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let her have a pet. At age 50, however, she has three cats, two goats and 20 chickens on her three-quarters of an acre lot that she also shares with her boyfriend and two of her three children.

Feb. 04, 2014



When North Carolina accountant Laura Harper was a little girl, her parents wouldn't let her have a pet. At age 50, however, she has three cats, two goats and 20 chickens

on her three-quarters of an acre lot that she also shares with her boyfriend and two

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knickerknacks. The store also sells feed for chickens, goats, hams, horses and other animals, along with custom coops, nesting items, heated bowls and even chicken diapers.

The store also houses two employees, who tend to the store's customers while providing accounting services for about 30 small businesses. Another part-time employee helps with heavy lifting, and Snowflake, a white Sultan chicken, lives in the store, parading long feathers that cover her feet and a soft bunch that crowns her head.

Customers also seek advice, such as whether it's normal for chickens to lay a series of eggs with double yolks — and scream so loud in the process — and what to feed them during that progression.

About 25 years ago, Harper started providing accounting services for her father, a serial entrepreneur. After having three children while doing accounting work for two law firms, Harper founded Netaganza in her home. Around 2004 she moved her business to an office near Six Forks Road, and then to one on Creedmoor Road in 2007.

About two years ago, Harper brought home two goats to address the thick ivy that had taken over their yard.

“The best part of the day would be getting home from work, going outside, having a beer and then just sitting there and playing with goats,” she said. “They are just crazy. They will show off for you.”

More than a year ago, Harper started adding chickens in twos and giving them names, such as Thelma and Louise, and Lucy and Ethel.

Harper started researching the idea of opening her own supply store early last year,

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will hold its first “flock swap” where people can buy, sell or trade their animals.

The store broke even in December, and Harper expects it to start making money in the spring. Harper doesn't need to make a lot of money, she said, just enough to cover the additional rent, and pay for someone to clean her house.

“We are trying to foster a community of people that have the same interests,” Harper said. A community that can share information, work together and know that no one will look at them like they are crazy “when they say they have 12 chickens.”

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