



County Planning Commission Workshop

Crowing Fowl Ordinance Update

PLNP2024-00226

Planning and Environmental Review

September 8, 2025

Young Choi

Workshop Overview

- Background & Workshop Request
- Existing Crowing Fowl Zoning Code
- Proposed Amendments & Feedback
- Next Steps



Background

- Increasing number of concerns related to public health, safety, and land use compatibility of Crowing Fowl.
- The proposed Zoning Code changes are being coordinated with County Code update.
- County Staff has been coordinating with County Agricultural Advisory Committee and various agricultural organizations and businesses.
- Initial outreach indicated that the Amendments should target Roosters, rather than entire Crowing Fowl species.

Background



Sacramento County Sheriff's Office

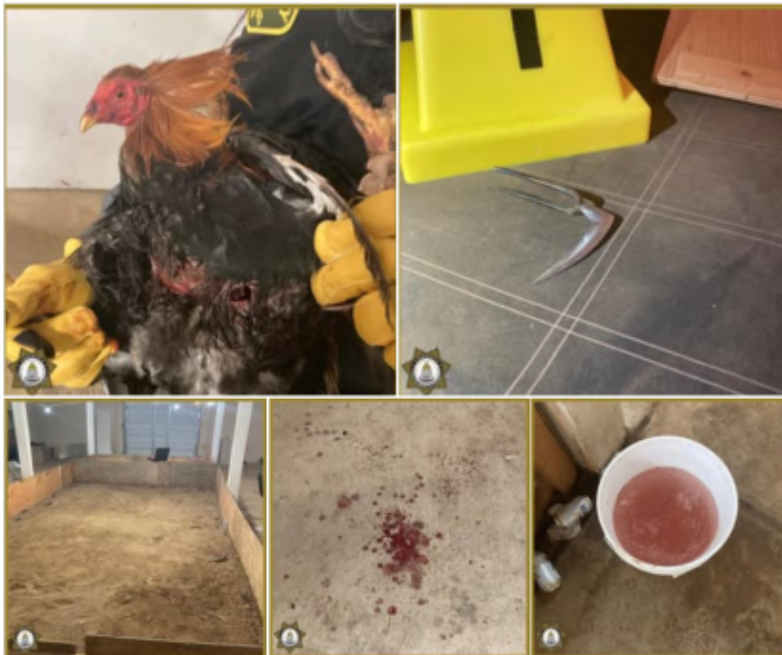
about 8 months ago



LARGE-SCALE BIRD FIGHTING RING DISCOVERED IN SOUTH SACRAMENTO

This weekend, Sacramento County Sheriff's Office Central Division Patrol Deputies responded to a residence in the South area of the County on Borden Road, regarding a large group of vehicles. Upon their arrival, approximately 40-50 individuals fled the area on foot and by vehicle. Multiple vehicles crashed through neighboring fences, and several were left abandoned at the scene.

Suspecting the individuals fled beca... [See more](#)



The Desert Sun

More than 200 birds seized in South Sacramento cockfighting bust

Brian Day, Victorville Daily Press

Updated Mon, December 9, 2024 at 2:43 PM PST

3 min read



Officials seized more than 200 birds, including some severely injured, while dismantling a large-scale cockfighting ring in Sacramento County over the weekend, authorities said Monday.

Update: Cockfighting, marijuana operation raided in Antelope

By Loretta Kalb and Bill Lindelof

lkalb@sacbee.com

Updated July 7, 2015 11:15 PM

Headed by the Sacramento County Sheriff's North Problem Oriented Policing team, a group of officers from Sacramento, El Dorado and Placer counties found evidence that the roosters were being used for illegal cockfights.

About 100 birds were removed from the property by Sacramento County Animal Control officers.

Workshop Request

- To receive feedback/comments on:
 - A **Zoning Ordinance Amendment** To Amend Chapters 3 and 7 Of The Sacramento County Zoning Code Pertaining To The Keeping Of Crowing Fowl.
 - A **County Code Amendment** To Amend Title 8 Of the Sacramento County Code To Add Provisions To Address The Keeping Of Roosters.

While County Code updates are not subject to Planning Commission review, due to the coordinated effort with the Zoning Code, the draft County Code amendments are also being provided as part of this workshop.



Current Crowing Fowl Ordinance

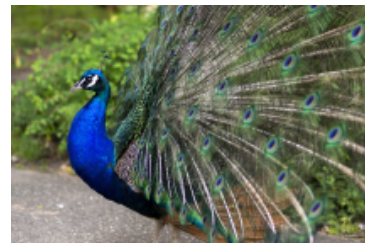
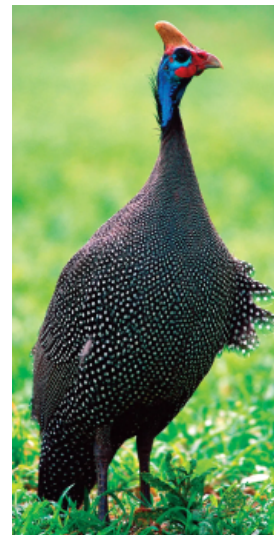
- Crowing Fowl: Any rooster, peacock, goose, quacking duck, or guinea fowl.
- Sacramento County currently allows crowing fowl on lots over 10,000 square feet.
 - Not allowed in RD-10 through RD-40, RM-2, O, Mixed Use, and M-2 zone districts

RD10 - 40 = Residential at higher densities

RM – mobile home park

O = open space

M-2 = Industrial



Rooster Limits In Other Counties

County	Minimum Lot Size to Keep Roosters	Rooster Limits
Sacramento (Current)	10,000 square feet (.23 acres) (not allowed in RD-10 through RD-40, RM-2, O, Mixed Use, and M-2 zones)	No limitation
Sacramento (Proposed)	14,520 square feet (1/3 acre) for each rooster. (AG,AR,RR,RD-1 through RD-10 zones only)	Maximum 5 roosters on AG, RR, AR. RD-1 through RD-10 require TUZ with maximum 2 roosters.
Yolo	> 5 acres (Agricultural/Rural zones only)	Roosters allowed only on lots > 5 acres; each rooster counts as 4 Animal Points
El Dorado	≥ 3 acres	Roosters allowed if lot is 3 acres or more; prohibited on smaller lots
San Joaquin	≥ 1/3 acre	1 rooster (1/3 to <1.5 acres) 2 roosters (1.5 to <3 acres) 3 roosters (≥3 acres)
Sutter	Not allowed in R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4 zones	0 roosters allowed in these urban residential zones
Placer	> 0.5 acre (-AG zone) > 1 acre (RF zone)	Up to 24 poultry per acre; no restriction on type (roosters allowed if zone & size criteria met) Roosters prohibited in Single and Multifamily Zones

Rooster Limits In Other Cities

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Sacramento (Proposed)	14,520 square feet (1/3 acre) for each rooster. (AG,AR,RR,RD-1 through RD-10 zones only)	Maximum 5 roosters on AG, RR, AR. RD-1 through RD-10 require TUZ with maximum 2 roosters.
City of Sacramento	Roosters are not permitted on any developed lot used exclusively for residential purposes.	Prohibited
Folsom	Not more than any combination of two chickens, ducks, pigeons and/or rabbits	
Citrus Heights	20,000 sf	
Roseville	AG zones only	10 maximum
Elk Grove	Prohibited in RD Districts	
West Sacramento	Prohibited	Prohibited

Proposed Amendments

- **3.9.3.G Incidental Agricultural Accessory Structures, Uses, and/or Keeping of Animals:** Staff is clarifying that these provisions apply only to small-scale, non-commercial agricultural activities that are incidental and accessory to the primary residential use. The amendment also allows for a three-month compliance period or NCS from the effective date of the ordinance.

3.9.3.G. Incidental Agricultural Accessory Structures, Uses, and/or Keeping of Animals

[AMENDED 02-24-2017][AMENDED 12-01-2017][AMENDED XX-XX-XXXX]

Incidental agricultural accessory structures, uses and/or keeping of animals is allowed, ~~except in multifamily and RM-2 zoning districts unless developed as a duplex or halfplex,~~ subject to the regulations contained in this section. **These provisions apply only to small-scale, non-commercial agricultural activities that are incidental and accessory to the primary residential use of the property.**

All new incidental agricultural accessory structures, uses/and or keeping of animals established after Month XX, YYYY shall comply with the applicable standards in Section 3.9.3.G.1 through 3.9.3.G.4.

Any incidental agricultural uses and/or keeping of animals established prior to Month XX, YYYY have until Month XX, YYYY (three months from the effective date of the ordinance) to come into compliance with applicable standards in this section pertaining to the maximum number of animals that may be kept unless they obtain a Certificate of Nonconforming Use prior to Month XX, YYYY (three months from the effective date of the ordinance).

Proposed Amendments

- **3.9.3.G.1 General Standards:** This language is not a new requirement; it was previously located in Section 3.4.6.C. and has been copied here for clarity.

~~c. All areas devoted to such uses shall comply with the standards applicable to stables and corrals related to dust, odor, flies and other nuisances included in Section 3.4.6.C. These standards are applicable to the incidental keeping of animals. All areas devoted to such uses shall not allow dust, odor, or flies to cause nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons in the neighborhood or the public and at a minimum shall comply with the following:~~

~~i. All areas shall be maintained so as to be sufficiently dust-free so that no visible quantity of dust is observable at the property lines of the parcel. This shall be done by maintaining sufficient natural vegetation, by watering down the area as often as necessary to prevent dust problems, or by utilizing other more effective dust prevention methods.~~

~~ii. The operator shall take every reasonable precaution to prevent the breeding of flies or the emission of dust or odors into the neighborhood. Reasonable precautions shall include:~~

~~1. Routine manure and bedding clean out of animal enclosures (i.e., stalls, pens, coops) and routine cleanup of manure deposited on the property.~~

~~2. Disposal of animal wastes, such as:~~

~~a. Properly drying or composting away from neighboring properties.~~

~~b. Burying to a minimum depth of two feet.~~

~~c. Removal to approved disposal site.~~

~~iii. All areas shall be maintained in a sanitary condition and in compliance with the following standards:~~

~~a. Water usage and drainage shall not mix with manure accumulations and shall not be disposed of contrary to local and state requirements.~~

~~b. Animal feed shall be stored and utilized in a manner that will not encourage rodent populations.~~

d. The provisions of these use standards shall not apply to public or private stables (see Section 3.4.6.C), or where such animals are kept as a general or commercial agricultural use.

Proposed Amendments

- **3.9.3.G.3.c. Where permitted by Table 3.2**, the minimum lot area for the keeping of small animals (animals less than 75 pounds), (other than pets as defined in Chapter 7.3) including crowing fowl (**except roosters**), on a noncommercial scale as an incidental use, shall be 10,000 square feet. **The keeping of roosters is subject to the following restrictions:**
 - In AG, UR, IR, RR and AR zones, the keeping of roosters as incidental agricultural use shall be limited to three rooster per acre (14,520 square feet per rooster), with a maximum of 5 roosters total on any property.**
 - In RD-1 through RD-10 zones, the keeping of roosters as incidental agricultural use may be allowed with a Temporary Use Permit as provided in Section 3.10.3.M and Section 6.5.7. The number of roosters is limited to one rooster per 14,520 square feet of gross lot area, with a maximum of 2 roosters total on any property.**
 - Rooster are not permitted on parcels less than 14,520 gross square feet in size except as provided in Section 3.9.3.G.3.e.**
- ~~The keeping of crowing fowl as an incidental agricultural use shall be allowed in all zones other than RD 10 through RD 40, RM 2, O, Mixed Use, and M 2.~~

Proposed Amendments

- No longer requiring Use Permit for Educational Programs.
- Minor Use Permit option for Legitimate poultry hobbyist or breeders.

- **3.9.3.G.3.e.** The keeping of goats, sheep, steer, **fowl**, and **other** similar animals may be temporarily allowed on parcels less than **the minimum lot sizes or in greater number than specified in Section 3.9.3.G.3.a through 3.9.3.G.3.d under the following standards:** 20,000-square feet, and hogs on lots greater than two acres, with a Minor Use Permit if part of a Future Farmers of America or 4-H Club educational program or, if kept by independent exhibitors as defined by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.
 - i. Educational Programs, Animals kept as part of recognized educational programs, such as Future Farmers of America, or 4-H Club may be raised on parcels smaller than the minimum lot sizes specified in Section 3.9.3.G.3.a through 3.9.3.G.3.d. Only animals participating in an educational program are permitted under this provision.**
 - ii. Hobbyists and Breeders, Legitimate poultry hobbyists or breeders, as determined by the Agricultural Commissioner, must obtain a Minor Use Permit. The Minor Use Permit will determine the appropriate standards for incidental animal keeping such as but not limited to number of allowed animals, coop size, foraging space, and setbacks.**
 - ~~• Only animals kept as part of a market program are allowed.~~
 - iii.** Structures utilized for the keeping of animals is subject to the development standards found in Section 5.3.2.C. for Agricultural and Agricultural-Residential zoning districts (Table 5.6) and Section 5.4.5. ~~A. B.~~ in Residential Zones (Table 5.10. ~~B - Agricultural Accessory Structures~~).
 - iv.** **The keeping of animals under this Section is subject to all applicable County codes, including but not limited to prohibited conduct as specified in Title 8 of the SCC.** Failure to comply with **County Code**, the standards of this Section, or any conditions of the Minor Use Permit may result in **enforcement action and/or** the revocation of the Use Permit pursuant to Section 6.4.1.G.

Proposed Amendments

- **3.9.3.G.4 Enforcement:**
The amendment would authorize the Planning Director to enforce the entirety of Section 3.9.3.G.
- In addition, appeals of the Director's Determination would be heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals rather than the Board of Supervisors.

3.9.3.G.4 Enforcement:

As provided for by Section 6.6, ~~of the Code, incidental egg-laying chicken and duck-keeping~~ any privileges or allowances granted under this section may be withdrawn from any property by written notification to the property owner by the Planning Director. Withdrawal must be done with cause.

Any condition or combination of circumstances that, in the opinion of the Director, in consultation with applicable County agencies, creates problems contrary to public health, safety, or general welfare or so as to constitute a public nuisance or is in conflict with this Section, any sections referenced herein, or Title 8 of the SCC, will be deemed ~~considered~~ a violation of this the Code and valid cause to grounds for withdrawal of privileges or allowances granted under this Section. ~~egg-laying chicken and duck-keeping privileges.~~ Once any property owner has been ~~noticed~~ notified of the withdrawal of privileges to keep animals on a particular property, such privileges may be reestablished only upon written request and approval of the Director, in consultation with applicable County agencies. A Director's Determination may be appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals ~~Board of Supervisors.~~ Where privileges are withdrawn, all animals, structures, fencing and appurtenances related to animal-keeping shall be abated as provided for in Section 6.6.9. of the Code.

Proposed Amendments

- **3.10.3.M Temporary Keeping of Roosters:** This section would allow property owners in RD-1 through RD-10 zones to keep roosters as an incidental agricultural use with a Temporary Use Permit.
- Temporary Use Permit good for 3 years.
- May require annual verification.

3.10.3.M Temporary Keeping of Roosters [ADDED XX-XX-XXXX]

In RD-1 through RD-10 zones, the keeping of roosters as an incidental agricultural use may be allowed with a Temporary Use Permit, subject to the minimum lot area and number of roosters listed in Section 3.9.3.G.3.c.ii. The Temporary Use Permit shall be valid for a period of up to three years at the discretion of Zoning Administrator and annual verification may be required. Failure to comply with the provisions of Section 3.9.3.G shall result in permit revocation pursuant to Section 6.6 of this Code.

Proposed Amendments

- **7.3. Code Terms and Use Definitions:** Staff is proposing to add a definition for the commercial use of agricultural activities and to clarify existing terms.

- **Agricultural Uses, General/Commercial [AMENDED 03-09-2016] [AMENDED XX-XX-XXXX]**

The primary use of ~~the premises a lot~~ for ~~agriculture~~ agricultural purposes, including but not limited to: ~~the~~ cultivation of the soil for ~~the~~ production and harvesting of crops, the care and breeding of livestock, and poultry, pastureland, horticulture, dairying, viticulture, aquaculture, silviculture (timber management), floriculture, apiaries (beekeeping), whereas such use constitutes the lot's principal dedicated activity and/or the primary source of income for on-premises residents. This definition also includes the ancillary ~~and the~~ storage and minor repair of agricultural vehicles s and equipment used for the processing and transportation of the products ~~grown~~ produced on the premises.

- ~~Incidental~~ **Agricultural Uses, Incidental [AMENDED 02-24-2017]**

Row crop cultivation and animal husbandry other than kennels, hog farms, feedlots, and the keeping of pets, provided the activity is conducted on a hobby-type basis for personal use or consumption; or ~~or~~ for urban agricultural purposes and further provided that such activity is not a primary use of the premises.

- **Incidental Keeping of Animals [AMENDED 02-24-2017] [AMENDED XX-XX-XXXX]**

Any animal husbandry activity conducted on a hobby-type basis for personal use or consumption; or ~~or~~ for urban agricultural purposes other than kennels, hog farms, feedlots, and the keeping of pets; and which is not the primary use of the premises. ~~The keeping of crowing fowl is not included as incidental keeping of animals.~~

- **Structure, Incidental Agricultural Accessory [ADDED 05-11-2018] [AMENDED XX-XX-XXXX]**

A structure that supports agricultural activity ~~or~~ animal husbandry, or incidental keeping of animals conducted on a hobby-type basis for personal use or consumption; or for urban agricultural purposes. ~~and f~~Further provided that such activity is not a primary use of the premises. Incidental Agricultural Accessory Structures are limited to private stables and corrals, barns used primarily for agricultural purposes, hog barns/pens, and aviaries/chicken coops (shelter for fowl).

Proposed County Code Amendments

- **Clear Definition of “Enclosure” and “Rooster”**

“Enclosure” means a structure used for confinement, including, but not limited to, a wire cage or item traditionally used for another purpose such as a water tank or plastic barrel that meets both of the following criteria:

1. Is used to provide long-term housing for one adult rooster.
2. Prevents interaction with other roosters.

“Rooster” means any male chicken which:

1. Is 6 months or older; or
2. Has full adult plumage; or
3. Is capable of crowing.

- **Limit on Tethering**
- **Access to water and shelter, sufficient room, and clean and sanitary premises.**
- **Violation of Title 8 subject to civil penalties, District Attorney may charge with misdemeanor. County Counsel may see legal or equitable relief.**

Feedback/Comments

- Is three months enough time for compliance?
- Is a limit of five roosters per property appropriate in AG, UR, IR, RR and AR zones?
- Is a limit of two roosters per property appropriate in RD-1 through RD-10?
- Should there be additional requirements or findings for approval of the Temporary Use Permit (TUZ)?
- For Legitimate Poultry Breeders, is Minor Use Permit appropriate?
- Other questions/feedback/comments.

*Min. lot size per rooster 14,520 s.f. (3 roosters/acre)

Next Steps



- Review of public comments and updates to draft Ordinances
- Recommendation Hearings: Agricultural Advisory Committee and County Planning Commission
- Board Hearing. Ordinances will take effect 30 days after final action
- To provide additional comments, please contact Young Choi, Associate Planner (choiy@sacounty.gov)