



NEWS UPDATE OCTOBER 2017

I think I can easily say that without doubt the past six weeks have been the most challenging I've experienced since beginning A Poultry Place in January 2001. I never expected running a sanctuary was going to be easy but when your right ankle is encased in a moonboot because of fractures it is most challenging. It hasn't just been the physical injury I've had to cope with, there's also been an emotional toll, mainly because of the poor medical treatment I have endured, which has included being referred by the local doctor and hospital to wrong department for treatment; then being pressured into having surgery, which I resisted, only then to be told a fortnight later (by another doctor) that both fractures are mending really well and surgery was unnecessary and in fact 80% of people with such fractures recover without it! Thankfully, I've had great support from friends and Vegan ACT, who have been organising regular working bees to keep the sanctuary functioning. I'm slowly coming to the end of the healing process – about another month and hopefully I should be almost back to normal. Of course the incapacitation has meant some of the regular jobs I do at this time of the year have been put off but the important thing has been to focus on recovery.

Adding a little to all the stress has been the lack of rain. Up until last week we had received nothing for more than a month. On two nights last week we got decent downpours (35mm in total) which has been welcomed. I'm currently handfeeding the sheep and they are restricted to a strip of land as I allow some growth to take place in all their paddocks – fingers crossed the next few weeks will see the paddocks burst back to life and hopefully we'll get some follow-up rain. The lack of greenery has been underlined by the behaviour of some of the others. As I sit and write I can see ducks, chickens and turkeys leaping up to grab newly sprouted green leaves on the fruit trees, as they have already eaten those within easy reach – it's quite a performance. A few of the roosters in the house paddock have realised they can fly onto their house roof and eat leaves at that level.



Of course given my predicament I've been refusing to take on new residents, which is tough because I fear what may happen to them but there's not a lot I can do. That said there have been some new faces appear – mainly those I had agreed to take in before my fall.

One was a lone hen who had been inherited by people who didn't currently have the capacity to look after her and were keen to find her a home where she could roam and have friends. Three other hens arrived who apparently "eat their own eggs" and were no longer welcomed by their family, sadly yet another example of how disposable people view poultry. And two others arrived another who "are past their egg producing days and are getting a bit harassed by our new and exuberant pup. I'm interested in learning more about your sanctuary so they can retire in peace". All these girls are getting on well with some of the broiler girls and will be introduced to the main flock when I've recovered.



I'm currently playing mother hen to seven youngsters, all roosters who arrived from two separate projects in Sydney. They are different ages but young enough that I am confident they will be bond together and form a larger flock, which will make their introduction to other roosters easier but that will be two or three months down the track as these guys are still quite young being five and three weeks old respectively when they arrived. Thankfully, in both cases the people surrendering the chicks have begun lobby the institutions to no longer participate in such schemes – fingers crossed they succeed in their efforts.

I did manage to make it down to Edgar's Mission to be a presenter at the annual Kind Critter Care Conference. It provided an opportunity (albeit all too short) to catch up with great colleague Pam Ahern, as well as some very special-needs sheepee friends, Charity and Saturday, who spent a brief time in my care while they made their way to Edgar's a few years back. Catching up with the two woollies was even more special this year, given my ankle was in the moon boot and we could compare mobility stories and prosthesis it was lovely to see them both thriving. Sadly, however I missed the Living Green Festival in Canberra but am going to be able to make it to this weekend's Cruelty Free Festival in Sydney, where I am presenting a talk about roosters to coincide with 2017 being Year of the Rooster.



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