

Noise from Cockerels Crowing Guidance

The keeping of cockerels in close proximity to residential property is likely to lead to complaint of nuisance.

It is a fact of life that we all make noise whether we are talking to others or playing music. Some types of noise particularly if they occur regularly or at unsocial hours can affect others quality of life.

Complaints of nuisance from cockerels crowing are on the increase particularly when they are kept in residential built up areas rather than in the more traditional countryside locations.

Practical advice to minimise crowing

- **Location** - It is important to ensure that the cockerel is located as far as practicable from neighbouring residential property.
- **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. Think whether you really need a cockerel: cockerels are not required for hens to lay eggs.
- **Housing** - Keep the coop as dark as possible to minimise early morning crowing as a cockerel will crow when light enters the coop. Do not let cockerels out of the darkened coop until a reasonable hour – we suggest 7am. The coop ceiling should be lowered to prevent the cockerel throwing back its head and crowing.

The Law

The owner of cockerel(s) must ensure that the crowing does not cause a statutory noise nuisance.

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

- **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.

- **Time of day** - It is more likely that the law will consider nuisance is being caused if your cockerel is crowing at unsocial hours, i.e. night, early morning or late evening.
- **Duration/frequency** - It is more likely that the law will consider nuisance is being caused if cockerel(s) are crowing regularly and 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.

If informal negotiations with the cockerel owner fail and we are satisfied that the noise constitutes a Statutory Nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, an Abatement Notice will be served, this would require nuisance from cockerels to be abated. If this is not complied with, the responsible person 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, shelters should be cleaned regularly and uneaten food removed daily.
- 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.