

WildSafeBC position paper on the raising of urban livestock

WildSafeBC understands and supports the concepts of local food security and we recognize that the raising of chickens and urban animal husbandry can be a part of a local food strategy. At the same time we would recommend that any production of food be done in a manner that is environmentally responsible and sustainable. Part of that responsibility lies in ensuring local food production does not create attractants for local wildlife.

WildSafeBC does not take a stance on whether or not animal husbandry (keeping of chickens, goats, pigs, bees, etc.) should be allowed in a municipal setting, but, if a municipality does allow for it then we encourage the adoption of bylaws that set out the following standards by which the practice can be undertaken. Please note that the recommendations are not meant to be exhaustive but only address those issues around reducing human/wildlife conflicts.

Important: The following guidelines can only reduce conflict, not completely rid a community of the conflict that will be created by allowing an attractant such as chickens within their boundaries.

If farm animals are to be kept in an urban setting, then the following minimum guidelines should be observed:

1. The raising of any domestic animals be conducted in such a manner as to not attract wildlife.
2. Specific measures that should be taken include:
 - a. The enclosure should have a properly installed and well maintained electric fence set up around its perimeter (see WildSafeBC's document called Electric Fence Guidelines)
 - b. The enclosure should be built in such a way as to exclude larger wildlife such as fox, coyote, cougar even without the application of electric fencing.
 - c. For chickens and small animals a coop or hutch within the enclosure should provide the animals with a safe roosting/nesting area and should be able to be closed for the night and be built so as to exclude small predators such as weasels, skunks or martens.
 - d. Enclosures should be located away from cover and within good sight lines for people approaching the enclosure.
 - e. Animals should be fed in such a manner as to ensure that no feed is left uneaten and available to wildlife. Feed which is not used by the animals should be cleaned out on a daily basis.
 - f. All feed should be stored in airtight, wildlife-resistant containers in locations that are not easily accessed by wildlife.
 - g. Any other wildlife attractants in close proximity to the enclosure must be managed so as not to attract wildlife to the enclosure.
3. In the event that the enclosure is breached by wildlife the incident should be reported immediately to the provincial hotline (1-877-952-7277).