ForeWord Reviews

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

The Small Scale Poultry Flock: An All-Natural Approach to Raising Chickens and Other Foul for Home and Market Growers
Harvey Ussery
Chelsea Green
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Written by a self-described "old hick with chickenshit on his boots," *The Small-Scale Poultry Flock* is a welcoming and decisive guide to the poultry-keeping experience. But *keeping* poultry, readers quickly learn, is not an accurate term, for Harvey Ussery's natural approach is that of a partnership with his flock, in what he terms "an integrated food independence enterprise." In following the lead of his flock's happiness, from their housing conditions to what they eat and where they roam, the author determined that he, too, could reap happiness and real rewards—in better compost for his garden and healthier and more delicious eggs and meat.

Aimed at the backyard homesteader or small-scale farmer whose goal is production of all of the family's eggs and dressed poultry, this book also works as a starter kit for those contemplating the life of a "flockster," the name Ussery has coined for those, like him, enamored with the poultry life. The author shares straightforward, encouraging information written from the viewpoint of someone who desires to share the knowledge that has come out of three decades of hard-won experience. Indeed, he contends that it's not about one answer, but about experimentation to find what works best.

The first chapter "Why Bother?" is a rallying cry for those contemplating freedom from conventional food sources. In it, the author shows the inner workings of factory farming and explains how that system not only makes for unhappy animals and low-quality food, but creates a serious situation for contamination of our food supply. From those troubling facts, the complexities of poultry farming look like little bother at all. The rest of the book is filled with thought-provoking quotes, essential information, and fascinating sidebars. Readers learn everything, from starting a flock and recognizing mating behaviors to managing brooding and butchering techniques. Additionally, Ussery sheds light on common questions, such as "is a rooster needed to make eggs?" and "is there a difference between brown and white eggs?" Sidebars like "Reading the Poops" make feeding time easier.

Helpful charts, anatomical diagrams, photographs of all aspects of poultry keeping,

appendixes including shelter plans, resources for more reading, and a glossary round out this nearly encyclopedic guide. Anyone considering a natural approach to producing eggs and meat will cherish this must-have reference, enjoyable to sit down and read cover-to-cover, but also perfect for answers on the go.

Jennifer Fandel