

It has been a while since I managed to get around to doing an update – actually it's been more than three months. The reason for this is a combination of things – I have been extremely busy workwise, which has meant life at the sanctuary has been more hectic than usual, and on top of that in recent months for the first time since I began A Poultry Place I have been feeling a little jaded and taken for granted due to the reactions of some seeking my help. Thankfully, however it is all behind me and as of this week I am now on 13 weeks long service leave, which will allow me to relax, catch up on things and appreciate what it is I have created here.

At the start of May I put a temporary halt to taking in any more roosters as the house paddock, where I do the introductions was fully occupied and given the hectic work scheduled I had ahead of me till the end of June I knew I wouldn't be around as much as I needed to be to properly supervise the boys' integration process so I began to tell those making inquiries for me to take in their roosters that I would not be in a position to help until the end of June. The amount of abuse I subsequently copped from some (ie the humans responsible for creating their unwanted rooster problem in the first place) was unbelievable and unlike anything I've ever experienced before.

Since the start of May I received requests to take in 43 roosters. Of course no sanctuary can take in all the roosters that are "unwanted" and I have a process of questioning those wanting to surrender rooster of how the rooster came into being and if the person bred him asking if they intend to keep doing so as there is a 50:50 chance of hatching another rooster. In many cases it weeds out breeders who just want me to solve their problem but on a few occasions recently people, especially breeders have chosen to argue this point with me and ask who I thought I was to tell them what to do. I am surprised that so many fail to see their culpability in these situations.

One woman got abusive with me because I hadn't responded to her message immediately. I think she expected me to be sitting by the keyboard ready to type back to her as I have no other duties to attend to such as a job or chores around here..... Another woman angered me by her racist attitude – "I have a young rooster, yet to crow – but he will need relocating, he will only be exploited, by Asians, and others Mediterranean types I've met before last time ..." – obviously in her mind Anglo Saxons never treat roosters badly ... I obviously differ in that assessment and as it was obviously not the first time (and probably not the last time) she has been in such a predicament I suggested she just not to buy anymore chicks but she said she liked having them around for the eggs..... There was also a school teacher who asked me to take in roosters from a hatching project they planned at her school as she wanted to avoid the euthanasing of any male chicks. I responded by sending her a plethora of information asking her to get the school to abandoned the plan altogether and I got no response.

To top it off one Saturday morning I got a call from a guy in Sydney who wanted me to take his five hens who were no longer laying – they had to go that day and he expected me to drive up and collect them as he was "too busy" taking the kids to sport. His attitude was appalling and typical of many – he wanted them gone as he and his wife were no longer prepared to buy feed for them if they weren't getting eggs. Yet he stressed they were a family of animal lovers, with a dog and a cat – yet he could not explain to me why the hens had to go. Thankfully with the help of Dori from NSW Hen Rescue I located a woman on the northern beaches of Sydney who was happy to have them go and join her flock.

So I have to say these experiences made me feel quite drained and down. It is always awful to have to say no to people but as I said earlier sadly no sanctuary can say yes to everyone. Thankfully, there

were a few people who understood my position and either found alternative homes or held onto their boys until I could take them in – two of these guys arrived this week and another two will come here over the weekend – at least that’s four lives saved.

Despite the crappy way some have treated me at the same time I have also been overjoyed by the efforts of others. One Saturday morning as I checked the emails over coffee I came across a message from a young woman concerned about a Muscovy duck who had been “dumped near the mangroves in the last few days. It looks pretty exhausted, shivering in cold, old ...we have tried to feed it food scraps and left some water. My concern is there are foxes around the area and lot of traffic nearby so it might get injured or worst yet get killed which is very sad for such a magnificent creature”. I told her if she could catch the duck I could offer a safe forever home. An hour later I got a phone call from her saying the duck had been caught and she and her parents were happy to bring the lucky duckie down here from Sydney. That afternoon the duck, a drake, the rescuing family called Lucky during their road trip, arrived. The rescuers had no prior knowledge of poultry but did not eat animals, which probably explains their compassion, and on top of that her mother had made me some fabulous Indian food, which I feasted on for the next few days.



I again felt such emotional joy, a few weeks ago when I attended the second March to Close All Slaughterhouses in Sydney. This is a worldwide event and last year when I spoke at the inaugural Sydney march I challenged/encouraged attendees to return this year with a friend so we had a bigger crowd. I am so happy that no one listened to me – they went even better and brought along at least two friends as the participants this year were at least triple that of last year (it had to be a crowd of close to 1000 I reckon). Even better was that this year’s route took us straight through the centre of the Sydney CBD and saw the police close off main Sydney streets like George, Pitt, Elizabeth and Castlereagh as we weaved our way through the city – granting us a crowd of spectators.

Also during recent months I have been proud to have been part of an initiative by my friend and colleague Pam Ahern of Edgar’s Mission. Earlier this year Pam called me to ask if I would be a presenter at a workshop she was holding for people who are considering having an animal sanctuary. The intention of the workshop was to let people learn from our experiences and prepare them for what lies ahead if they pursue the dream. The first Animal Critter Care Conference was scheduled for late March but demand was so overwhelming we ended up doing a second workshop at the end of May. It was uplifting to meet so many humans who are seriously considering, or have already begun, to start creating sanctuaries to be havens for those who many humans call food. It was rewarding that they were happy to listen to me waffle on about my experiences with A Poultry Place. It was also

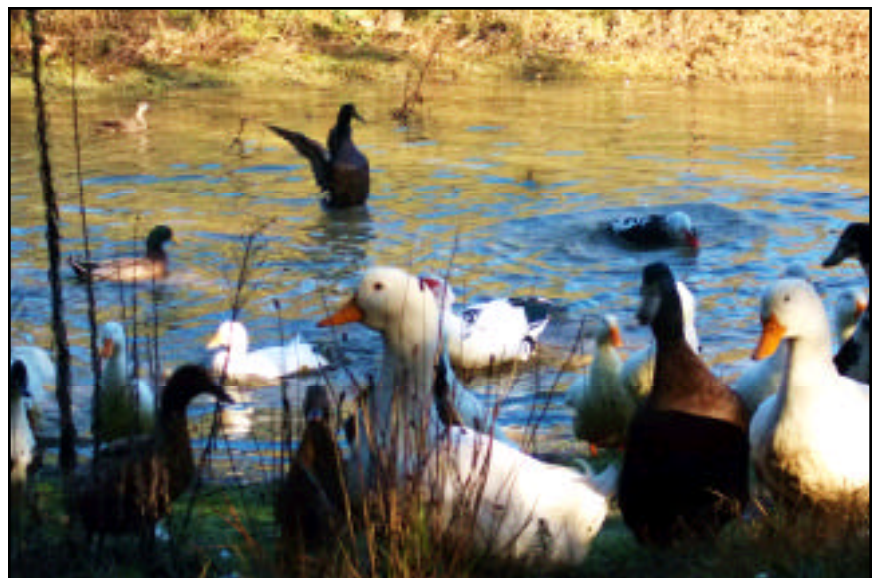


great to finally have the opportunity to visit Edgar's Mission and catch up with friends like Pam and finally meet some of her co-workers. An added bonus was catching up with another old friend – Charity the sheep. Charity stayed at A Poultry Place for a week back in April 2013 as she was making her way to her new forever home with Pam and co. This little cherub only had one properly formed foot, another was a twisted stump, while there were no feet on her left side. She now has little booties on her feet which enables her to play with her new friends in the special needs sheep paddock at Edgars. I had tears in my eyes when she and her new chums came running towards and was so delighted to see her having a quality life.



Back in late March I celebrated Zed the broiler rooster's second birthday. When he was a chick, not more than a few days old, Zed and his brothers and sisters were on display the kids petting area at the 2013 Royal Easter Show in Sydney. At the end of the show a kind woman adopted the nine of them having no idea that the chicks were broilers, that is chickens bred specifically for the meat industry. She learnt this the hard way as one by one they began to die, despite their young age, due the strain their massive bodies put on their respiratory and skeletal systems. When Zed arrived at A Poultry Place a few months later, due to neighbours complained about his crowing, he was one of only two left. It is rare that a broiler chicken makes it to one-year-old, it's recording breaking Zed marked two years as the previous longest period of time a broiler bub had lived here after rescue was 22 months. Given that broilers are usually killed for human consumption at 5-7 weeks of age Zed is an old man!

Finally I am happy to say it finally rained here last week – a bit of a relief as we had had hardly any rain at all throughout autumn. It made the ducks very happy as it began filling the dam!



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