

Why Keep the Rooster with Your Flock?



Why Should You Keep
the
Rooster?

Why would you keep the rooster? The general feeling from most chicken keepers seems to be just the opposite. Rightly so in the case of neighborhood rules, or possibly having small children around. But in many cases, if you keep the rooster, your flock will benefit from a good leader.

When you picked up your chicks this year, the little fluffy balls of fun were so cute! No doubt one was your favorite. Now that the chicks are reaching 10 to 12 weeks of age, you have begun to notice something a little different about your favorite chick. It may be slightly bigger, stand a little taller, have bigger feet and it may be growing a slightly more noticeable comb or wattles. You may have a rooster! But will you keep the rooster?

Pullet or Cockerel? How to Know

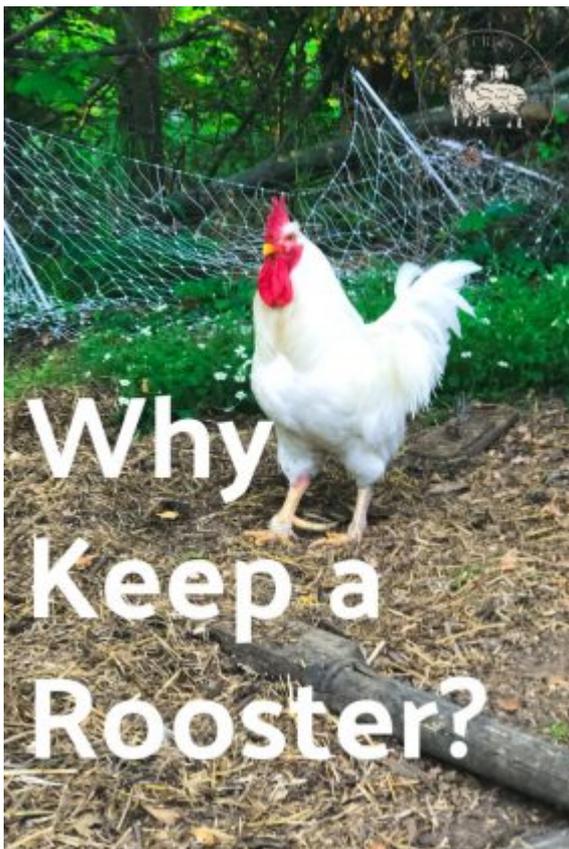


Sexing Chicks is Rarely 100% Correct

Before you get upset and jump to possibilities and options, let's explore some reasons why you might want to keep the rooster. If you can legally keep the rooster in your neighborhood or town, there are some good reasons to have one around. You may have heard that a rooster is mean, ornery, and dangerous. These reasons can be true but they are not always

the case. (Read more about Cranky Roosters in this post.) I am not advocating keeping an overly aggressive rooster.

I find the roosters are a great addition to our flock. We currently have fourteen roosters. Before you make a move to have my sanity checked, let me tell you that we generally do keep quite a few roosters. They work hard every day, keeping the hens safe. Let me explain a few reasons that I am glad we keep the rooster.



The Rooster as a Peacekeeper

Peacekeeper – The rooster in a flock is in charge. He will assume this role and do what he has to do to maintain his position. Other roosters may be able to be part of the flock, too, as long as they don't challenge him. In addition, the rooster will keep the hens from squabbling among themselves. In the absence of a rooster, a hen will often take the role of flock leader.



Keep the Rooster for Flock Protection

Protection – Roosters are on alert most of the day, watching for predators, alerting the hens, and making sure they take cover. While the hens are dust bathing or eating, the rooster will stand guard and stay alert to possible danger. When a hawk or some other predator is spotted, the rooster will sound the alarm. He is calling the hens back to safety. If they free range, this might be a bush to hide under, or the nearby coop. In our case, with multiple roosters, the alarm is picked up and the other roosters begin to gather their hens too. It's quite amazing to witness.

The Rooster will Provide

Providing – The rooster will search out tasty food bits and call the hens over to enjoy the snack. He makes sure that his hens get started eating first in the morning and then he begins to eat too. In addition, roosters provide the necessary actions for having fertile eggs, in case you want to hatch out eggs in an incubator or let a broody hen set on a clutch of eggs.



The Crowing?

Crowing– Now I am sure you are wondering how I can put a positive light on this noisy ear splitting wake up call. First, roosters don't necessarily start crowing before dawn. Ours will often stay quiet until they hear me in the feed shed, dishing up breakfast. Roosters crow to warn other roosters to stay away. They also crow to celebrate, such as when breakfast arrives, after mating, or to show pecking order. In addition, they will crow to let the hens know the location of the flock, when it's time to head back to the coop

at night and various other reasons. But the best reason, for flock security, would be the crowing to warn of an approaching visitor.



While you may decide to re-home your cockerel and just keep the pullets, I am very glad I kept one particular oops rooster. Even though I ordered all pullets, we received a rooster in the bunch. He is a white rock cockerel who we named King. For years, King was the star of our poultry area. He may have jumped at me once or twice in his younger, impulsive days. I quickly put a stop to that and he grew into a wonderful protector.

I see benefits and uses when you keep the rooster. Let me know how your surprise roosters turn out.