

Noise from Cockerels Crowing Advisory leaflet



It is a fact of life that we all make noise whether we are talking to others, playing music or driving or cars. Some types of noise particularly if they occur regularly or at unsocial hours can however affect others quality of life. Complaints of nuisance from cockerels crowing are on the increase particularly where they are being kept in residential built up areas rather than in the more traditional countryside locations. The keeping of cockerels in the urban environment is likely to lead to complaint of nuisance due to the close proximity of neighbours.

Practicable Advice to Minimising Crowing

1. THINK DO I REALLY NEED A COCKEREL – COCKERELS ARE NOT REQUIRED FOR HENS TO LAY EGGS.
2. Location – It is important to ensure that the cockerel is located as far as practicable from neighbouring residential property.
3. Competition – Where more than one cockerel is kept or others are located in the immediate area this is likely to lead to cockerels competing with each other. This can increase the amount of crowing considerably.
4. Housing – Keep cockerels in a coop at night. Keeping birds in a coop can minimise early morning crowing. Coops should be kept as dark as possible, light entering the coop can trigger the onset of crowing. Do not let cockerels out of the darkened coop until a reasonable hour.

The Law

If you own a cockerel(s) you must ensure that the crowing does not cause a statutory noise nuisance.

In considering whether a statutory nuisance exists Environmental Health Officer's will consider a number of factors including:

1. Nature of the area – cockerels have been part of the English countryside for generations and to some extent part of country life and its charm. This is not to say that nuisance cannot be caused in the country but an odd cockerel crowing in an isolated rural location is less likely to be considered a nuisance when compared to cockerels kept in a more built up residential environments such as towns and villages.
2. Time of day – It is more likely that the law will consider nuisance is being caused if your cockerel is crowing at unsocial hours, ie night, early morning or late evening.
3. Duration - It is more likely that the law will consider nuisance is being caused if your cockerel(s) are crowing for long periods. This more likely with numbers of cockerels because the birds compete.

Investigating complaints

If we receive a complaint about noise we are obliged by law to investigate it. This may include;

- Asking the complainant to note down all times that they are being disturbed.
- Officers from Environmental Health undertaking visits to witness the disturbance.
- The use of noise recording equipment.
- If we are satisfied that the noise constitutes a Statutory Nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, an Abatement Notice will be served requiring you to stop the disturbance, and if this is not complied with, you could face a maximum fine of £5000 (domestic premises), or £20,000 (commercial/ Industrial premises)

Other General Issues Relating to the Keeping of Poultry Cleanliness

Food and water left out for poultry may attract vermin such as rats and mice. Chicken houses may also provide shelter for rats and mice. To prevent this happening, make it a part of your regular routine to clean the shelters and remove uneaten food. Present food to birds in a fixed and stable container rather than scattering food on the ground. Under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 there is a general duty to keep your property free from rats and mice. In the summer poorly kept poultry may result in unpleasant odours which can attract flies. These can become a nuisance to you and your neighbours.

Security

Owner of poultry should take practicable steps to ensure that poultry is now allowed to stray beyond the boundary of their own land.

Sale of Eggs

Should you decide to sell your eggs to friends, over the garden gate or on a market stall it is a requirement you register as a food business. For information and to register contact Boston Borough Council's Environmental Health Commercial Team.

Other information

There are many other issues relating to the keeping of poultry particularly in terms of animal welfare – DEFRA provide welfare codes for poultry (www.defra.gov.uk).

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Other formats

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Please phone 01205 314200.