

SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT...

by Chris Moore

I had just moved into an old farm house that had lots of ground with lots of weeds. Amongst the weeds stood an old chicken coop. It was in pretty good repair, considering that it was weathered and had not been used for a number of years. As the realtor showed us the coop before we purchased the property, she noted that the portal for the chickens as still in tact. Trying to improve her chances for a sale, she said, "You could even start your own chicken farm!" That advice was great, but who knew anything about chickens?

As a house warming gift, the realtor gave us a single hen to help us on our way to the flock of chickens. The hen was more of a pet than anything else. She did lay one to two eggs a day for which I was grateful.

One day as I went out to gather her eggs, I noticed that "Henny" as she was lovingly called, looked different. Her waddles were longer (those are the red things that hang down from her chin) and her top comb was larger and more pronounced. I passed off the strange appearance as a figment of my imagination. A few days later, I heard crowing in the back yard. I looked out thinking that maybe that enthusiastic realtor had brought us a rooster. There stood Henny like a diva from the opera crowing to her little hearts content. I summoned my husband and told him that either someone had switched birds or there is more here than meets the eye.

We began to do some research and discovered that chickens are flock birds. That means that they have to live with other chickens or their life is not complete. If a hen is alone, she will attract other chickens to her by growing long top combs and waddles like a rooster. She will also start crowing to attract other chickens to begin a new flock.

Our chicken wasn't so dumb after all! She was lonely and needed companionship. We felt sorry for her and took her to a farmer down the street so she could have a productive life producing eggs and chickens. I am afraid that our dream as chicken farmers was never realized; however, this event surely gave us something to crow about!

