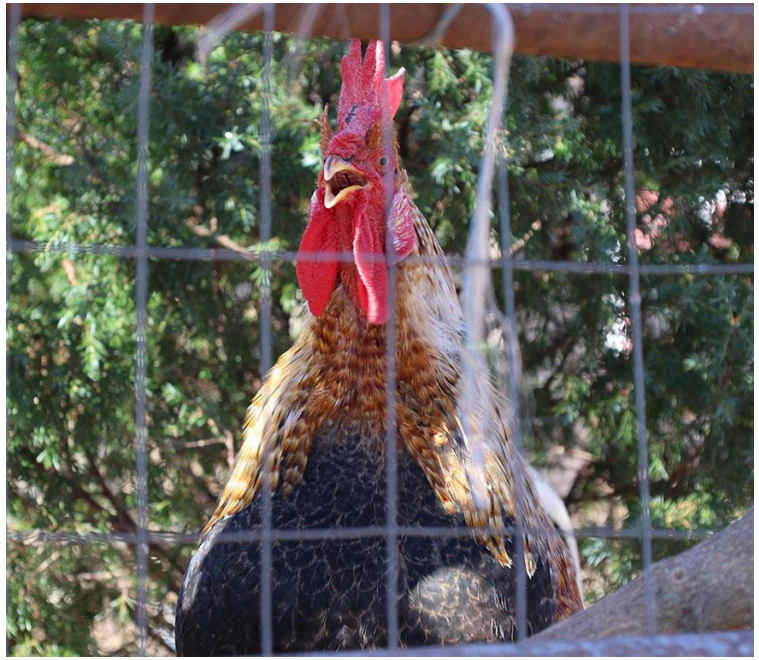
- Earlier than requested wakeup calls

Facts

- Roosters are the main culprit
- Hen noises – when lay egg, quieter than dog
- Bigger issue with smaller lot sizes

Approaches

- Rooster ban
- Flock size
- Setbacks



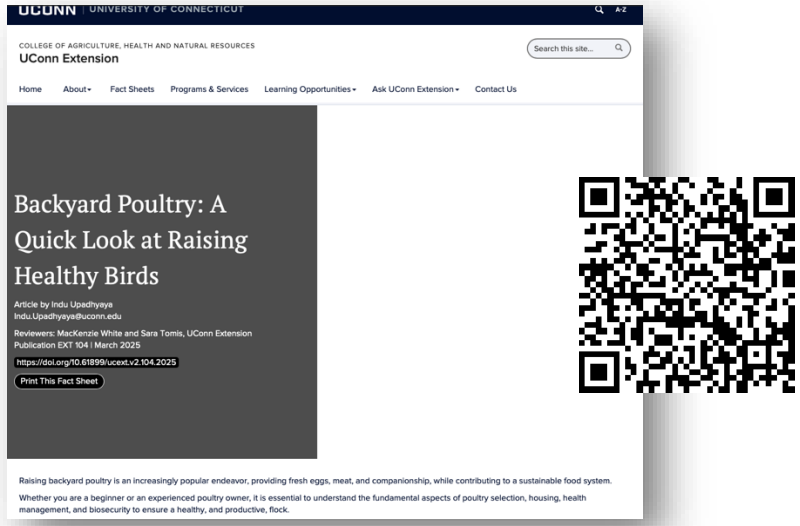
"we live on a 1/4 acre lot and have a neighbor with 4 roosters. Yes, a 4 am wake up every day is not what we had in mind when we moved here. Their roosters are closer to our house than theirs. We are unable to sleep with our windows open. "

-facebook user

Manure –Odor & Disease

Concerns

- Odors
- Pests (flies, vermin)
- Disease



https://s.uconn.edu/backyardbirds

Facts

- Don't produce a lot of solid waste
- Can be composted for fertilizer
- Can be managed by common maintenance and sanitation practices

Approaches

- Setbacks
- Flock size
- Manure management requirements
  - cleaning schedule (seasonal variation)
  - "odor-free"
  - Fully contain compost
- Reference CT public health code – manure management
- Reference/distribute UConn Extension fact sheet

Manure – water quality

Concerns

- Proximity to wells
- Proximity to septic
- Proximity to wetlands and waterways

Facts

- High nitrogen & phosphorus
- Can be composted and used as fertilizer
- Could impact private wells or water bodies
- Could impact septic leaching field

Approaches

- Good manure mgmt. practices can address
- Outside of septic leaching field
- Avoid locations where runoff into water bodies or occasional flooding is observed/likely
- 75ft downgradient from private wells
- 100ft from wetlands or waterbodies

Public Health

Concerns

- Chicken-related pathogens
  - *Salmonella*
  - *Campylobacter*
  - *E. coli*
  - Avian Influenza

Facts

- Some occur naturally in gut (*E. coli*)
- Others are spread through interaction with other species (e.g., migratory birds)
- Keep out of home

Public Health

Approaches

- Manure mgmt. & sanitation requirements
- Containment
- Processing considerations
- Education/outreach about safety
  - Don’t allow in home
  - Don’t track in home
    - Hand washing
    - Chicken boots
  - Pest management
  - High risk
    - <5 years old
    - Pregnant
    - 65+
    - Immunocompromised hosts

Containment

Concerns

- “Trespassing”
- Runaways (scare cars/kids/pets)
- Spread disease
- Interaction with pets/wildlife

Facts

- Coops can attract wildlife –coyotes, bobcats, foxes, bears
- Unsecured feed can attract bears, rodents, other wildlife
- Roaming a bigger issue on smaller lots

Approaches

- Fencing should be sufficient to prevent unwanted escape or predator entry
- CT DEEP recommends fully contained (including roof) & electric fence
- Somewhat lot size dependent

Animal Health

Concerns

- Animal welfare (incl. proper care, maintenance, and infrastructure)

Facts

- Access to high quality feed and clean water
- Number of birds
- Indoor/outdoor access
- Secure housing
- Manure management

Approaches

- Minimum and maximum number birds
  - Can be tied to size of enclosed area rather than lot
- Coop size requirements (2-4 ft./bird)
- Enclosure requirements (No drafts, electric fencing, prevent wildlife interactions)

Egg Sales

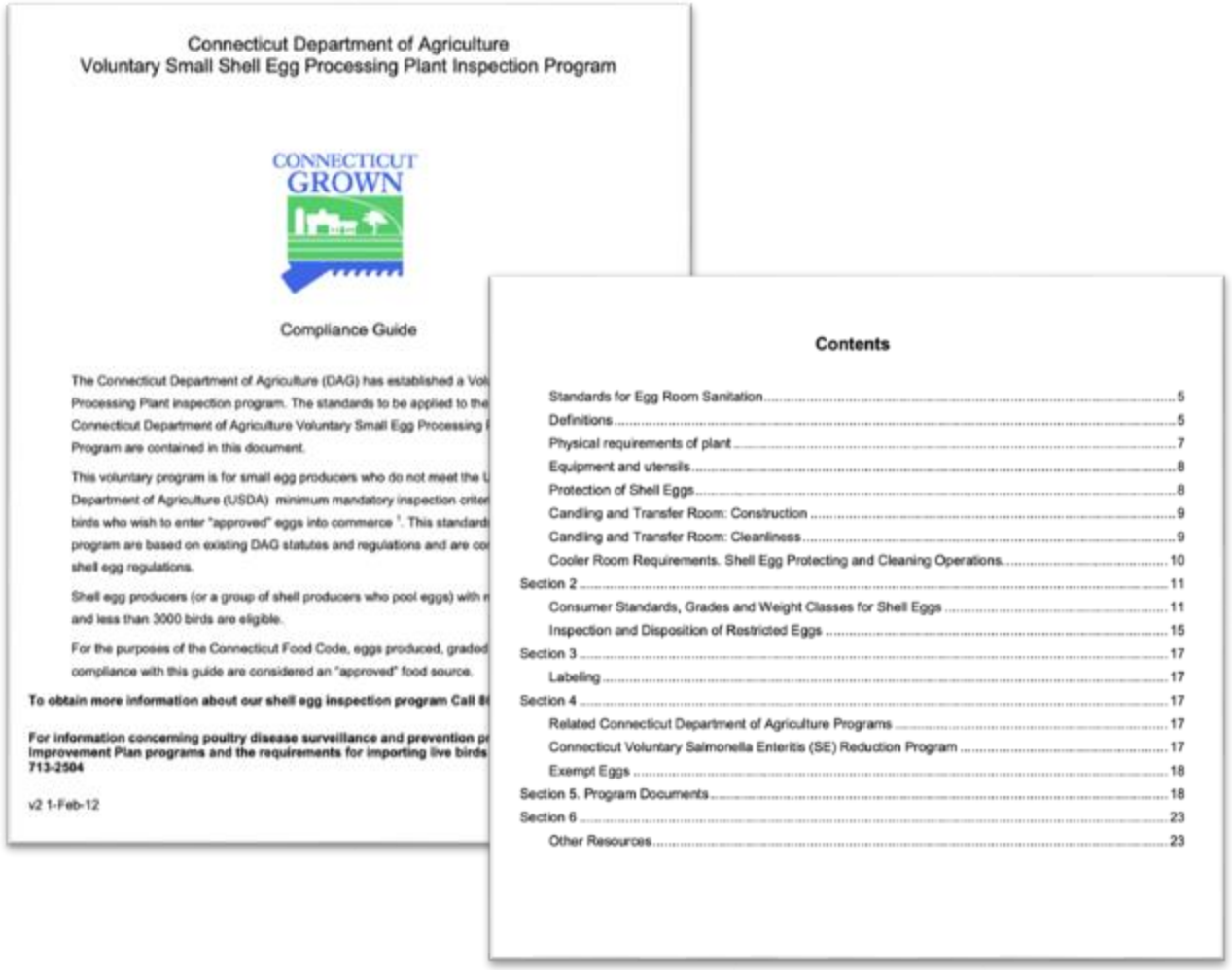
Concerns

- Proper handling/health

Facts

- Eggs should be clean
- Kept at 45°F or below
- Free eggs for neighbors?

Reference – CT Voluntary Shell Egg Program Guidelines



Connecticut Department of Agriculture
Voluntary Small Shell Egg Processing Plant Inspection Program

CONNECTICUT GROWN

Compliance Guide

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DAG) has established a Vol
Processing Plant inspection program. The standards to be applied to the
Connecticut Department of Agriculture Voluntary Small Egg Processing
Program are contained in this document.

This voluntary program is for small egg producers who do not meet the U
Department of Agriculture (USDA) minimum mandatory inspection crite
birds who wish to enter "approved" eggs into commerce [1]. This standard
program are based on existing DAG statutes and regulations and are co
shell egg regulations.

Shell egg producers (or a group of shell producers who pool eggs) with
and less than 3000 birds are eligible.

For the purposes of the Connecticut Food Code, eggs produced, graded
compliance with this guide are considered an "approved" food source.

To obtain more information about our shell egg inspection program Call 8

**For information concerning poultry disease surveillance and prevention p
Improvement Plan programs and the requirements for importing live birds
713-2504**

v2 1-Feb-12

Contents

Property value?

Concerns

- Negative impact?

Facts

- Subjective
- No evidence well kept chicken coops affect property value
- Community benefits (free eggs?)

Approaches

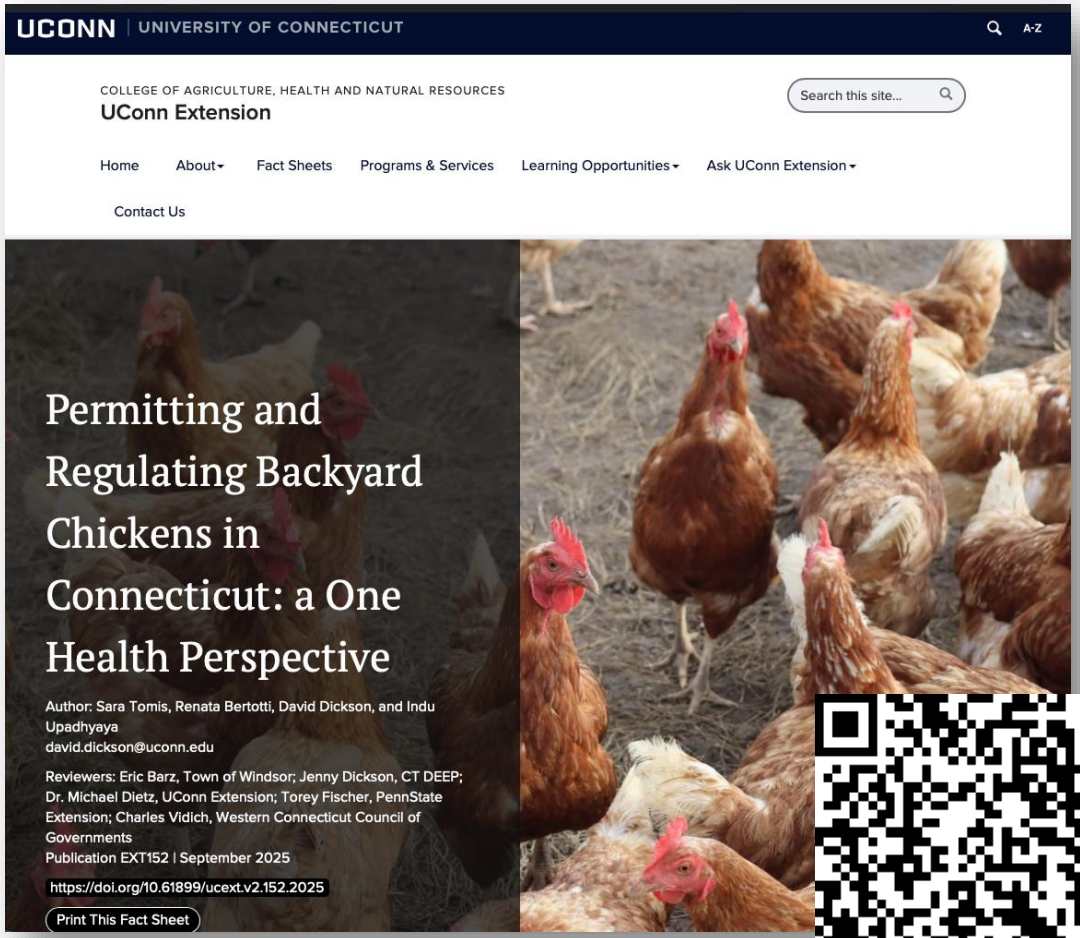
- Smart regulations that fit community and lessen concerns

> *"All the homes were well kept and considered a quiet neighborhood. We were there for 5 years before this happened. We've put $100k in renovations into the house and* ***will now see our investment go down and not be able to enjoy the property as we have for the last 5 years****. This is why we approached the town to amend and clarify the regulations."*
>
> -homeowner comment on social media after chicken coop with roosters was put up 30 ft from their house

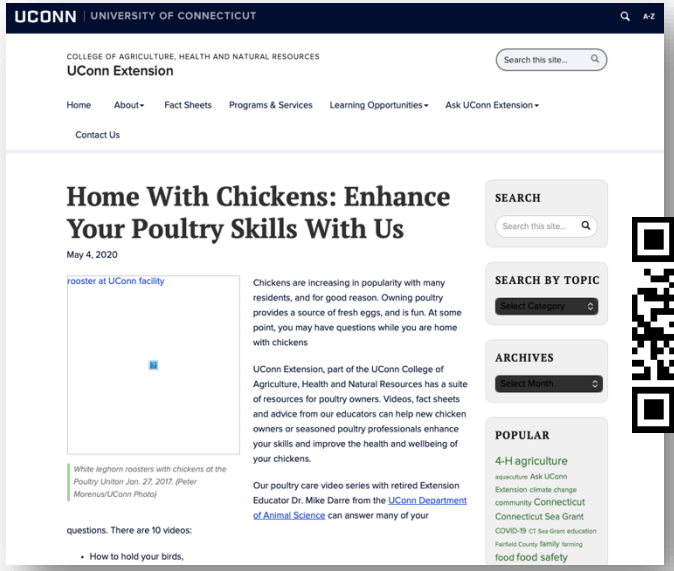
Summary – Things to consider

- Flock limits
- Roosters
- Containment
- Setbacks
- Placement/lot location
- Coop & run size requirements
- Maintenance requirements
- Egg sales
- Education

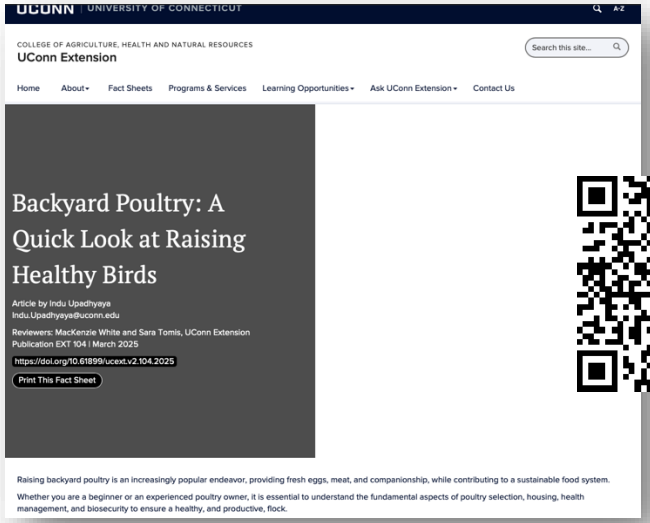
Further exploration



https://s.uconn.edu/chickenzoning



https://s.uconn.edu/chickenhome



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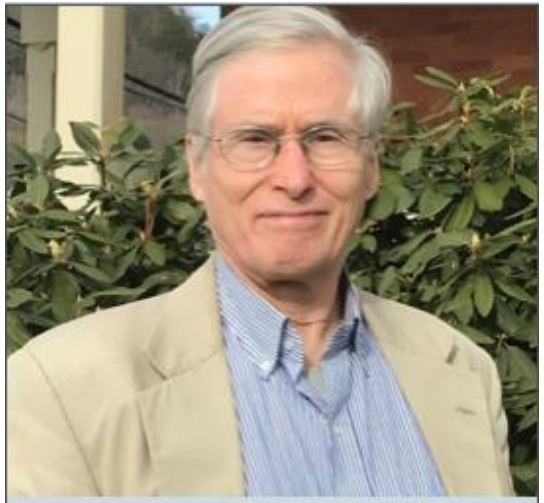
What do most CT Towns Require?



Environment | Housing | Land Use

Charles Vidich – Senior Project Manager

Charles has over 40 years of experience in planning and government, including as the Principal Planner at the Council of ...

WESTCOG

Data Collection | Environment | GIS | Land Use | Planning

Tucker Beckett – Senior Planner

Tucker works on land use and environmental planning projects. Prior to joining WestCOG, he worked as a municipal planner for ...