



Chickens: Tending a Small-Scale Flock (Hobby Farms)

Sue Weaver

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Hobby Farms Chickens: Tending a Small-Scale Flock for Pleasure and Profit is geared toward the hobby farmer looking to begin his or her own flock of chickens on a small farm or even backyard. Author Sue Weaver, who keeps various exotic breeds and countless barnies on her farm, is an expert on all things livestock and an avowed chicken fanatic. This photo-filled guide begins with "Chickens 101" and details the physiology of chickens, members of the Phasianidea family, providing beginning hobby farmers with a basic education in the chicken's unique physical makeup (from wings and feathers to beaks and digestive tracts), behavior, mating, and its unexpected high intelligence. The author offers advice on choosing the right types of chickens to get started: meat, egg, or dual purpose, or maybe even "just for pets." The book is an excellent resource for selecting which breed of chicken is best for the hobby farmer, based on the birds' traits, such as aggression, personality, noise factor, tolerance for heat, confinement, cold, etc. Chickens also provides information on selecting or building a suitable chicken coop for the hobby farmer's brood, outlining the basic requirements (lighting, ventilation, flooring, waterers, insulation, safety, and so forth). A detailed chapter on feeding chickens offers essential guidance on nutrition, commercial feeds, supplements, and water requirements. For the chicken hobby farmer looking to start with a clutch of baby chicks (from his own hen or an outside source), the author provides excellent info on incubators and hatching as well as all of the accommodations and preparation required for hens in the nest box. A chapter on selling eggs and broilers provides timetables, requirements, and dos and don'ts to get a hobby farmer's business off on the right foot. All chicken keepers will find the chapter on health of particular value, with expert advice on preventing common problems and dealing various maladies and diseases. Much detailed information about all of the topics in the book is encapsulated in sidebars. A glossary of over 125 terms plus a detailed resource section of chicken and poultry associations, books, and websites complete the volume. Fully indexed.

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