

UPDATE FROM A POULTRY PLACE

5 JUNE 2014

If April was duck month for new arrivals, May was definitely chicken month, with 25 hens and roosters joining us at A Poultry Place. It seems appropriate given May is International Respect for Chicken Month, an initiative began in 2005 by US animal rights organisation United Poultry Concerns to celebrate chickens throughout the world and protest the bleakness of their lives in farming operations.

Three hens (pictured below left) arrived after their human became worried about their safety in her backyard. A year ago they were amongst 10 chicks hatched in a hatching project. They and three other sisters were lucky enough to find homes in suburbia, rather than being returned to the company which runs the program to be eventually killed for food, as is what happened to their four brothers. As the month continued seven more hatching project by products came to join us.

Three other hens (pictured below right) arrived a few days later – unwanted simply because they “weren’t laying eggs anymore” one of the girls had experienced some trauma during her life as one of her wings had been bitten off by a family dog. Somehow she survived the ordeal and after being given up for dead by her family who put her in a bag only to discover the morning after she was still alive so she was put back in the hen house for a few more months until she and her sisters weren’t producing enough eggs to justify their existence to their people.



A gorgeous boy called Thommo (pictured next page left) became the 450th rooster to be granted refuge at A Poultry Place. He was one of four chicks given to a suburban Canberra family as chicks six months ago, they were all supposed to be hens but as they matured Thommo showed his true colours and the family, who had no idea of the consequences of having a rooster in suburbia sought about trying to find a forever home for their pal, which saw him arrive here.

A similar story saw three other glamorous guys (pictured over page right) arrived here as the month came to a close. I’ll let Ben, who contacted me, tell the story:

“I found your facebook page and I am in awe of the work that you do for the poultry in your care and generating awareness of poultry issues. I am writing this email for some advice or help with my situation. I have always loved chickens and finally set up a chicken coop in my backyard. A friend of a friend gave us 4 young chicks and it is now becoming apparent that one of our beloved hens is in fact a rooster (I was in denial, however, the crowing at 6am now has me convinced). I am also becoming suspicious of two more of our chickens as they develop. I would ideally like to keep all of the chicks as they are happy, healthy and amusing additions to our household, although I am conscious of not wanting to disturb any of our neighbours and the future happiness of the flock as they grow, if

we do indeed have 3 roosters and 1 hen. Any advice would be appreciated as we want the best for our chickens and if you feel that you have the capacity to take our rooster we would be forever grateful." Ben sounded sound genuine in his email so I followed up with a visit and confirmed he had three boys and encouraged him to adopt some hens through my fab friends at NSW Hen Rescue so his girl would not be alone when the boys moved to A Poultry Place. It was lovely to end the month (last Saturday) when Ben and his partner Susie came to deliver their boys and left with three hens adopted through Hen Rescue to join their solo girl. I was lucky enough to baby sit these three gorgeous girls overnight. One of them Jess was found stuck in manure, had her rescuers not been in the battery farm that night she would have drowned.



I was also pleased to help out some other people through another piece of networking. Having been contacted by a woman on the south coast about four roosters she rescued a couple of months ago, but now needed to be rehomed due to a neighbour's complaints. I put her in touch with Disposable Heroes Rooster Sanctuary, which was closer to her and they were successfully offered a permanent forever home.

Seven bantam roosters arrived after their human made contact. He had adopted a couple of bantams from an animal shelter and allowed the hen to sit and hatch eggs continuously until "things got out of control". When I asked if breeding was going to continue the man said he wanted to surrender all the roosters to put a stop to this once and for all. A little victory. As is always the case with bantams these little fellows are delightful and love tree climbing. I only wish I had more time to watch their antics – it reminds me of being a kid and climbing monkey bars.

As some of you know I have a love of 1980s pop music. One artist whose star shone briefly during that period was so-called gender-bender, Marilyn, who hit it big with a tune called "Calling Your Name". So I was intrigued when I got this message:

"When we acquired Marilyn, we were told he was a hen. Then he began to crow. Marilyn is a Polish/Silkie and is gold in colour. He is very friendly. Unfortunately, over the past couple of weeks, we have received a number of complaints from neighbours and had a visit from the council this week as two people have complained directly to council about his crowing. I have been trying, unsuccessfully, to rehome Marilyn. I was horrified when one man who came to pick him up said that he did not want him because he is too skinny and 'wouldn't make good eating'. The RSPCA say they can't take him because they have no room. One of my daughters friends offered to take him but her chooks are free range and their two German Shepherds frequently decide that they would like a chicken snack. We love Marilyn very much and we would be very grateful if you would be able to help him and us."

Marilyn (pictured below) now resides at A Poultry Place. It was touching to see how upset this family



were to have to rehome him, they didn't really want to.

During the month I was also contacted by Beckky, a young woman I assisted some years ago in rehoming a rooster known as Gilbert, who was being terrorised by kids at her sister's school. Beckky has just adopted a broiler chicken, one bred for its meat, and wanted my advice as the hen wasn't very mobile. I had to unfortunately explain to her that due to the way broilers are bred there is no way we can rectify the skeletal and mobility problems which affect them as they mature and all she could do is to ensure her hen gets to enjoy some of the things most of her kind never experience such as sunshine, dust bathing, scratching in the grass.

I am honoured to be speaking at the upcoming March To Close All Slaughterhouses in Sydney on Saturday June 14 alongside others such as Christine Townend, who founded Animal Liberation NSW back in 1976. The rally is part of worldwide actions being planned for the same day – a great show of solidarity for the movement and brings everyone together to reflect on where we're up to and where we need to go. I have been asked to talk about my experiences with animals that have come out of the farming industries and been given a second chance. See the advert below for more details. Hope to see you there Now I better get started on what I'm going to say. ●

MARCH for the **CLOSING DOWN** of all the **SLAUGHTERHOUSES**

JUNE 14th 2014 PARIS LONDON SYDNEY TORONTO LOS ANGELES MONTREAL NEW YORK **JUNE 7th** BERNE TOULOUSE

On Saturday, June 14, 2014, be part of a historic international day to denounce the injustice done to all nonhuman victims of human oppression and exploitation. Join us in a peaceful march through the streets of Sydney to close down all slaughterhouses.

WHEN: Saturday, June 14, 2014 @ 12pm.
WHERE: First Fleet Park, Circular Quay.
SCHEDULE:
 12pm - Assemble at First Fleet Park.
 1pm - March down George Street.
 1:30pm approx - Special guest speakers at Wynyard Park.



FEATURING:

- * Christine Townend (founder of Animal Liberation)
- * Dr. Yvette Walf (University of Tasmania)
- * Steve Kilbey (The Church) * Bede Carmody (A Poultry Place)
- * Emma Hurst (Animal Liberation)

www.animal-lib.org.au
 www.mtcas.org

Find Animal Liberation NSW:     

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freechook@bigpond.com

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