

Diaries During Lockdown¹

Converting the “Egg Club” to a COVID-19 Safe Trusted Network

July 1, 2020

(updated on October 18, 2020)

David is seeking to find a safe way that a trusted group of good friends can sit to chat face-to-face and maybe even take a garden or barn tour while picking up a dozen spare eggs from New Fadum Farm.

18 months ago, we had a sudden and unexpected increase in the population of hens on New Fadum Farm. We were down to 5 laying hens so Deborah ordered six more chicks from Agway. Soon thereafter our daughter, who was teaching kindergarten in Brooklyn, decided to hatch out some chicks in her classroom and asked us if we could provide them a permanent home at the end of the school year. We said yes. Long story short, when COVID-19 hit last February, we had 14 hens who all started to lay at once. We were getting 8 to 12 eggs every day - and that was way too many.



Figure 1: Eggs Waiting to be Delivered to Members of the Egg Club

When an overabundance like this happened in the past, we enlisted one of our daughters to feed the hens every day and collect the eggs. In return, she got to take all the extra eggs to church on Sunday to sell for one dollar per dozen. This turned out to be a win-win situation. This year because of the pandemic, we couldn't use this solution because church wasn't meeting in person on Sundays. Instead, we set up an “Egg Club” consisting of 9 families trusted friends all of whom were sheltering snugly at home. Whenever we had a spare 4 to 7

dozen eggs in the refrigerator, I would organize an egg drop with my two granddaughters. Wearing our masks, we would drive around town visiting members of the Egg Club, delivering eggs and pausing to share a few moments at a safe distance. As spring wore on, the visits might include a quick, safely distanced garden tour. We never went inside their houses; we just left eggs on the stoop.

¹ You can access all of the “Diaries During Lockdown” [here](#). “Diaries During Lockdown” is a network of professionally trained mathematical modelers (along with some of their friends and colleagues) who are using the tools of system dynamics and systems thinking to explain many of the complex choices facing individuals, organizations, and governments as we collectively grapple with the COVID19 pandemic. The apparent voice of this story is that of David Andersen, a retired Professor of System Dynamics and Public Policy who lives on New Fadum Farm. This voice is actually the synthesis of a number of different analysts and writers.

My new idea is to convert this Egg Club, a pre-existing network of friends who know each other well, into a COVID-Safe Trusted Network. I envision such a group as able to meet for some limited purpose while observing a well-defined protocol. This protocol would be an agreed upon set of rules that everyone in the network has studied and agrees to follow. If protocols are tight, these groups can be quite safe.

I think that we can use the same six principles that structured the protocol for the contractors who have been working on Deborah's new wool room back in the tractor shed:

1. **Defining the Egg Pick Up Activity:** *To deliver farm fresh eggs to friends of New Fadum Farm.*
2. **Trusted Responsibility for COVID19 Safety during the Egg Pick-Up:** *We are all responsible for each other.*
3. **Social Distancing:** *No shaking hands, no hugging. Follow the rules—six feet distance and masks.*
4. **COVID-19 Testing for Members of the Egg Club:** *If you have a temperature or don't feel well, stay home.*
5. **Quarantine:** *Observe all official quarantine regulations.*
6. **Out of Region Travel:** *Be careful not to bring back the virus and spread it if traveling.*

The well-defined activity for our Egg Club will be to deliver/receive eggs, chat while keeping at a safe distance and maybe take a garden or barn tour. We could establish additional trusted networks for other purposes—walking dogs together, weeding and sprucing up the church gardens, or just having safe face-to-face conversation.

*The first version this narrative ended right about here, but in real life the story continued.
Here's what happened:*

I asked my daughter – the kindergarten teacher - to review this story. “Dad”, she reported, “the Egg Club principles are fine, but they aren't a protocol. If we tried to have my kindergarten class carry out this so-called protocol as you wrote it, 22 kindergarteners would come up with 22 different ways to do it”. She added wryly, “I suspect your adult friends aren't much better at following directions than my kindergarteners!”

Based on her feedback, I understand that we need to add a few sections to fill out the written protocol:

- A. **Describe the physical layout.**
- B. **Define who is involved in the Egg Pick up**
- C. **Set out in detail how the whole activity will be carried out.**
- D. **Describe in detail the food service and hospitality options, including use of toilet facilities.**
- E. **(Optional) Activity worksheets or checklist.**

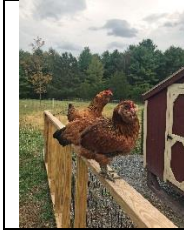
My daughter's last comment was that few people, whether trusted adults or kindergarteners, can make sense of a protocol and go on to change their behavior just by reading it. It will require motivation, discussion, clear guidance, and practice to turn protocols into safe behavior. To acknowledge the vital importance of this point, I add a preamble to the whole protocol.

This Story Has a Lesson: *COVID-safe Trusted Networks, like our Egg Club, enhance life for group members by presenting a plan for safe in-person interactions that meet safety standards set by public health authorities. The key to creating a successful Network is to clearly lay out a specific and limited set of activities that conform to a detailed and agreed-upon protocol.*

Technical Modeler's Notes:

1. **Ali's CORONA1 Model.** You can download and run Ali's model here: [CORONA1.mdl](#). Please right-click on the file and select "Save link as ..." You will need to download a free version of the simulation software VENSIMPLE to open and run this model.

2. **Professional Presentations.** Ali's professional briefings with an introduction to his model and its conclusions can be found at [Spread of Corona](#), [Waves of Corona](#) and [Policies to control Corona](#).



**New Fadum Farm Egg Club
Pick-Up Protocol
Preamble to the Protocol
Draft Date: August 1, 2020**



Why are we doing all this? This seems all to be a bit “over the top”. Pages and pages all about how to drop off and pick up a carton of eggs. Why all this fuss?

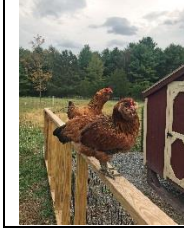
- COVID-19 is going to be with us until there is a vaccine. That could be quite a while. In the meanwhile, it is worth all our whiles to learn new habits to help return us to a more “normal” life and to stay safe.
- We all have grandparents or friends and colleagues who are at high risk. Changing our behaviors is not just about our own safety and well-being. We are protecting the most vulnerable in our midst.
- Once we learn how to make these changes for small and simple activities, we can start to do the same for larger and more complex activities. Small changes can lead to larger changes in behavior.
- If this works well, we want to spread it around. Promulgating behavior change to distant others will benefit by careful thinking in advance. We are laying a sound foundation for a movement to change micro-behaviors.
- We want to get it right. By writing down details, we can have them reviewed by others to be improved.

Behavior Change is hard.

- Having the big idea is not enough. We need to drill down and make small changes in our behaviors that can run against a whole lifetime of learned experiences. Many of us hug each other as a basic building block of our everyday interactions.
- Initially, we will need to pay attention, teach each other, and rethink how we do small things. Over time, we will create a new normal.

Steps to safely change behaviors.

1. Carefully write out a simple protocol and share it around to get it right.
2. Start small and work out the kinks and details with a small group of friends.
3. Make sure that initially everyone has access to a written version of these protocols before the event begins.
4. Talk about and reflect on what we are doing the first time that an egg drop takes place.
5. Reflect on and learn from experiences, updating these protocols as needed.
6. Share lessons with others.



**New Fadum Farm Egg Club
Pick-Up Protocol
Guiding Principles
Draft Date: August 1, 2020**



Purpose of this Document: To set out rules for safe operation of the Egg Club during the COVID-19 epidemic.

- The “Egg Club” consists of people who visit New Fadum Farm to pick up eggs and want to keep themselves and their families safe.
- People in the New Fadum Farm “COVID-safe Bubble” include an infant, two septuagenarians and other members of sub-populations at risk for COVID19 infections and we want everyone in our bubble to stay safe.
- We want to ensure that none our activities contribute to further spread of the epidemic.

Purpose of the Egg Pick-Up Activity: To deliver farm fresh eggs to friends of New Fadum Farm.

- An important secondary purpose is to have a nice chat with some friends, maybe take a tour of the barn to visit with the hens, and maybe even look around at Deborah’s garden or take a stroll back to the new bridge over the brook.
- Quite possibly, Deborah and David may serve a cup of coffee (perhaps with cookies) to members of the egg club while we are seated at a safe distance from each other.

Trusted Responsibility for COVID-19 Safety during Egg Pick-Up: We are all responsible for each other.

- Egg Club members will take care to be COVID-safe and will be aware of the contents of this protocol.
- David Andersen will have responsibility for ensuring that all Egg Club members are aware of and compliant with these COVID-19 safety protocols and testing requirements when picking up eggs.
- As a general principle, all Egg Club activities will follow reopening policies promulgated by Albany County and the State of New York. If county or state officials roll back some of the reopening permissions, Egg Club activities will be temporarily suspended.

Social Distancing: No handshakes, no hugging. Follow the rules—six feet distance and masks.

- All Egg Club members will maintain social distancing following current guidelines promulgated by the CDC, the New York State’s Governor’s task force on COVID-19 re-opening, and Albany County Department of Health.
- All members will wear face masks or maintain 6 feet or more of social distancing when on a barn tour or looking at Deborah’s garden.
- Members can remove their masks when seated more than six feet apart to have a cup of coffee or seltzer and chat.
- **David is expected to present a problem with regard to social distancing. His family worries that he may not comply strictly with these social distancing norms—please help him remain compliant ☺.**

COVID-19 Surveillance for Egg Club Members: If you have a temperature or don’t feel well, stay home.

- Egg Club members will routinely monitor their health status using the CDC Health Bot available online [here](#) (or an equivalent screening device) and closely pay attention to and follow the recommendations of such screenings.
- Egg Club members recognize that measuring one's body temperature is an easy way to discover **possible** asymptomatic infection early on (despite issues with false negatives and false positive readings☺).
- During egg pick-ups, Club members will tell an interesting (or amusing) story about their body temperature. For these purposes, an "interesting story" can be a straight-up report on one's current body temperature.

Quarantine: *Observe all official quarantine regulations.*

- Current public health requirements state that persons who have been in contact with an active COVID-19 case should be evaluated by the appropriate public health agency (presumably Albany County Department of Health) and should maintain possibly prescribed quarantine.
- Egg Club members will strive to meet current Albany County and NYS public health requirements with respect to possible quarantine measures.

Out of Region Travel: *If you travel, be careful not to bring back the virus and spread it locally.*

- Out of region travel, especially to regions where COVID-19 is still active and to large gatherings, may require additional monitoring and attention by everyone concerned.
- Egg Club members will pay attention to out of region travel and discuss it with other Club members as necessary.



**New Fadum Farm Egg Club
Pick-Up Protocol
Description of Details
Draft Date: August 1, 2020**



Describe the physical layout. The egg pick up will take place at New Fadum Farm where three spaces will be prepared in advance. Two of these will be seating spaces with an adjacent table suitable for holding a parcel of papers or a beverage cup and small plate. The third space will be a larger table that will be used for food service, when offered, and for the physical transfer of the egg cartons. All of these spaces will be separated from each other by 8 feet or more.

Define who is involved in the Egg Pick up. Two household units will be involved in the egg pick up—a hosting household and a guest household. The host household will consist of David and Deborah Andersen, who live within a larger unit involving others at New Fadum Farm. The hosting unit will have overall responsibility for making the safety and activity rules clear to all involved. The guest household will come from one of the members of the trusted network that makes up the greater “Egg Club”. To participate in the Egg Club, a guest household will need to be aware of this protocol and express a willingness to observe its provisions.

Set out in detail how the whole activity will be carried out. In advance of the egg pickup, the hosts will prepare the physical space. The carton of eggs will be placed on the larger table with disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer easily available so that the guests can clean the egg cartons before picking them up, if they wish. If the hosts are providing a drink and a snack, those will also be set out in advance. The hosts will greet the guests while still wearing face masks. After all are seated, with hosts at one sitting area and guests at the other, face masks can be removed for conversation and food service, if that is an option. Food service options are described below. At some points during the visit, hosts and guests may walk back to the barns to look around, stroll in Deborah’s garden or perhaps take a short walk in one of the mowed back paths. During the walk, masks may be left off, but guests and hosts will keep at least six feet apart and walk in the same direction. If the six-foot distance cannot be maintained, involved persons will replace their masks.

Detailed description of food service and hospitality options (including use of toilet facilities). There are three food service options:

- I. **No food or beverages are served.**
- II. **Guests bring their own beverage and snack.** If guest bring their own, they will place them on the small table in their sitting area and serve themselves.
- III. **Hosts provide beverage and snacks.** If the hosts a drink and small snack, that will also be set out in advance. Separate plates of food will be provided for guests and hosts. Similarly, cups, plates,

silverware, and serving pieces will be segregated for the hosts versus the guests. Disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be provided to guests at the larger table. Households will take turns moving to the larger table, picking up beverages and snack from their designated serving area and returning to their seating area. At some point, the guests will pick up the egg carton from the larger table, using disinfectant wipes to clean the carton, if they wish. All dishes and silverware will be left in place when the event ends, and the hosts will clean up afterwards using safe procedures.

If guests need to use the toilet during an egg pickup, they will use the toilet inside the Andersen's house. One person at a time will be allowed in the house and must wear a face mask. Disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be made available in the bathroom. Guests and hosts alike are requested to wipe down high touch surfaces used in the toilet.

(Optional) Activity worksheets or checklist. There is no additional activity worksheet or checklist. The first time that guests visit for an egg pick up, the host will provide a copy of this protocol and go over it with them.