

# Backyard Chicken Behavior



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# Why is Behavior Important?

- **Promote Positive Interactions**
- **Decrease Negative Behavior**
- **Properly Manage Nuisance Behavior**
- **Increase Overall Experience of Owners**



# Brief Example



# A Little History...



- Chickens domesticated in Asia ~10,000 years ago
- Despite many years of selection, behavior of modern chickens remains almost identical to wild ancestors



# Positive Behavior





# Foraging



# Perching



# Dust-bathing





# Nesting



# Negative and Nuisance Behaviors



# Aggression



- **Social Formation**
- **History**





# Social Formation

- One bird dominant, one bird subdominant, chained together becomes a dominance hierarchy
- Usually get a peck to the back of the head, hence the term “pecking order”





# Remember the Romans?



- **Developed ag breeds**
- **Sacrificial/ Augurs**
- **Fighting**



# Decline of Roman Empire



# Aggression



- Is all aggression bad?
- When is aggression bad?
- When do you intervene?
- Can it be reduced?

# Reducing Aggression





# Feather Loss: Are These Signs of Aggression?



# Feather Loss

- No, could be accidental



- Yes, feather picking

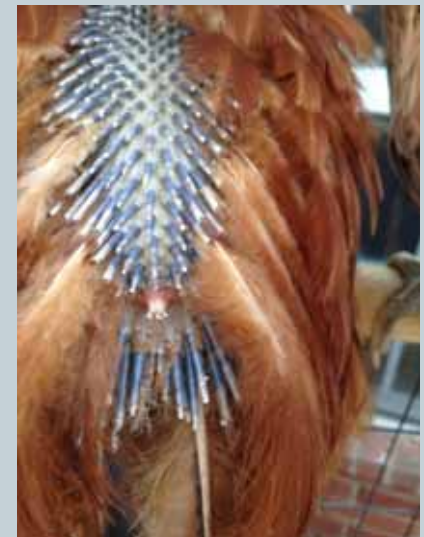


# Other Causes of Feather Loss

- Cage abrasion/wear



- Molting



# Note on Cannibalism

- Not common in backyard flocks
- Hen pecked to death
- Usually in vent area
- Socially learned behavior





# Egg Eating



- **A Learned Behavior**
- **Prevention is Key!**
- **Identify the Culprit**
- **Other Causes**



# Conclusions and Questions

- **Increase Positive Behavior**
  - Foraging, dust-bathing, perching
- **Decrease Negative Behavior**
  - Aggression, Feather Picking
- **Know Your Chickens for a Super Experience**

