Fernie and Regional District Bylaws

This is a quick summary of the by-laws governing residents of the RDEK and the City of Fernie. You can access the RDEK zoning and bylaws at http://www.rdek.bc.ca/Bylaws/bylawmain.htm and the City of Fernie zoning and bylaws at http://www.fernie.ca and search for bylaw 1750.

This is not legal advice, and if you feel unsure about your rights to house any animals, insects or nematodes on your property and you would like to make sure you won't be violating any bylaws, you should phone either the RDEK or the City of Fernie bylaws department and clarify.

Both the RDEK and the COF describe in their bylaws what activities are permitted in each of their zones. People living within COF boundaries are much more limited in what animals they can keep than our neighbours in the RDEK (areas like West Fernie). The only zone in the City of Fernie for which "Keeping of Small Farm Animals" is permitted is Rural Residential. This is roughly the neighbourhoods of Burma Road (excluding currently developed subdivisions like Alpine Trails and Parkland) and the area behind Ridgemont (near Old Stumpy Trail).

The city bylaw does NOT mention (explicitly exclude) the keeping of bees or worms, nor does it clearly define whether keeping a small number of certain animals would be considered to be like keeping pets (i.e. a small number of rabbits, birds, dwarf goats). This is a potential grey area, and if your neighbours never make a complaint, you might find you have no problems 'flying under the radar' so to speak. And you can always fight City Hall!!

The RDEK has three categories that would affect an RDEK backyard barnyard-er: The keeping of small farm animals, keeping of farm animals, and agricultural use. Here is how the RDEK defines these categories:

FARM ANIMALS, KEEPING OF SMALL means the keeping or rearing of small farm animals, excluding geese and turkeys, provided the number of rabbits does not exceed one (1) animal unit and the cumulative number of chickens, ducks and similar fowl, exclusive of geese and turkeys, does not exceed fifteen (15) animals.

FARM ANIMALS, SMALL means bees, rabbits, ducks and similar fowl, exclusive of geese and turkeys.

FARM ANIMALS, KEEPING OF means the keeping or rearing of poultry and livestock, other than swine or mink, provided the number of animal units of livestock does not exceed one (1) animal unit per hectare in total and the number of animal units of poultry does not exceed one-half (1/2) animal unit per hectare in total. In all cases the number of livestock or poultry permitted shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number.

AGRICULTURAL USE means the use of a parcel for the growing, rearing, producing or harvesting of agricultural or food products including: apiculture, horticulture, silviculture, dairying, rearing of livestock, fowl and fur-bearing animals, fish farming, intensive agriculture, preliminary grading and processing for shipment of those products which are grown or raised on the parcel or farm and sale of produce grown on the parcel or farm.

ANIMAL UNIT:

- 1 beef or dairy cow plus calf or bull
- 1 horse (stallion, gelding or mare and foal), donkey, mule or hinny
- 4 sheep plus lambs
- 4 goats plus kids
- 40 rabbits
- 125 chickens, turkeys, geese or ducks

RDEK Zoning:

Residential Zones:	**Animals Allowed:**
Single Residential (Urban) RS-1	Keeping of small farm animals
Single Residential (Urban-A) RS-1A	Keeping of small farm animals
Recreation Residential RS-2	No
Resort Residential RS-2A	No
Single Residential (Extensive) RS-4	Keeping of small farm animals
Mobile Home (Park) Residential RH-1	No
Rural Residential Zones:	
Rural Residential (Estate) RR-1	Keeping of farm animals
Rural Residential (Small Holding) RR-2	Agricultural use
Rural Residential (Hobby Farm) RR-4	Agricultural use
Rural Residential (Country) RR-8	Agricultural use
Rural Resource RR-60	Agricultural use

Fernie Community Eco Garden
Workshop Series 2008 - Keeping Food Real

For more information:
www.ecogarden.ca
ecogarden@fernie.com

Backyard Barnyard

This handout offers some interesting information about the various animals which can be kept in an urban or suburban environment as well as a good number of references for more in-depth study of each animal. It includes animals you'd expect to find in a banyard as well as the wilder ones, such as honey bees and bats, all of which can contribute to sustainable food production on a very small scale. If you're considering keeping animals for dompanionship or their usefulness in your home or garden environment or for production of meat, milk, eggs and fur it's very important to do your homework! On the back page is an overview of the bylaws and regulations concerning the keeping of animals in our area.

Resources (general):

http://www.beyondpeak.com/food-beyondpeak.html

Barnyard in your Backyard, edited by Gail Damerow

www.omlet.us *or* www.omlet.co.uk - *innovative backyard houses for chickens, rabbits, ducks, guinea pigs; with lots of how-to info about the animals*

http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/training/livestock.htm

Even the smallest, simplest critters depend on your care and commitment for their health and well-being once they arrive in your home or backyard.

rabbits

Rabbits live in big groups in the wild and your domestic rabbit will also enjoy the company of other rabbits. In fact a single rabbit will get lonely unless you are prepared to spend a lot of time with it.

Rabbits should not eat lettuce, but they would love cabbage, greens, broccoli, kale, carrots and fresh herbs as part of their diet. Don't forget that grass and hay is a part of their diet, as well as commercial rabbit mixes.

If there's a rabbit around your house (or yard), it will reliably produce about a pound of dry manure a week, or 50 pounds in a year. With minimal effort, the rabbit's output can be turned into "black gold" for the garden. A minimum of three weeks of composting is recommended. Raising earthworms in beds underneath the rabbit cages also help ensure odor control in the rabbitry.

Resources:

www.pathtofreedom.com/pathproject/simpleliving/rabbits.shtml

www.rudolphsrabbitranch.com/rrr.htm

http://www.joyofhandspinning.com/angora-care.shtml

ducks

Ducks are one of the easiest animals to keep. They are very hardy so rarely have any disease problems and withstand the cold better than chickens. Khaki Campbell ducks are very reliable egg layers, giving more eggs than chickens do. The eggs are very delicious, and are somewhat higher in fat which adds to the flavor. In most preparations, you can't tell the difference except duck eggs are at least twice as big as chicken eggs. It's important to have a fenced yard for ducks to protect them from predators including dogs and cats. They do not need to have a pond but they must have fresh water every day in a container that is deep enough to submerge their heads. This is how they clean their air passages. You can provide them with some swimming water in a plastic tub or child's wading pool. Be sure that they have a way to easily get in and out. Don't let ducklings near water until they are 4 or 5 weeks old as they can drown.

Resources:

Ducks and Greese in Your Backyard: A Beginners Guide by Rick & Gail Luttman

Raising The Home Duck Flock by Dave Holderread

Raising Ducks & Geese by John M. Vivian

chickens

Chickens require more care than ducks but are still wonderful and useful animals to have. They need a warm, secure house and a fenced yard. The older breeds tend to be more dual purpose, as a source for both meat and eggs, and hardy. Bantams, or banties, are good for weeding the garden and provide many amusing moments.

Resources:

Chickens in your Backyard: A Beginners Guide by Rick & Gail Luttmann (an excellent guide and a very funny book!)

Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens: Care / Feeding / Facilities

goats

Goats are one of the more delightful animals to keep. They are very smart, so good fencing is important. They need a secure barn at night to protect them from predators: dogs, coyotes, bears and cougars. Goats are browsers which means that they prefer shrubs to grass so if you have any brush clearing to do they are great helpers. Give your goats plenty of outside space where they can play, exercise and forage to their heart's content. Goats are a friendly bunch and enjoy being in each other's company, so always start off with at least two goats.

Goat milk is very delicious and can be tolerated by many people who are allergic to cow's milk.Keep the milk supply flowing by breeding your does once a year, starting when they are 8 months old or when the does weigh at least 80 pounds (for regular-size breeds). The doe will "freshen" and give milk after the kids are born. If kept milked, she will continue producing for up to 10 months. Allow her a dry period of about two months before she delivers new kids and begins producing milk again.

Resources:

Your Goats: A Kid'sGuide to Raising and Showing by Gail Damerow

American Dairy Goat Association, www.adga.org

www.attra.org (sustainable agriculture), 800-346-9140

www.dairygoatjournal.com - Dairy Goat Journal, PO. Box 10,Lake Mills, WI USA5355i

bees

Many beekeepers have bee hives in their back yards and even on city roof-tops. Bees can travel several miles to collect nectar and pollen, so they do not need flowering plants close by. Most suburbs have plenty of flowers, and bees can make a good crop of local honey.

City beekeepers must take special care so their bees do not become a nuisance to neighbors, or even appear to be a problem.Bee stings are usually their biggest concern. Usually, beekeepers can care for their bees in ways that allow neighbors to feel safe and comfortable in their yards. A tall fence or shrubs provide protection to bees and people by forcing the bees' flight path above people's heads.

Although they seem to love small ponds and creeks, bees will drink from a dog's water bowl, or a bird bath or swimming pool. To deter bees from going to a neighbor's yard for a drink, the suburban beekeeper should provide water for their bees with a small water garden in a half-barrel with floating plants or simply a dripping faucet over a wooden board.

There is no practical way to prevent swarming; however, swarms are usually very gentle because the bees eat a lot of honey before they swarm. Strong colonies with young queens are most likely to swarm. When bees swarm, they typically form a cluster within 100 feet of their old hive while scout bees search for a new home. Providing a new hive is a good way to discourage swarms from going into a neighbor's yard.

Resources:

Beekeeping For Dummies by Howland Blackiston
The Backyard Beekeeper by Kim Flottum
Natural Beekeeping by Ross Conrad
The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture by Amos Ives Root

http://outdoorplace.org/beekeeping/citybees.htm
http://www.backyardhive.com/
http://www.biobees.com/

guinea pigs

The guinea pig, also known as a cavy, is a popular indoor pet in families with young children. The soft combed-out fur of long- and curly-haired varieties can be spun into knitting yarns, often combined with wool. Native to Peru, this rodent-like animal is a traditional food source high in protein and low in fat. In South America there is an entire cuisine for cavy and larger varieties are being bred for export. Flavour of the meat is said to be similar to rabbit. As a domestic pet in Canada, however, a cavy is unlikely to end up in the stewpot, but potential owners of these shy, cuddly animals should be aware of the level of care needed to keep them healthy.

Resources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinea_pig
http://guinealynx.info/healthycavy.html
http://www.aracnet.com/~seagull/Guineas/careguide.html

A pet or a food source? This can be the beginning of a family discussion.

worms

Vermicomposting is a system for turning food waste into potting soil with the help of Redworms *(Eisenia fetida)*. Worm composting is an excellent way to recycle on-site, in your own home, all year round. You place food waste in your worm bin. The worms turn it into plant food. You use the plant food to grow vegetables in your garden. If you compost your garbage with worms, you help the environment.

How it works: Provide a drainable, aerated bin for your worms, with shredded newspaper for bedding.Bury your kitchen waste, cut into small pieces, in the worm bin. Select a variety of food, such as low acid fruits, vegetables (except onions), egg shells, cereals and grains, cooked or raw, and other organic items like cardboard and tea bags.Do not add meat or dairy products. Bacteria and other organisms break it down and worms eat the food waste, bedding, and bacteria. They turn it all into humus—nutrient-rich food for growing healthy plants.

Plan on about six months from the time you set up your bin before you can get compost. As the worms process the garbage and bedding, the contents of the bin will turn dark brown. You can then harvest the vermicompost in a variety of ways to use on your plants and in your garden.

Your worm bin will not smell if you don't overload the system with too much food or moisture.If you treat them right they will reproduce. You will find cocoons in your bin from which baby worms will hatch. After several months, you may have twice as many worms. You can share them to help a neighbor set up a bin, or just leave them in your bin. Overpopulation will not be a problem.

Resources:

www.wormwoman.com *and* www.wackyworldsof.com/html/worm_care.html

http://www.cityfarmer.org/wormcomp61.html - Compost Hotline 1-604-736-2250

bats

Bats are incredibly important to the health of the environment and our gardens. They are the primary predator of night-flying insects such as moths, beetles, and mosquitoes. A single bat can catch hundreds of insects in just one hour, consuming from 30 to 50 percent of its body weight in insects each night. A healthy colony of bats can protect gardens and crops from major damage by pest species such as cucumber beetles, moths, cutworm, corn earworm, and leafhoppers.

Bats are good neighbors to have around. You can help by providing bats with a nice bat house. They like tight, warm spaces with 30-35º C temperatures in July when they have their young with them. The bat house should be placed in the sun and around 12 to 15 feet off the ground to prevent predators from getting them.

Bat House Plans: There are many designs and sizes of bat house plans which can be found online.

Resources:

http://www.wildaboutgardening.org/en/features/section1/bathouse/bathouse.htm
http://www.batcon.org/bhra/economyhouse.html
http://www.batmanagement.com/main.html
http://www.batconservation.org/index.html