



Urban livestock ownership, management, and regulation in the United States: An exploratory survey and research agenda



Nathan McClintock^{a,*}, Esperanza Pallana^b, Heather Wooten^c

^a Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning, Portland State University, P.O. Box 751, Portland, OR 97207, USA

^b Oakland Food Policy Council, 221 Oak St., #D, Oakland, CA 94607, USA

^c ChangeLab Solutions, 2201 Broadway, Suite 502, Oakland, CA 94612, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 January 2013

Received in revised form 8 November 2013

Accepted 9 December 2013

Keywords:

Animals
Food systems planning
Municipal chicken ordinances
Urban agriculture
Urban livestock
Zoning

ABSTRACT

As interest in urban agriculture sweeps the country, municipalities are struggling to update, code to meet public demands. The proliferation of urban livestock—especially chickens, rabbits, bees, and goats—has posed particular regulatory challenges. Scant planning scholarship on urban livestock focuses mostly on how cities regulate animals, but few studies attempt to characterize urban livestock, ownership and management practices in the US in relation to these regulations. Our study addresses this gap. Using a web-based survey distributed via a snowball technique, we received responses from 134 livestock owners in 48 US cities, revealing the following: why they keep livestock; what kind of, livestock they keep and how many; the proximity of their livestock to property lines and dwellings; the extent to which they raise animals for meat; how they manage waste and other possible nuisances or public health risks; and their interest in exchanging animal products through sale and barter. We also examine whether such practices conform to the regulatory context. Results suggest that urban livestock ownership is more akin to pet ownership and should therefore not be restricted under planning codes as if it were a commercial-scale agricultural activity. Given the diversity of livestock ownership practices and lot sizes, we recommend that planners consider the following when developing urban livestock codes: (1) more appropriate setbacks and animal limits per lot; (2), promotion of high standards for animal welfare; (3) addressing sales and slaughter; and (4), making regulations more visible to the public. We, conclude by laying out an agenda for future research on urban livestock regulation and management.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Over the last few years, public interest in urban agriculture has spread rapidly across North America. Planning scholars and practitioners have been keeping pace with this latest surge in interest in urban agriculture, calculating urban agriculture's potential contributions to local food systems (Colasanti and Hamm, 2010; MacRae et al., 2010; McClintock et al., 2012), documenting best practices (Hodgson et al., 2011; Wooten and Ackerman, 2011), and developing recommendations for policy and planning (Feldstein, 2013; Hodgson et al., 2011; Mukherji and Morales, 2010; Raja et al., 2008). In many cities, planners are updating codes to reflect changing land uses and activities, including the production and sale of agricultural products and the keeping of urban livestock such as chickens, geese, ducks, goats, pigs, rabbits, and bees. While most cities already have ordinances in place that regulate animals in some manner (Bouvier, 2012), over 20 US cities (including Cleveland,

San Antonio, Kansas City, and Seattle) have recently passed new ordinances that explicitly deal with urban livestock (Butler, 2012).

Historically, the presence of livestock in the city was controversial. Earlier in the 20th century, many municipalities restricted or prohibited livestock ownership, citing the public health risks of keeping farm animals in close proximity to humans. While some of the concerns over waste and nuisances were warranted, restrictions on livestock (and agricultural practices, in general) were more a reflection of a dominant paradigm to classify and separate “urban” from “rural” land uses (Bartling, 2012; Fogelson, 2005; Gaynor, 1999; McNeur, 2011; Orbach and Sjoberg, 2011). Many of the same concerns can be heard today as opponents raise concerns over smell, noise, and public health (McCaffrey, 2012; Robinson, 2012), advancing their “desire to maintain a particular vision and meaning of urban space” (Bartling, 2012, p. 8). Furthermore, some animal welfare activists have argued against livestock ownership on moral grounds, contending that legalization will result in neglect of animals, inhumane conditions, and the development of backyard factory farms (Elwood, 2011; Kauffman, 2012). Some have opposed regulation favorable to livestock out of concern for the additional pressure urban livestock might put on already

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 503 725 4064.

E-mail address: n.mcclintock@pdx.edu (N. McClintock).

over-burdened animal control departments and animal shelters, particular as the allure of a “hipster” fad dwindles (Aleccia, 2013).

Succumbing to what Orbach and Sjoberg (2011, p. 3) colorfully refer to as “clucking”—which consists of “avoidable debates, controversies, disputes, litigation, filibusters, and other argumentative processes”—by opponents of urban livestock, some cities have simply left livestock out of recent efforts to update or draft new urban agriculture ordinances. San Francisco’s Urban Agriculture Ordinance (Ordinance 66-11), for example, deals only with zoning and permitting for crop production and sales; efforts in neighboring Oakland have been stymied by debates over whether or not animals should be included in a new urban agriculture ordinance (McClintock et al., 2012; Tian, 2011).

Despite the upsurge in urban agriculture in North America and the concomitant growth in relevant scholarship, research on urban livestock policy and planning in the US remains scant. Some scholarship examines conflicts related to urban livestock ownership (Orbach and Sjoberg, 2012; Salkin, 2011; Schindler, 2012), or details the various functions and benefits of urban agriculture or livestock (Blecha and Leitner, 2013; Calfee and Weissman, 2012; Voigt, 2011; Wood et al., 2010). Much of this recent literature reviews how livestock is regulated, detailing how municipal and county codes regulate livestock through a combination of zoning, nuisance, public health, and animal control ordinances (Butler, 2012; Hodgson et al., 2011; Salkin, 2011; Voigt, 2011). Such local controls include: outright bans; limits on types and numbers of animals; animal-specific permits; neighbor consent; and design, size, and setback requirements for coops and shelters. In a survey of 22 recently revised municipal ordinances, Butler (2012, p. 17) reported that most cities allow animals in residential areas to some extent, but that “it is rare to find a municipality that is widely permissive in all aspects of urban livestock keeping”. Similarly, LaBadie (2008) found that chicken ordinances in 25 cities vary widely in terms of regulation of flock size, distance to property lines and dwellings, enclosures, nuisances, and slaughter. Further illustrating this trend, Bouvier (2012) found that 84 of the 100 largest cities in the US allow chicken ownership in some capacity; only three ban chickens outright, while an additional 13 restrict ownership to agricultural zones or to lots so large that most residents are excluded. Further, he found that 71 of 100 regulate chickens through animal control ordinances, while only 14 locate chicken ordinances within the zoning code.

With few exceptions (e.g., Bartling, 2012; Blecha and Leitner, 2013), however, scholars have not thoroughly examined the actual motivations and management practices of urban livestock owners, nor have they investigated whether or how existing regulations transform these practices. More than simply a gap in academic scholarship, this lack of understanding has policy implications. As Thibert (2012, p. 349) notes, planners and municipal officials rarely understand the “diversity of practices within the urban agriculture movement;” this lacuna thereby poses a challenge to the development of ordinances that can effectively regulate such practices. Indeed, as cities develop policies to facilitate (or curtail) the expansion of urban livestock ownership, it would help to first characterize what urban livestock ownership and management actually look like on the ground. What motivates most urban livestock owners to raise animals? How many animals do they raise? What kind of structures do they keep their animals in and how far are these from the property line? How often do they clean animal waste and what do they do with it? To what extent are they raising animals for meat, eggs, milk, or other food uses? To what extent do these practices conform to or violate existing regulations?

This exploratory survey of 134 urban livestock owners from 48 different US municipalities begins to answer some of these pertinent questions, and offers preliminary insights into the scale and scope of their practices. Moreover, their responses suggest that the

diversity of practices and experiences may warrant the reevaluation of current urban livestock controls. We hope that these results might pave the way for future research while helping guide planners and policy makers as they redefine the place for urban livestock in North American cities.

The paper proceeds with a presentation of our survey methodology. We then present our results, beginning with a brief overview of the municipal regulations of chickens currently in place in the respondents’ cities. We then report the management practices of respondents, with special attention to if and how the practices of a subset of chicken owners adhere to municipal regulations. In the discussion and conclusion that then follow, we underscore the importance of: revisiting existing regulation to develop more appropriate setbacks and animal limits; using regulation to raise animal welfare standards; addressing sales and slaughter; and informing the public about regulation. We conclude by outlining an agenda for future research on urban livestock management and planning.

Methods

Survey distribution and response

In June 2011 we distributed an online questionnaire or web-based survey (Cook et al., 2000; Fleming and Bowden, 2009) via email using a chain referral or “snowball” sampling technique (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). The survey, which consisted of 36 questions, was sent to known urban livestock keepers nationwide and to list-serves belonging to the Community Food Security Coalition (COMFOOD and UrbanAg), Illinois Local Food and Farms Coalition, Institute of Urban Homesteading, and Bay Area Homestead Hook Up, with the request that recipients forward the survey along to other relevant list-serves and individuals. Given this “viral” dissemination technique, it is impossible to calculate a response rate. We ultimately received 134 responses from individuals in 48 municipalities (see Fig. 1), exactly half of whom ($n=67$) resided in the Bay Area (see Fig. 2). Roughly a quarter of total responses ($n=36$) were from Oakland, likely because Oakland was the origin of the study. Nine responses came from adjacent Berkeley and 22 responses from 14 other Bay Area municipalities. The other metropolitan areas with the highest response rates were: Chicago ($n=13$); Minneapolis ($n=10$); Portland ($n=8$); Cleveland ($n=7$); Seattle ($n=4$); and San Antonio ($n=3$). There were also single responses from municipalities in the New York, Salt Lake City, Nashville, Missoula, Denver, Washington, Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, and Lexington metropolitan regions.

Determining the regulatory context

Given the high rate of chicken ownership among respondents and low numbers for other animals, we decided to restrict our examination of the relationship between regulation and management practices to chickens. We first searched for chicken ordinances on two websites that catalog chicken ordinances from around the country: www.backyardchickens.com and www.thecitychicken.com. We followed the relevant link for each municipal ordinance to crosscheck the scope of regulation. In cases where the city was not listed on either website, we consulted www.municode.com to access the municipal code for a particular city or searched for the code through the municipal government website. In cases where livestock ownership is regulated by the county, we searched for relevant regulations in the code for the surrounding county. In each instance, we assessed the following areas of regulation: limits on the number of chickens; if roosters are allowed; required setbacks from on-site and neighboring dwellings

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6548805>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6548805>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)