



NEWS UPDATE APRIL 2017

As I begin to put this update together I'm coming to the end of a two-week break from the paying gig, which I have used as downtime to recharge and catch up on some of the chores about the sanctuary. It's been quite lovely having the time off as the weather continues to be unseasonably warm given we are two-thirds the way through autumn. It is only today that it really is beginning to feel like autumn as there is rain falling and it is struggling to reach the forecast high of 16 degrees, which is about eight degrees cooler than it has been everyday this month. Indeed, today's rain fall is the first of the month as well!

From my vantage point I have a great view of the house paddock and can watch turkeys, roosters and broiler bubs scratching up the softened earth until the next shower hits and they all retreat back under shelter until it passes and they again venture out and dig some more. They are joined by a band of cockatoos, who seem to have adopted A Poultry Place as their patch, along with a band of magpies. It is easy to lose hours watching such antics and I feel privileged to be able to witness it.

The past few days have seen a number of new faces arrive all of whom have been accompanied by kind, caring humans who have gone a lot further than many who surrender companions.

Last Saturday morning one woman arrived from Newcastle with her rooster, Benny, for whom she was seeking a safe, forever home. She also happily chauffeured down half-a-dozen other roosters from up that way to make her trip worthwhile. All seven are now happily dwelling together as can be seen in the picture right.

The following day a woman from Sydney arrived with her two hens, Margot and Chaza, as well as two roosters (John Watson and Lucky), whom she had agreed to chauffeur down. These boys were saved from being killed because a friend was at a vet surgery and overheard a phone call between one of the vet nurses and a client asking about euthanising two roosters who



could no longer be kept because of a neighbour's complaints. That both women were willing to step up and help out other beings they were not responsible for is one of those rare moments you cherish when running a sanctuary.

The kindness of humans has also been illustrated in recent weeks with a number of donations of equipment being made. One woman, who rehomed her hens here late last year contacted me asking if I wanted some pool fence panels and other stuff as she was selling her house and thought they could be of use here at the sanctuary. Another couple, who had asked if their sole surviving hen, Jemima, could come here to live passed on all her stuff as well, including a house (see pic right), which with a few modifications is now proving temporary shelter for some recently arrived broiler chicks.

Jemima has proven to be quite a character and fast made friends with another recently arrived hen, Roxy, and at the moment is befriending Margot and Chaza along with some other recently arrived hens. They have decided to set up home in the duck paddock but will eventually be integrated into the main hen flock during the next month or so.

The spareroom has again been pressed into service as a nursery with the arrival of some chicks from a hatching project, as well as some chicks from a broiler (ie meat chicken) farm. Both groups of chicks are the same age given a day or two and yet the size comparison is quite stark as can be seen in the pic below, which was taken last weekend when they were approximately five-weeks-old. On the left is a broiler bub, who is visibly much larger than the bub on the right, who is an Isa Brown (a breed developed for optimum egg production and used throughout the egg industry).



Chickens grown for their meat - known as broilers - are specially bred to grow at a much faster rate than nature intended, which sees them ready for slaughter between 5 and 7 weeks of age. Through genetic manipulation these birds grow to look Frankensteinish with oversized feet and large bodies on infant skeletons.

In March I had the honour of being one of the speakers at the inaugural March to Close Slaughterhouses in Canberra. The March has been held in Sydney since 2014 but this was the first time a rally was put together in the nation's capital and was one of a number held in almost every capital city in Australia on the same day. There were plenty of enthusiastic and passionate people who joined us, not bad given it was also a long weekend, and we managed to raise awareness amongst many shoppers as we walked through the main shopping precinct of Civic. Looking forward to an even bigger turnout next year.



May is International Respect for Chickens Month, an initiative launched back 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. Throughout the month I will be publishing posts on the A Poultry Place facebook page highlighting some of the stories of the residents here. The posts are intended for like-minded people to share amongst their meat eating family, friends and work colleagues in an attempt to encourage people to rethink their attitude towards and use of chickens. So if you are on facebook make sure you like the A Poultry Place page and check it regularly throughout the month for stories to share.

TO VISIT A POULTRY PLACE EMAIL freechook@bigpond.com

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