Happenings at the Sanctuary

Population 687+

We will close out the year with more than 600 animals in residence, including...

369 Chickens 39 Cows
117 Pigeons 12 Sheep
58 Ducks 6 Goats
30 Doves 3 Alpacas
16 Geese 1 Pig
8 Turkeys 5 Emus
9 Guineafowl 15 Others

In addition to these occupants of coops, barns, and aviaries, scores of rewilded pigeons and dozens of rewilded ducks use the sanctuary as home base, breakfasting with us each day. Countless wild turkeys and deer find refuge from hunters here.

Highlights

This was a big year for familial relations among cows. First, we reunited Rose with her daughter Daffodil, after she was discarded by the same dairy that had discarded her mother years before. Next, young Magnolia arrived after a different dairy went out of business and was adopted by Rose and Daffodil. Then, the calf called Gemini moved in and elderly Autumn—who had nine of her own calves taken away by a dairy—stepped up to become his protector, champion, and constant companion.

A group of pigeons previously rescued from racing moved into our “up the hill” aviary in May, and one or two pigeons at a time arrived throughout the year. Even though pigeons are still raised for the meat called squab, we are the only farmed animal sanctuary that routinely offers refuge to these clever and caring birds. We have two aviaries, each with fly space and an enclosed coop.

Eleven ducks, ten chickens, four turkeys, two geese, one dove, and a young ewe called Shadow arrived at the sanctuary after their original rescuer was murdered by her estranged husband. Sadly shaken by the experience of losing her devoted caregiver so violently, Shadow didn’t quite know what to do upon arriving at the sanctuary. Always empathic, Domino the alpaca greeted her gently and showed her around. Shadow has since made friends with many people and currently curls up with Gemini each night.

We began as a chicken sanctuary, and our community continues to include more roosters and hens than any other kind of animal. New feathered friends this year included roosters, hens, and chicks rescued from a breeder of birds for cockfighting and a group of starving chickens discovered by local authorities investigating a backyard puppy mill.

As part of The Rooster Project, we opened a new satellite refuge just for roosters. Located in our original region of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, this new site will promote compassion for chickens in a region dominated by the poultry industry while also helping with the persistent problem of too many roosters needing refuge. See the flip side of this report for other elements of The Rooster Project.

In Memoriam

Coco
As the matriarch of the front pasture herd, elder cow Coco nurtured and instructed rescued calves while making sure that everybody abided by the benevolent rules of bovine society. Her death was mourned by cows and people alike.

Pogo
A tiny bright bird with an out-sized personality, Pogo often held court while perched on the head of Broggy the ram. Before coming to VINE, he once snatched himself from the jaws of a hawk and plummeted back to earth, unharmed.

Olive
Deeply devoted to her sheep family Olive never stood out from the crowd but made a big impact in her quiet way. Always willing to offer a ride to a rooster, Olive helped to co-create our community of care and will be deeply missed.

Rocky
Rocky the peacock grace our community with his fine feathers and polyamorous personality. We will never forget the day he challenged the emus to a duel nor the many times that he danced and displayed to roosters, pigeons, and even wild geese.
Education and Advocacy

Speaking Up for Animals

This year, VINE organized or participated in more events than ever before. In speeches and workshops as well as in both online and print publications, we drew upon our own relationships with animals to educate the general public and other animal advocates.

Eating the Rainbow

As an LGBTQ-led farmed animal sanctuary, we have worked for many years to promote veganism in LGBTQ communities and to illuminate the links between homophobia and speciesism. This year, we once again organized the only Pride Month event in our town. We distributed our brochure entitled “Does Eating the Rainbow Make You Gay?” at conferences and VegFests across the country. Our cofounder pattrice gave presentations on “Queering Animal Liberation” at the national Animal Rights Conference here in the USA and at the Festival végane de Montréal in Canada.

The Rooster Project

Every year, hundreds of roosters are euthanized because there is no room for them at sanctuaries. This year, we launched The Rooster Project, a multifaceted multi-year endeavor that will simultaneously boost the capacities of sanctuaries and reduce the number of roosters needing refuge. In addition to providing material and technical support to sanctuaries, The Rooster Project will intervene in the two top causes of rooster homelessness (cockfighting and backyard hen keeping) while counteracting the gender stereotypes that lead people to reject roosters.

Making Connections

We always work hard to help people see the links between animal exploitation and other forms of oppression. This year, we stepped up our efforts on the problem of ableism, partnering with a local organization that provides services to people with disabilities and also speaking up more about disabilities within our sanctuary community. With San Francisco Women Against Rape, we helped to organize an event that explored intersections among speciesism, ableism, racism, and violence against women.

Bringing It All Back Home

More so than most large farmed animal sanctuaries, VINE works to develop relationships and foster respect for animals in our local community and surrounding region. This year, we partnered with local institutions and grassroots organizations in many ways, such as hosting meetings, helping to organize events, and sharing resources. We also promoted veganism throughout southern Vermont and New Hampshire by organizing potlucks, bake sales, and an art exhibit as well as by tabling at local festivals.

60+ Events

- 21 on-site volunteer days
- 14 lectures, talks, and workshops
- 10 vegan bake sales and potlucks
- 5 protests
- 17 other outreach & educational efforts

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Message from pattrice

Wow. What a year. It’s not at all clear to me how our tiny staff managed to do so much while taking care of so many animals. Wait, I do know — it’s because we weren’t alone. From the donors who stepped up to help us buy a new tractor and build the satellite site to the volunteers who stepped up to staff events or tackle on-site projects, our extended community made it possible for VINE to thrive. I hope that anyone who contributed in any way this year will join me in feeling proud of our collective accomplishments.