



NEWS UPDATE JUNE 2017

Running a sanctuary means you come into contact with all sorts of people — some nice and some not so. The past two months has definitely brought me in contact with individuals who fit into both categories, none of whom I sought out mind you — they all contacted me wanting, or in some cases expecting my help.

Three times during the past two months I have had the pleasure of meeting wonderful people who have gone out of their way to help members of the species which is probably the most disrespected of all those classed as 'farm animals'. I'm talking about roosters and the circumstances of how nine boys came to join the A Poultry Place family.

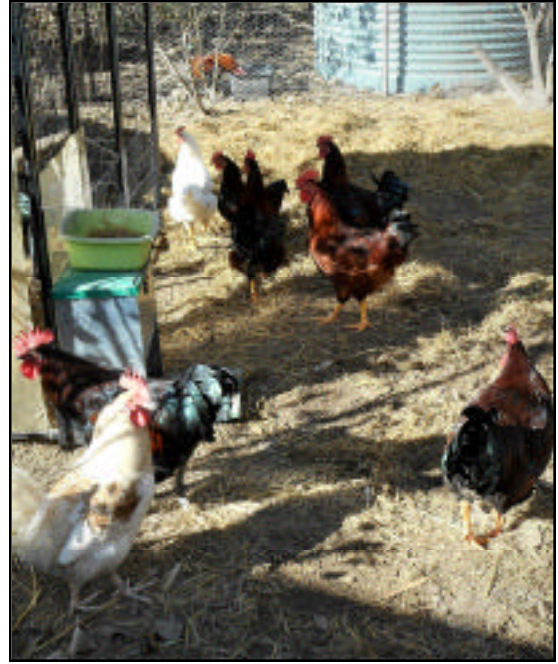
First up was James (pictured right), who was found by a young woman called Sarah while driving home from work. Sarah spotted the rooster on James Ruse Drive (hence his name) and managed to catch him, fearing he would be hit by a car. She took him to a nearby vet, who kept the rooster to see if anyone would claim him — after a week he was still there and so Sarah set out to find him a new home — she tracked me down and drove James down one weekend. She didn't hesitate to make the three-hour each way drive for this gorgeous guy she had happened upon by chance. A few weeks later another Sydney woman, India and her husband brought two roosters they captured who were wandering the streets of their Sydney suburb. Again they didn't hesitate when they were told by NSW Hen Rescue the sanctuary was located in southern NSW.



And then there's Nicole's story about the six roosters she brought up here from Victoria. Here it is: *"Dear Bede, Can you help with something please? In January I was at a feed store buying straw for my ex battery girls and I saw four men tossing a hen about between them and yelling and cheering each other on. I intervened and took her and her eight one-week-old babies. The mother hen will stay with us forever. Her daughters have been re-homed to a close friend of mine and now I have six very bold and very loud boys here. Our council regulations do not allow roosters. We have been on a waiting list for a sanctuary in Victoria, who after hearing their story had offered to take the boys and keep them as a family group. This seems to have fallen through. I am writing because I am desperate to find the boys a home together.*

Are you able to take the boys, or refer me to another caring and empathic animal lover who could?" When Nicole mentioned she and her husband were happy to drive them up here I agreed and within a day the six of them had already begun living comfortably with the two India had brought down around the same time (see pic below right).

In each instance these humans took action to help out other beings that were not their responsibility and I think it illustrates an attitude which would be great if more could adopt it, especially given 2017 is the Year of the Rooster.



And speaking of boys some of the young turkeys who arrived here just before Christmas have entered poultry puberty as evidenced by beginning to sprout beards (pic above left). A turkey beard is the black fibrous hairs that hang down from the chest away from the body plumage of male turkeys (aka Toms) but also some hens. It begins growing when a youngster is about five-months-old and continues to grow throughout their life.

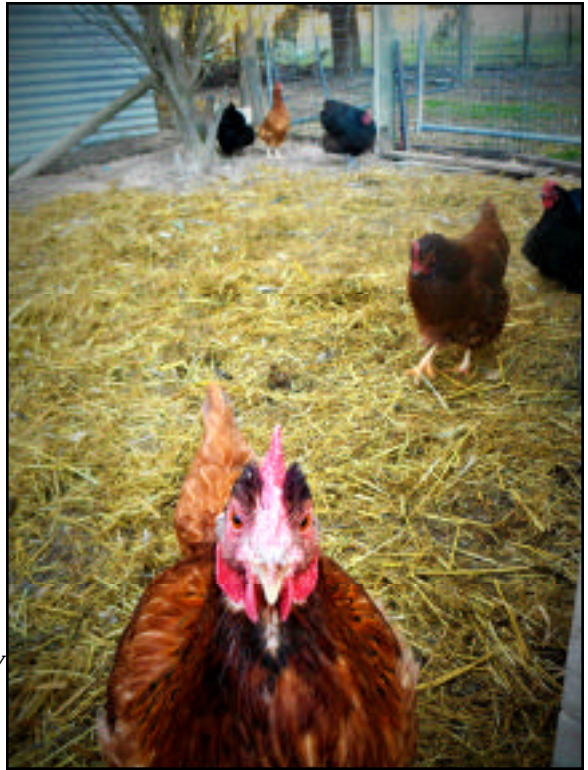
The past couple of months have also seen some new ducks arrive including a mother Muscovy and her two ducklings, who could no longer be kept where they lived and three from a woman who also surrendered her chickens as she is moving overseas.

To say this woman pissed me off is an understatement. When she first contacted me she said she would rehome her hens but no one wanted her two roosters so she wanted to bring them to me — I responded saying it was cruel to separate the flock and indeed the only way I could take the roosters was with their hen friends as it would mean they would more easily fit into the existing main flock here. She then went on to explain the chickens were divided into two flocks – her pet flock and her utility flock. The utility flock were the birds she raised for their eggs and meat. When she brought them out to me there were actually four roosters among them and she continually told me about how she had no problems slaughtering her own chickens and that she could never stop eating them. I told her politely that she should respect the fact that she was at a sanctuary where poultry are not used or exploited in any way. She didn't seem to get the contradiction that I saw — that she had one set of chickens who were pets and another who were food! She then said if she didn't end up moving she would like them back – I said no once surrendered they stay and that I in good faith could not return them to her if she was going to slaughter them.

Other hen surrenders were much more pleasant experiences including two bantams from a Canberra backyard who came with their own mobile house, which has been used as a temporary house for the school hatching project chicks who arrived just before Christmas — these eleven have been joined by Tiny, one of the broilers who arrived in recent months.

Three girls named Esmay, Agatha and Shirley, came from a young family who were moving and unable to take the hens with them but determined to find them a safe space, even if it meant driving them down from Sydney.

Of course there were also hens surrendered because they no longer lay. Another attitude which pisses me off. Here's an example: *"We have had three backyard chickens since they were 12 weeks old (now two-and-a-half years old) and whilst the kids have enjoyed having them they never really laid many eggs and in fact stopped altogether three months ago despite living a pretty luxurious free range lifestyle! Anyway would like to donate them to your wonderful sounding sanctuary if possible?"* At least this individual made a sizeable donation towards their ongoing upkeep when I collected them.



And here's two requests for surrendering received and I'm not sure which is the most obnoxious. I let you judge. Firstly, there was this: *"I'm on the Sunshine Coast and have an unwanted rooster. Would you pick up the rooster?"* Surely it's not too hard to read the information about the sanctuary which says it is in southern NSW

And then this one: *"Hi. I'm hoping you can help me. We are moving to Queensland soon and desperately need a home for our male muscovy duck. He's very friendly and not at all aggressive. I don't want any payment for him I just want a happy loving home for him."* I responded by saying it is usually more polite to offer a contribution to ongoing care rather than asking a sanctuary to pay for a surrender (which I don't do anyway). In the end she said it was too far to bring her beloved duck to the sanctuary and would try to rehome him closer.

I began my annual winter hibernation earlier this week and don't have to return to the paying gig until mid-August which makes life a lot easier at this time of the year given the shorter days and cooler weather, which brings with it the challenges of fog, frosts and frozen pipes and hoses. All part of the joy of having a sanctuary. It also makes The Pride happy as it usually means I spend a lot of time sitting in the sunroom reading or writing in between attending to their demands for pats and attention.

TO VISIT A POULTRY PLACE EMAIL freechook@bigpond.com

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