



May 26, 2015

Karen Davis, PhD, President
United Poultry Concerns
PO BOX 150
Machipongo, VA 23405

Dear Dr. Davis,

I am responding to your letters addressed to the Portsmouth Herald and the Portsmouth City Council in reference to the exhibition of chickens at Strawberry Banke Museum [SBM]. The following are clarifications of issues raised in your letter:

Films and other features: SBM is a living history museum and is dedicated to providing an authentic experience for its visitors. The museum exhibits authentic objects whenever possible – that's why SBM shows historic artifacts and not reproductions in the original houses. The 37 historic houses are carefully restored original buildings, not facsimiles. Rather than show films and lecture about 300 years of daily life at Puddle Dock, we demonstrate those activities. Live, well-cared-for chickens are consistent with our mission and are a better choice than a film of a chicken.

Chicken Coop: The chickens at SBM are not confined to a chicken coop. There is a large fenced yard [1,250 square feet] with both shade and sunlight. The chickens spend 1/3 of the day outside the coop. The coop has ample natural light and ventilation, and is cleaned on a regular basis.

Protection from Predators: The coop and yard are constructed to protect the chickens from predators. In the late afternoon of every day the chickens go back into their coop and are secured from danger for the night.

Care: SBM has a consulting veterinarian, a consultant who specializes in rare breeds of animals, and two staff members who are experienced in caring for poultry. I was the CEO for many years of a museum that had an extensive farm program. The staff is experienced and knowledgeable. The chickens receive daily care and are provided with fresh water and feed regularly.

The Story of Chickens: What could possibly address the care of animals more effectively than a teaching exhibit that models the very best ways to care for farm animals?

We strongly believe that the exhibition at Strawberry Banke Museum will have a positive impact on our many visitors – telling, in an engaging manner, the complex story of 300 years of daily life in a maritime neighborhood, and modeling best practices for caring for farm animals.

If you have further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Lawrence J. Yerdon
President & CEO
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