

## A Murder of Crows

A *flock* of crows is called a “murder”. It might also interest you to know that there are some pretty interesting names for flocks of other animals as well.

Bed of clams	Kindle of kittens
Bevy of quail	Knot of toads
Brace of ducks	Leash of foxes
Brood of chicks	Murder of crows
Cast of hawks	Mute of hounds
Cete of badgers	Nest of vipers
Charm of goldfish	Nide of pheasants
Cloud of gnats	Sedge of cranes
Clutter of cats	Skein of geese
Cry of hounds	Sleuth of bears
Drove of cattle	Souder of swine
Dule of doves	Span of mules
Gaggle of geese	Spring of teals
Grist of bees	Tribe of goats

## The Canadian Farm Protection Act

Canada has just passed a Farm Protection Act that provides for protection to farmers who are using “normal farm practices” while farming. Under this legislation, complainants can not take civil action against a farmer if the farmer is using these practices. The Act also calls for a review of all local municipal bylaws to ensure that they do not discriminate against farming.

The act specifically addresses “noise, dust and odors” as well as “other disturbances”. New bylaws affecting farming must be cleared through the provincial Minister of Agriculture. The legislation is designed to ensure proper planning for agriculture land and business development at the municipal level and calls for the Agriculture Land Commission (the administrators of the Agriculture Land Reserve), and the Ministry of Agriculture experts to work together to ensure agriculture planning is an integral part of community plans.

This piece of legislation is a very important step in the protection of farms and farmers in Canada. Essentially, in Canada, people who complain about their neighbor's chickens will be subject to arrest.

## Far Side in Next Issue

Next month, we will be printing another installment of *The Far Side* in our newsletter. Make sure that you have paid your 1997 dues, because if you haven't, you will miss that issue of the newsletter.

## Egg Binding

Egg binding is where an egg becomes stuck inside the hen. This creates an escalating problem for the hen as newer eggs back up behind the one that is stuck. Frequently, a hen that is egg bound will walk around like a runner duck.

Fortunately, there is a simple way to get the egg out. You put the egg-bound hen in a sink full of very warm water and she will expel the egg in about five to ten minutes. The moist heat causes the hens muscles to relax. A little added pressure behind the egg so it won't retreat as the bird strains will also help.

## Vorwerks

Vorwerks are an interesting breed developed in Germany around 1900 by a farmer named Oskar Vorwerk. Its a good dual-purpose breed. In shape they are like a heavier version of the Andalusian but the color is different from all other breeds. They are a VERY bright buff which is best described as orange but with a solid black neck hackle, there should be no striping at all. They have grey under color and blue legs! The males are darker than the females. They should weigh around 7 lbs for males and 5.5 lbs for females. Males all seem to have more meaty breasts than other similar size breeds

They are frugal eaters, and do well on less feed than other birds of similar size. Very good foragers. The eggs aren't all that large but they do lay well and hatch easily. However despite all that, they are very rare. There are only a handful of breeders in the UK that are keeping them from becoming extinct.



Vorwerk Cock

## Ostriches

Ostriches can cost up to \$10,000 a pair. That is down from a few years ago of \$40,000 to \$60,000 for a proven pair. During the breeding season the birds can be very aggressive in protecting their area. They kick just like a mule. Also during the breeding season neither bird can be trusted. Just feeding them can be quite a chore. When its time to retrieve an egg it usually takes two people, one to distract and one to retrieve (this one must be fast and agile). Their feed cost per day is around 50 cents per bird.

Not too many predators will attack a 350 pound, 45 MPH, and eight foot tall bird charging right at them. Dogs and most other animals don't pose a threat to them. At night they will use their first defence by running, until they hit a fence. If they don't break their neck they will do it again. A 6' hog wire fence on the perimeter makes a good pen.

The meat has a red taste like beef. Ratite meat is lowest in calories, fat, and cholesterol. It is the highest in protein and iron. If you eat meat, ratite (emu, ostrich, rhea and cassowary) are the ones to eat. Prime filets sell for \$15.00 a pound. The hide (#1 grade) sells for \$300 to \$500 each. The feathers are for the computer and car industry. The feathers collect dust instead of pushing the dust around. The dust is effectively removed and provides for cleaner computers and better paint jobs. Also big bird feathers are ostrich. Oil is another fine product of these magnificent animals.

Ostriches eat a mixture of 1/4 formulated pellet ration and 3/4 roughage. They consume about 1 1/2 lbs of pellets and 2 1/2 lbs of roughage every day. The protein level for breeders should be around 20%. These feeds have molasses in them for dust control. Trace minerals are added to and mixed with both feeds. In winter months, you can feed them a rolled grain mix called Cobb. This causes them to get fat and helps protect them in the colder months.

Ostrich raising is definitely not for the timid, but sometimes it can be profitable.



## Dubbing

Dubbing is the surgical removal of the comb, wattles, and (sometimes) lobes of chickens. It is done by some commercial growers (with hens & roosters) to reduce injuries to the comb (cannibalism and fighting) and to prevent reduced male fertility, thriftiness, and a reduction in the hens' laying due to frostbite injuries, as well as to promote ease of automatic feeder/waterer use. In chickens that have been badly frostbitten; the comb and wattles can actually turn black and fall off.)

Some varieties of exhibition fowl (Old English games, Modern games - large & bantam) need to have the males dubbed before one year of age, or they will be disqualified in the show coop. In this latter case, it seems to be a holdover from the past history of these breeds, which were developed from fighting fowl, and had the combs trimmed off to prevent injury or reduced vision. Fowls that are dubbed are generally straight combed.

## Reconstituted Chick

One morning, while doing her farm chores, a lady found a chick that her hen had left behind in the nest. Apparently, the chick had died and the mother hen had abandoned it. The chick was cold and stiff when she examined it. There were no signs of life. Disappointed, she put him in the trash and went back to her chores. Fifteen minutes later she went to put something else in the trash and saw a foot move.

She rushed him inside and put him under a light and within minutes she could see him breathing. Half an hour later he was hopping around his box. She gave him a drink of water and took him back to the mother hen. Now you can't tell which chick it was. The lady now puts any abandoned chick that isn't obviously injured under the light before she gives up on him.



Ostrich