

Planning, Building & Environmental Services



# Rooster Keeping – NCC 6.18, 18.08.040

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# Introduction

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Stakeholder Outreach

Proposed Amendments to Napa  
County Code

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# Introduction to NCC 6.18 – Rooster Keeping

Rooster keeping is the practice of owning and caring for male chickens, typically for purposes such as breeding, flock protection, hobby farming, or exhibition. It involves providing appropriate housing, nutrition, and management to ensure the birds' health, welfare, and compatibility with surrounding communities.







# NCC 6.18 – Rooster Keeping

- Adopted 2013
  - First step to attempt to regulate rooster-keeping in the unincorporated areas
  - Maximum – 25 roosters per acre/100 per parcel
  - Allows roosters younger than 12 months of age.
  - Established rooster-keeping guidelines
  - Established exempt entities.







# Current Challenges

The high number of roosters allowed under the current ordinance makes it harder for the County to address issues such as cockfighting, avian flu, and public nuisances.







# Cockfighting

- Cockfighting is an illegal practice in which roosters are forced to fight each other, often to the death, for entertainment or gambling purposes.
- Allowing up to 100 roosters per parcel makes the County an attractive location for rooster breeders.
- Current limit on roosters is not consistent with those of neighboring communities: 0-4 per parcel as opposed to 100 per parcel in Unincorporated Napa County.





# Criminal Activity

- Heightened officer safety concerns during cockfighting investigations
- Often linked to additional criminal activity





# Avian Flu

The avian flu is considered highly pathogenic.

Rooster-keeping operations are not regulated as formal businesses. They typically lack standardized testing or biosecurity protocols, increasing the risk of undetected disease spread

Roosters move in and out of County limits regularly, which can aide in transferring the disease.





# Public Nuisances



## Large scale rooster –keeping facilities

- 100 rooster maximum + 1 chicken per rooster minimum = 200 large birds.

## Environmental concerns

- Waste management
- Illicit discharge into waterways

## Property Nuisance

- Numerous structures
- Noise complaints
- Commercial activity



# Stakeholder Outreach

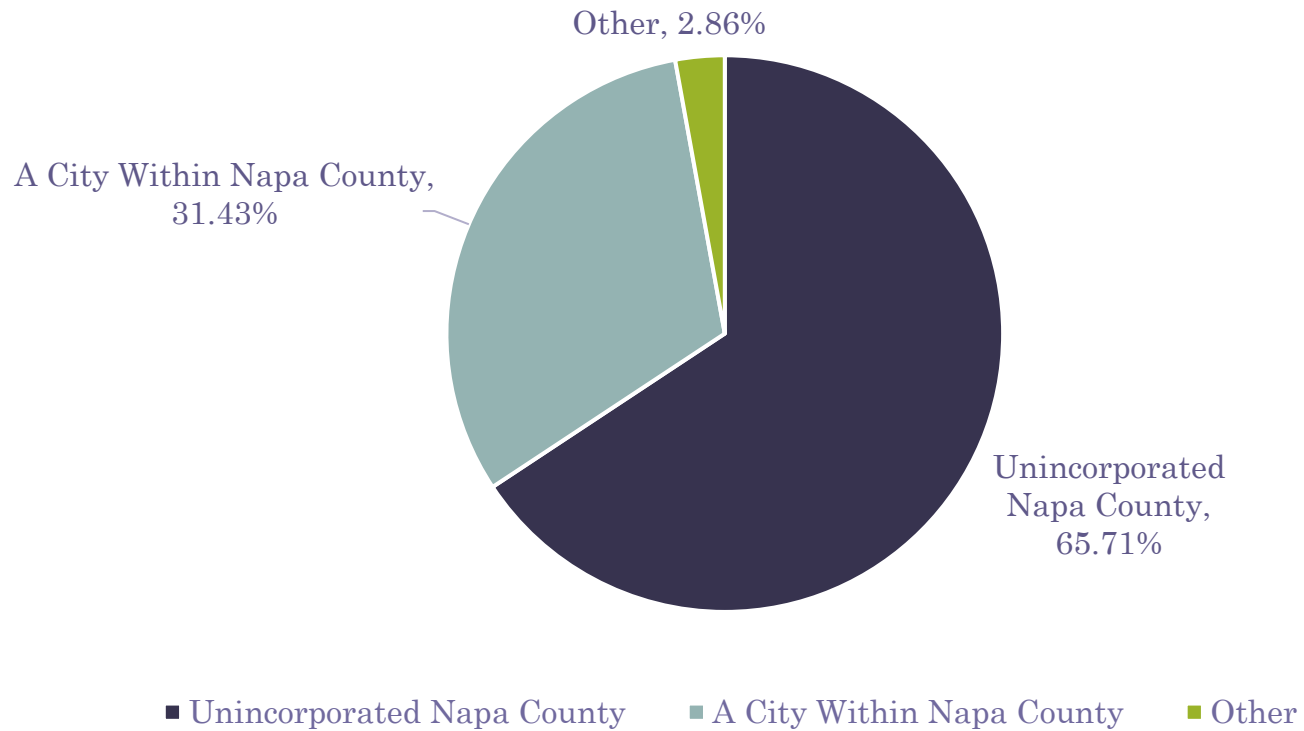
On October 20, 2025, the Agricultural Commissioner launched a community-wide survey to gather input on the proposed changes to the rooster ordinance. The survey was open from October 20, 2025 to November 3, 2025. Thirty-five people responded to the survey. A summary of the survey results is as follows:





# Stakeholder Outreach

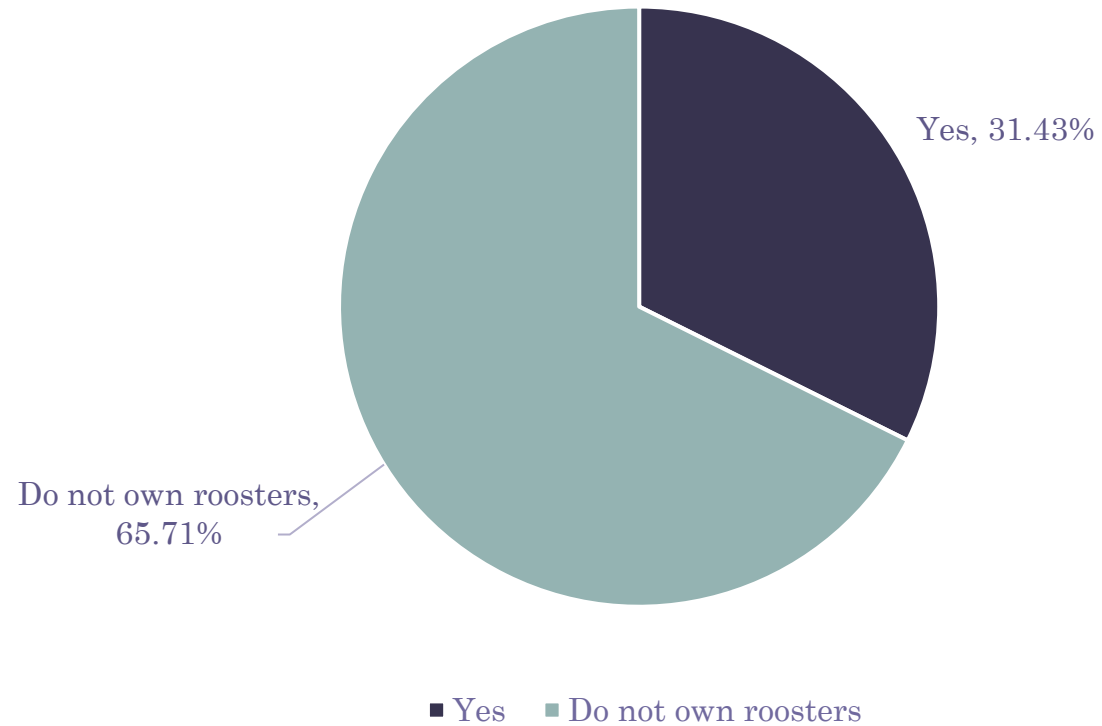
Respondent's Residence Location





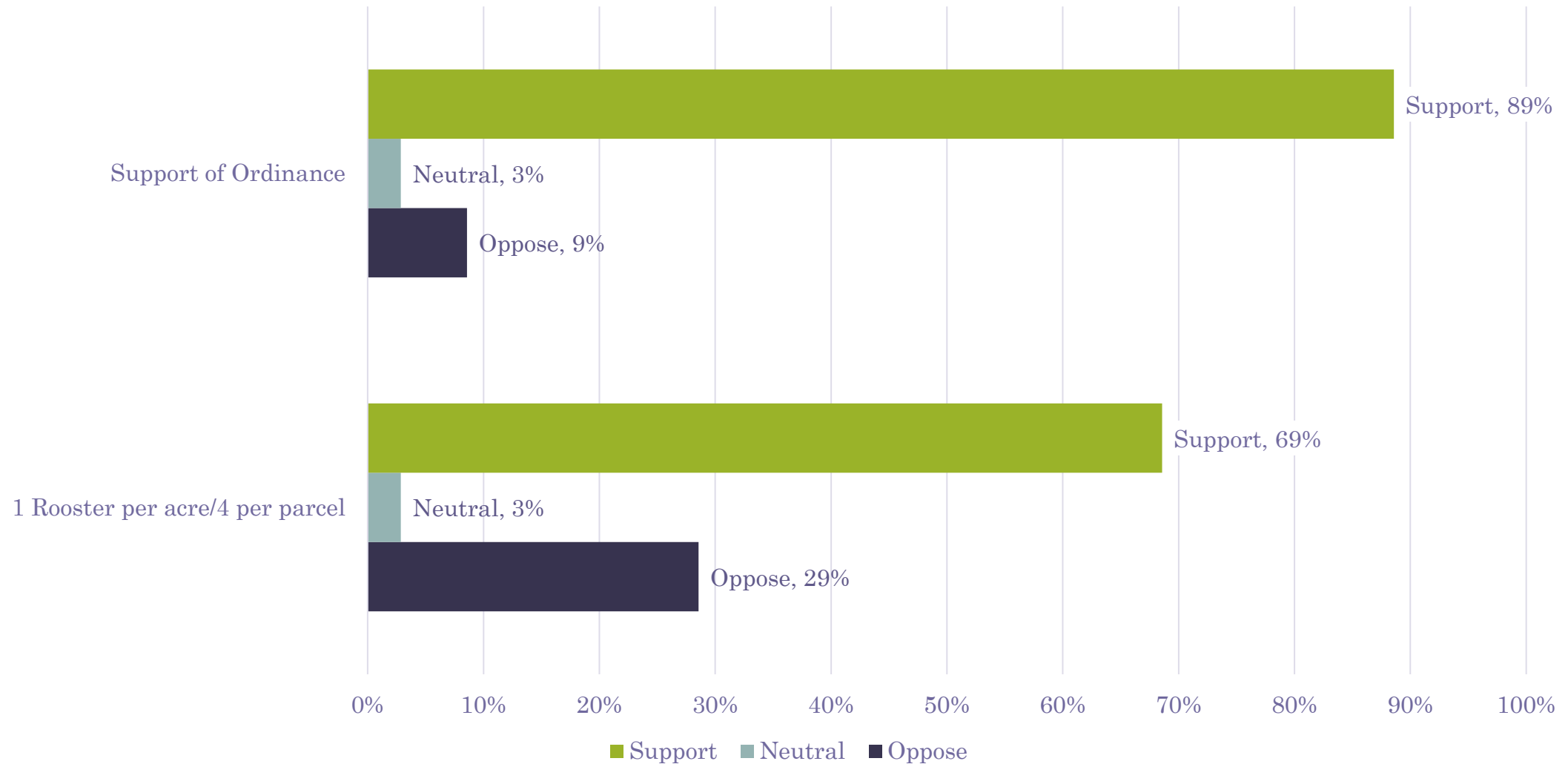
# Stakeholder Outreach

## Currently Own Roosters



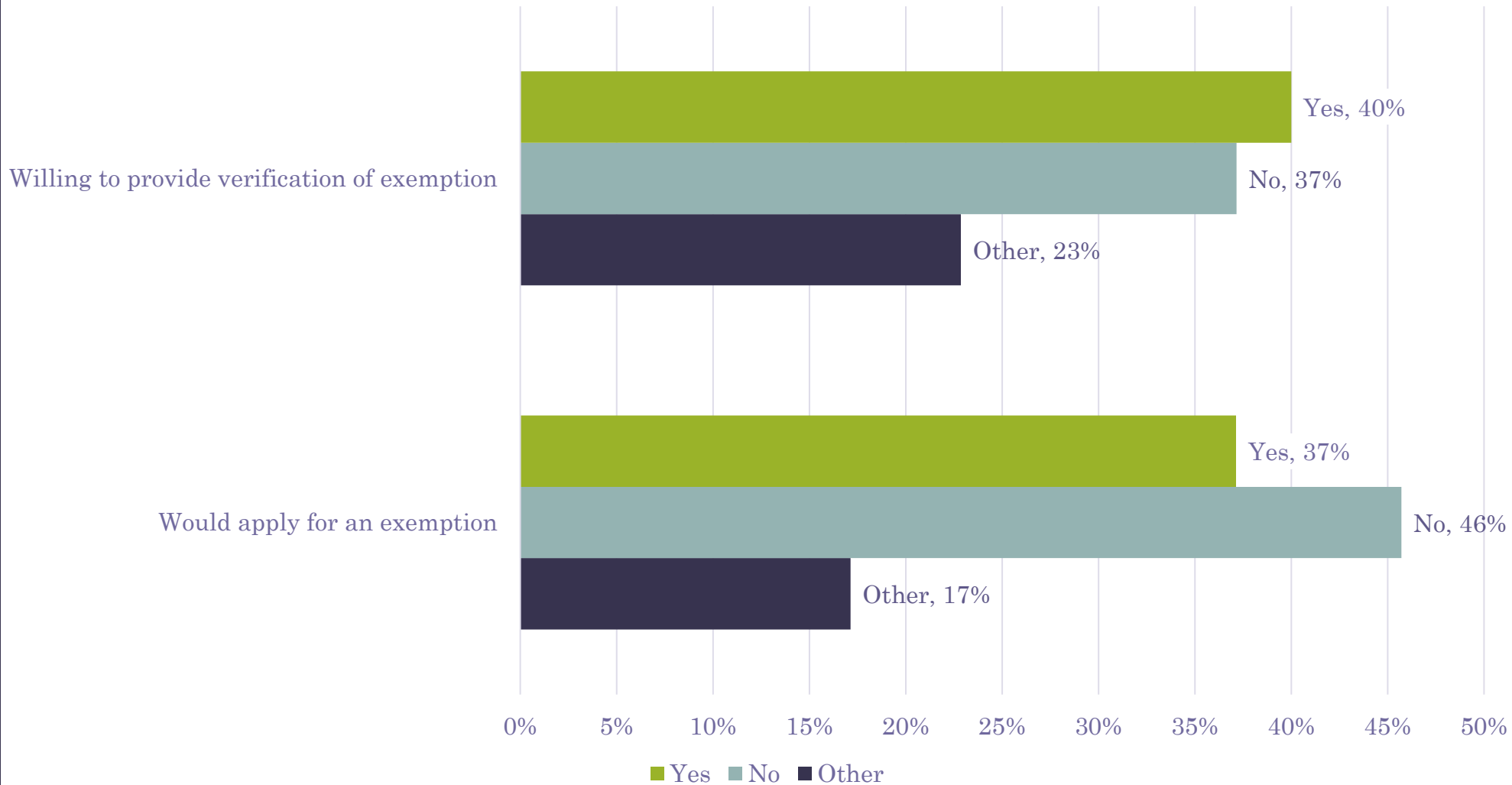


# Stakeholder Outreach





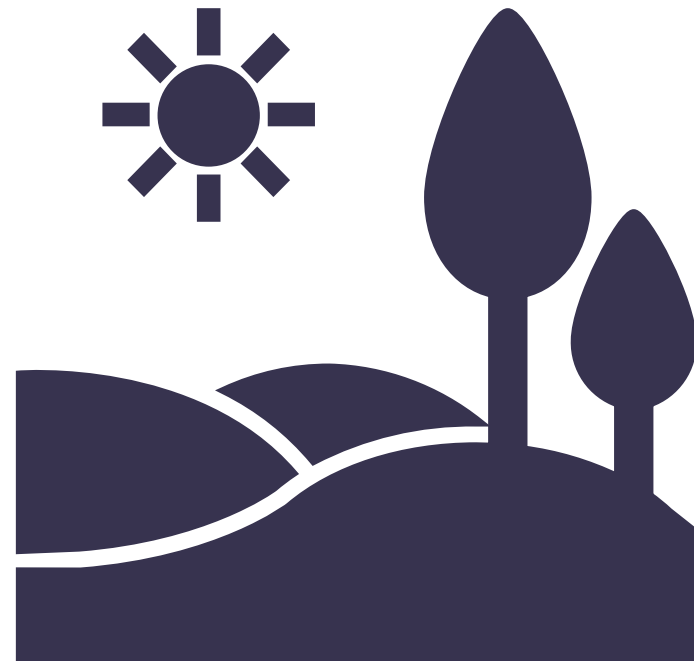
# Stakeholder Outreach





# Stakeholder Outreach - Conclusion

Based on this feedback, the proposed ordinance was updated to allow property owners with more than 0.5 acres but less than 1 acre to keep one rooster, and property owners with greater than 1.5 acres to own up to the maximum of 4 roosters per parcel, which aligns with American Canyon's ordinance.





# Proposed Amendments

The proposed ordinance amends several sections of Chapter 6.18 (Keeping of Roosters) and Section 18.08.040 (Agriculture) of the Napa County Code.





# Amendments



## 6.18.010 (Purpose)

- Amends Section 6.18.010 (Purpose) to clarify the County's goal to eliminate illegal cockfighting and the raising of birds to be used for cockfighting.

## Section 6.18.020 (Definitions)

- Amends Section 6.18.020 (Definitions) to change the definition of "Rooster" to include any male chicken six months or older, instead of twelve months or older, to ensure enforceability and consistency with common poultry management standards.

## Section 6.18.030 (Roosters)

- Further clarifies the rooster-keeping standards and reduces the number of roosters on a parcel from 25 per acre, a maximum of 100 per parcel, to a maximum of 4 roosters per parcel in accordance with the following schedule:

# Rooster Schedule

Parcel Size	Max. No. of Roosters
Less than 0.5 acres	0 roosters
0.5 acres to 1.5 acres	1 rooster
Greater than 1.5 acres	4 roosters



# Amendments



## 6.18.040 (Tethering Prohibited)

- Removes section 6.18.040 because it is added to 6.18.030.

## Section 6.18.045 (Exemption)

- Adding a Section 6.18.045 to discuss the exemption from 6.18.030 A. and fleshed out the details of the exemption process for legitimate entities such as agricultural producers, schools, animal shelters, 4-H and FFA programs, and individuals owning or breeding poultry for lawful exhibitions.

## Section 6.18.050 (Liability and Enforcement)

- Amending the language in 6.18.050 regarding enforcement pursuant to Chapters 1.20 and 1.28 of the Napa County Code.



# Amendments

## Section 18.08.040 (Agriculture)

- Updates the section on rooster keeping in Section 18.08.040 (Agriculture) to ensure consistency with the updated limits being proposed in Chapter 6.18.





# Next Steps and Recommendations



# Effective Date



February 1, 2026

- If the Board votes today to express intent to adopt the ordinance, the ordinance will return for adoption on December 16, 2025. If adopted, Staff proposes the Ordinance become effective starting February 1, 2026.





## Recommendation

Intent to adopt an ordinance of the Napa County Board of Supervisors, State of California, amending Napa County Code Chapter 6.18 (Keeping of Roosters) to address concerns regarding cockfighting and avian disease and Section 18.08.040 (Agriculture) of Chapter 18.08 (Definitions) relating to the raising and keeping of roosters.



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# Thank you

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