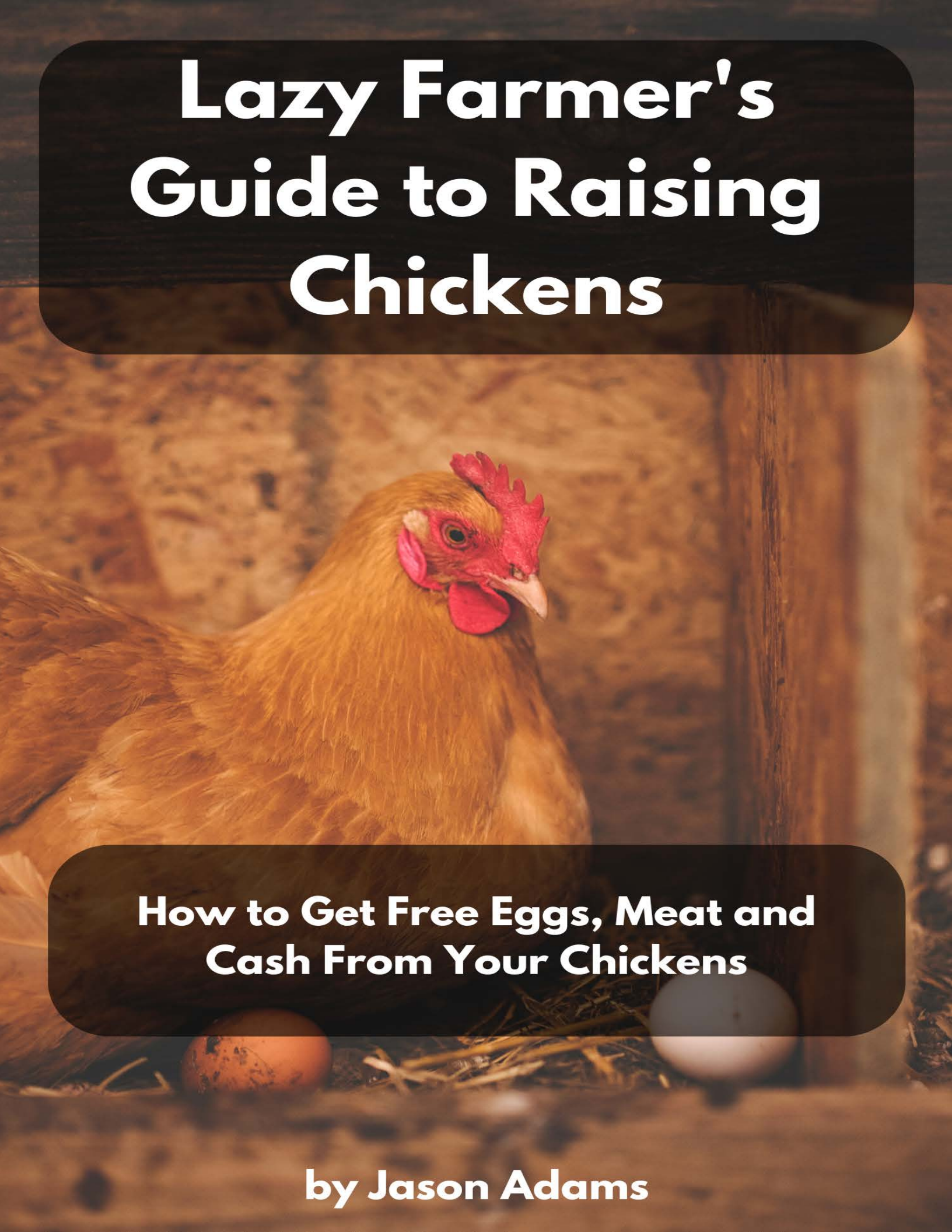
Lazy Farmer's Guide to Raising Chickens



How to Get Free Eggs, Meat and Cash From Your Chickens

by Jason Adams

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Introduction

You consider yourself a survivalist; a prepper ready for just about anything that the world could throw at you. You are ready for marauders who want your land, ready for natural disasters, political upheaval, plague, and perhaps a zombie or two… if the need should arise.

Are you truly ready though?

Have you thought about how you would create a sustainable food source for you and your group of survivors? Learning to garden and farm is important, but you also need to have a good protein source. One of the very best options available, and one of the easiest to start, is breeding chickens.

Keep in mind that this book is for survivalists, and is not intended for those who want to raise and breed show chickens. While there might be a few similarities here and there, they are decidedly different beasts.

Throughout the course of this book, we'll cover what you need to know to get started raising your chickens right now so you can be ready for the impending collapse. Even if the fall of civilization doesn't happen tomorrow or next week, you're still adding a valuable skill to your repertoire, and you will be able to save quite a bit of money on eggs and chicken!

Now, let's get on with the business of raising chickens.

Chapter 1

Why Raise Chickens?



Many people in our country have no real concept of where the food on our tables comes from. People do not understand the work of raising and slaughtering animals that was once very basic to us and that everyone knew. In the past century, we've gone from producing our own meat to buying meat that is packaged, processed, and laced with chemicals.

It's not healthy, but that's just the start of the problem.

Getting the food we need now is as simple as going to the grocery store or even picking up the phone for a delivery. What if all of that went away? What would you do to get your own meat? As someone committed to survival, you know that in the end, you can only rely on your own skills.

While learning proper defense, how to shoot, hunt, fish, and live off the land is important, they are certainly not the only skills you will want to have. Learning how to raise chickens and keep them healthy for their meat, eggs, and other benefits is very important.

Farming, and raising animals is certainly a part of farming, is an essential skill if you hope to have a decent chance of surviving and actually living well after whatever disaster, natural or political, occurs. Preparation is about far more than choosing the right guns and storing some silver. It's about learning to *survive* and to make the land work for you rather than just trying to scrounge a living off it.

Raising chickens can help with that, and it can certainly give you a much greater appreciation for your forefathers and foremothers who tilled the land and raised animals simply because it was a part of daily survival.

A Constant Source of Food

As you will see in the next chapters, raising chickens has a number of benefits, with the fact that they are a constant source of food being one of the biggest benefits. They offer meat and eggs alike, and they are actually relatively easy to bring up. This is true whether you are in an urban or a rural environment, making them an essential prep item for any survivalist

Start Raising Them Now

One of the mistakes that many people make when they start thinking about raising chickens is believing that they will just wait until a survival situation happens to start! This is the *opposite* of being prepared.

When things in the world go bad, where do you think you will find chickens? Do you have the time to start your flock and raise the chickens before you need them for survival?

The answer will probably be no. This is why it is so important to start your flock right now.

If you are in a city, look into the regulations regarding keeping chickens on your property. Many cities allow it, but they have certain rules you need to follow. Those who are in rural environments should not have any trouble getting started, but you do need to make sure you have the right equipment. This book is a great place to start.

By starting your chicken flock now, you will be learning to do things the right way *before* you really need them for survival. In addition, starting your flock now might just save you

a bit on your food bill, but we'll get more into the benefits of raising chickens in the next chapter.

Whether you are raising them for meat, eggs, a source of goods you can trade, or you want to start raising them as a healthier option for your family, start sooner rather than later.

Chapter 2

The Pros and Cons of Raising Chickens



Raising chickens offers a number of benefits. However, along with those benefits come some drawbacks for the survivalist. In this chapter, we will examine both the good and the bad about raising chickens as well as why the pros really will outweigh the cons in most situations.

The Pros

Let's look at the pros first, so you can get a better idea of just why so many survivalists are looking into raising poultry.

Fresh Eggs

Eggs are a wonderful source of food, and they can keep on providing food nearly every day. In fact, a single hen is able to produce up to 200 eggs each year. Having a flock could be a wonderful food source that is reliable, not to mention tasty. Additionally, the fresh eggs are healthier than what you would buy in the store since they are truly organic and do not have any chemicals or pesticides added to them.

A Natural Way to Keep a Garden Free of Pests

Chickens like to have added protein in addition to their feed, and one of the best ways to make sure they have it is to let them roam free in your garden. They are able to eat many of the bugs and other nasty little creatures that could damage your crops, and they are simultaneously eating more and getting healthier and larger. It's a winning situation all around!

Better Manure

Here's another benefit of raising chickens that many people do not even realize. Their waste is full of nitrogen, and nitrogen is what makes your garden really grow. By mixing their waste in with your compost, you can create manure that is fantastic for your plants.

Meat

In addition to raising chickens for their eggs, when you have a large enough flock, you may want to have some of the chickens designated for butchering and to become meat. Chicken is a fantastic source of protein, it's easy to cook, and it tastes wonderful. When you have a nice and large flock you are raising, it's easy to have enough for both eggs and for meat.

A Feeling of Accomplishment

Another one of the great benefits that most people do not consider when they first start thinking about raising chickens is the feeling of accomplishment that it brings. Really learning how to provide for yourself in every way imaginable can be a great feat that leaves you feeling good about yourself.

Knowing that you are adding to your skills and becoming independent will give you more confidence in your survival abilities.

The Cons

As many fantastic benefits as there is to raising chickens for survival, it really is important to look at some of the cons so you can be sure you are making the best decision for your situation.

The Noise

Often, your survival relies on remaining undetected. Chickens are not quiet creatures, and their noise could give away your position. If you are in a situation where you are

hiding and trying to remain a “ghost”, then chickens might not be an animal that you want to raise. However, the pros of having that additional food might even outweigh the con of being noisy.

Those who are in rural and relatively safe areas will not have to worry about this quite as much.

One option for those who want to keep chickens, but who do not want them to give away their position, is to keep the chickens in a location away from the shelter. This brings about a host of other inconveniences and problems though. If you do not have the chickens near, you still have to attend to them each day, and it will now take more time. It also means that someone else could come along, find and take the chickens. Additionally, protecting them from predators, which is the next con in this list, is all but impossible.

Protecting Them



You love chickens. They taste fantastic. You aren’t the only creature with this thought. Chickens are on the menu of many different predators from hawks and eagles to foxes, weasels and more. When you have chickens, you will have to deal with these predators coming onto your property and trying to get at them.

This means you need to be smart about how and where you keep them, and you have to provide a good shelter. Later, we’ll go over how you can do this.

Aggressive Roosters

The job of the rooster is to protect the flock, and you can bet that they take this job very seriously. Some roosters are actually very aggressive toward anyone and anything that comes toward their hens. This includes you, others in your group, and other animals.

Even though a rooster might not be a massive creature, *never* underestimate just how dangerous they can be. Their spurs, on the backs of their legs, are extremely sharp and they can cause some serious wounds, which is the last thing you need when you are trying to survive and stay healthy. Wounds from a rooster, or any wound for that matter, could develop an infection, so you always want to be as careful as possible.

The only time you will want a rooster is if you need to have fertile eggs. Those who are in survival situations and who are trying to grow their flock and make sure they have a never-ending source of chicken will likely *need* to have a rooster.

Let's look at a list of the pros and cons of keeping roosters to see if they are right for you.

Pros

- Roosters provide fertilization.
- Roosters act as a guard against predators.
- He can help to find food for the flock by alerting the hens that he's discovered something worth eating – good for free-range chickens.

Cons

- They can be aggressive.
- They crow at dawn – and often throughout the day, making them a larger danger for you if you want to remain quiet.
- It can be difficult to keep more than one for a large flock, as they may fight, which could lead to injuries or death.

If you raise a rooster from the time it is a chick, it is possible to make him less aggressive, at least toward you.

Raising Chickens in the City Today – The Pros and Cons

Sometimes, those preppers who are getting ready for whatever may come might not have the luxury of a large amount of land for raising chickens. Sometimes, they are in the thick of the city or in the suburbs. This does not mean that they can't raise chickens though. It just means that some of the pros and cons are a bit different.

Safer from Predators

In addition to the pros outlined above, you will note that in the city, you will have to contend with fewer predators than in the rural environments. This makes it easier to keep the chickens safe.

The Laws

Keep in mind that many city ordinances that allow you to keep chickens will not allow you to have roosters due to the noise they can create. This is something that you will need to look up for your particular area. If they do allow chickens, it could come with a licensing fee. Of course, if you are raising them in a survival situation, that's not really something that will concern people any longer!

Space Requirements

Another one of the problems that you might encounter while raising chickens in the city is simply having a lack of space. You will not have nearly as much room, and this means you will have to keep your flock smaller.

Butchering

There really is not a good place to butcher the birds in many smaller city homes or apartments either, especially if you are raising and butchering in today's world rather

than in a survival scenario. You never know just what your neighbors will think, or what their view toward it might be.

The Noise

Additionally, you still have to think about the noise the chickens make. Instead of worrying about it giving away your position to the enemy though, you have to worry about it annoying the neighbors.

Still, when you consider the benefits – the eggs, the satisfaction of being self-sufficient and the knowledge that you can be independent – raising chickens is well worth it.

Chickens – Worth It for the Survivalist

Most of the time, raising chickens is a great option for the survivalist. It allows you to have a constant source of food, and raising them is not overly difficult as long as you are able to get down the basics.

Canned food and MREs are great… if that's all you have, but the promise of fresh eggs and chicken is simply too good to pass up, so focus on the pros of raising the chickens, and then figure out ways to deal with the few drawbacks they have.

Chapter 3

Best Types of Chickens to Raise



If you are new to the idea of raising chickens, then you might not yet realize just how many different breeds of chicken are out there. Now that you are getting serious about it, you should start learning more about those different breeds so you can find the one that is right for you. In this chapter, we'll look at the different breeds available as well as what you might want to buy right now.

As you will see, different types of chickens will thrive in different environments. Always try to choose chickens that suit where you live if possible. This helps to ensure their health, which is ultimately better for your survival. Of course, in those situations when you simply do not have a choice, such as a survival scenario, sometimes any chickens are better than no chickens at all.

Great Egg Layers

First, let's look at some of the best options for those who want their chickens primarily as egg layers.

Ancona

This breed is a fantastic choice for those who want to raise their chickens primarily as egg layers. The hens tend to be around 4 to 5 pounds and the roosters are around 6 pounds, making them relatively easy to manage.

The hens lay large white eggs, and are actually capable of providing between 250 and 300 eggs per year, per hen. The Ancona also happens to be capable of living in both

hot and cold temperatures. They can even do fairly well in somewhat humid environments, although it is not their preference.

Leghorn

The Leghorn is a very popular chicken type, originally from Italy. They are excellent egg layers. They come in a variety of different colors, and the hens will typically lay around 280 or more eggs each year. Some may actually lay even more. Another one of the big benefits of this breed is that the hens mature rather quickly. They can begin laying eggs at 6 months. This means that many survivalists will be able to breed a large flock in a relatively short time.

Orloff

Another chicken that is starting to become a bit more popular with the survivalists is the Orloff. Originally from Persia, they've become far more popular in many parts of the world over the years. They will typically weigh between 6 and 9 pounds, and they are a very good egg layer. The hens should be able to provide you with close to 300 eggs annually.

They also happen to taste decent if you use them for meat. Of course, you can also find some other chicken breeds that are ideal as meat birds, which we'll cover in the next section.

Great Chickens for Meat

Here are some of the best breeds of chicken for those who are primarily raising them for meat. Of course, even though these might be loved for the taste of their meat, they can also produce eggs, just as you could eat the egg laying chickens if you need. After all, this is survival.

Bresse

Bresse is a popular breed for those who want to raise chickens mainly for the meat they can provide. It can actually be somewhat difficult to get hold of this chicken in the United States, at least not without paying a premium. They are originally from France. These might not be the most economical type of chicken for all survivalists or homesteaders, but those who are looking for one of the breeds with the best tastes really can't beat Bresse chickens.

However, here's a tip for the thrifty survivalist who still wants great taste. Go with the Blue Foot breed from Canada. They are easier to get, cheaper, and they were bred from Bresse chickens, so you get the flavor without the cost.

Cornish Cross

The Cornish Cross breed is very popular for their meat, and a huge part of this is the fact that they grow so quickly. They will reach the ideal weight for slaughter – about 6 pounds – within about two months. Because they grow quickly, they tend to be less active than many other breeds of chicken. This could make them ideal for those with smaller spaces, those in the city, and those who want to make sure their chickens are a bit quieter.

Eggs and Meat – the Best Breeds

Of course, if you aren't sure which you would prefer, primarily egg layers or primarily meat birds, then you might want to consider the following breeds. Many homesteaders feel these are the best of both worlds, able to lay a large number of eggs and still able to offer some fantastic tasting meat.

New Hampshire Red

These birds can offer up to 250 eggs per year, per hen, although the typical number is actually closer to 200 on average. They also happen to mature quickly, and they will

reach their slaughtering weight – between 6 and 8 pounds – quickly. The chickens are great for broiling, roasting, and more.

Orpington

Here is another great breed for those who are looking for both eggs and meat. The hens are able to lay between 175 and 200 eggs per year. The hens and roosters will reach adulthood when they are between 7 and 10 pounds.

One of the other very interesting features of this breed is the fact that the hens are excellent brooding mothers. In fact, they are so good at this job that you could actually use them to hatch eggs from other hens, and even ducks and other birds if it becomes necessary.

Plymouth Rock

Another dual-purpose chicken, the Plymouth Rock, is very reliable. In fact, they are so reliable that they will continue to produce eggs all throughout the winter. Of course, during the colder months of the year, you can expect to see something of a slowdown in their egg production.

When they reach adult status and are ready for slaughter, they will generally be between 6 and 8 pounds for the hens. The roosters are a bit larger and will weigh between 8 and 9 pounds in most cases.

As with the Oprington, they are great brood mothers, and they do a good job with their eggs and with the young chicks.

Rhode Island Red

These chickens will lay between 200 and 300 eggs per year for each hen you have in your flock. These large brown eggs are tasty, and the taste of those eggs is one of the primary reasons these are becoming so popular. However, they also have excellent

tasting meat. The adults who are at slaughtering age will range between 6 and 9 pounds.

The chickens tend to be friendly, and quieter than some of the other breeds. They are a good option for backyard breeding in cities.

Some of the Other Breeds You Might Want to Consider

The preceding are certainly not the only breeds of chicken out there, and they are not the only ones that preppers are considering using. Here's a quick list of some of the other breeds you might want to raise.

- Ameraucana
- Buckeye
- Chanticler
- Dominique
- Egyptian Fayoumi
- Marans
- Turken

Learn Your Breed

No matter how much space you have available, most people will find that it is possible to start a flock of chickens. Once again, it's important to reiterate that you should start doing this before you find yourself in an actual survival situation. It takes time to get things up and running with your flock.

Now that you have a better idea of what breeds are available and good for breeding, it's time to make your decision, or at least start narrowing your choices. It is important that once you choose the breed you want to raise that you take the time right now to learn more about the breed.

Learn where they will thrive, what they like and do not like, and what you can expect from them. Always take the time to learn as much as possible about your chicken breed. Become an expert in the breed or breeds that interest you the most.

While the information that you will find in this book applies across the board to the chickens, learning more about your breed really can help to make a difference in your success raising them.

Chapter 4

How to House Your Chickens



You understand the need for prepping and independence, so chances are rather good that you will want to learn how to build a chicken coop rather than buying one that's ready to go. In this chapter, we'll cover both options – building and buying – as well as keeping your coop clean.

First, let's look at what will go into building your own coop.

Skills You Need

First, you need to have a few carpentry skills under your belt when it comes to building a viable coop. Many survivalists and homesteaders are good carpenters in their own right and should have no trouble getting a coop built quickly.

However, there are others out there who are just getting into survival and who need to develop some basic skills that will help them with this project, as well as many other projects.

Here's a list of skills that you should learn.

- Measuring Materials
- Cutting
- Hammering
- Driving Screws
- Making It Level

Measuring Materials

You need to know how to use a tape measure and how to read the increments on it. You also need to make sure you are marking the lumber carefully. If the mark is not accurate, or if you begin cutting on the wrong side of the mark it could cause a serious problem with the project.

If the material is too large, you can always trim a bit more away. However, if you err on the opposite side and take too much away, then if could ruin that piece of material, which could end up being rather costly for you.

Cutting

You have to be quite careful when you are cutting. You want to make sure you are cutting along the mark you made and that you are cutting it as perfectly as possible. When you are making a coop, keep in mind that you may have to make some angled cuts along with straight cuts, and this skill can take some time to master. You might want to practice a bit first.

Additionally, you need to consider the type of saw you are using. If you are building the coop now, you might have access to power saws, which can make the job much easier on you. However, if there is no power and you are in a survival situation, or you just don’t have a power saw, you might be building with a handsaw.

Using a handsaw takes a lot of energy, strength, and practice if you hope to make accurate cuts.

Hammering

Everyone who picks up a hammer thinks they know how to use it properly. While it might seem easy enough to use a hammer, you do have to make sure you learn the proper technique for the safety of your other fingers, primarily. Hammering nails into a board is straightforward, and with some practice, you should get adept at it.

When building a coop though, you may have to hammer at odd angles and nail angled boards together. This is a bit more difficult, so you should take some time to practice with some scrap lumber if you have the chance.

Driving Screws

Using a power drill to drive or remove screws is very easy. However, as we mentioned with power saws, in a survival scenario, you may not have the luxury of a power screwdriver. In that case, become familiar with using a screwdriver and screws on different types of materials and in different situations.

Leveling

Using a level is easy, but it's something that many new to carpentry forget or neglect to do. No matter how good you might feel your eye for carpentry might be, 99.9% of people will not be able to tell whether something is level or not simply by looking at it.

Always make sure you have a level with you and that you use it in the work to make sure the edges are square, and that the build is level. If you don't, you will have a lopsided chicken coop… and who wants that!

Tools and Items You Should Have on Hand

Here's a quick list of some of the different tools and materials you will want to have with you if you plan to build your own coop.

- Lumber for the frame.
- An assortment of nails and screws
- Sheet lumber for roof and flooring
- Wire mesh or chicken wire
- Fencing staples
- Tape measure
- Marker or pencil

- Hammer
- Drill
- Screwdrivers
- Level
- Square
- Tin snips

A Vision and a Plan

After accumulating some basic carpentry skills, it's important that you have a vision for the chicken coop and a plan in place before you begin.

How many chickens will you want? This will determine the size of the coop you need to build. For those who want particularly large flocks, it might be necessary to create more than just a single coop. This could also be the case if you want to have some chickens specifically for eggs and other chickens specifically for meat.

Naturally, you also need to make sure you have the space available on your property for the coop you want. You could draw up your own plans for the coop, or you could find some online if you prefer.

One of the benefits with using premade plans is that you can be sure of the measurements, which is something that you might struggle with if you were trying to draw up your own.

The Basics of a Chicken Coop

The coop is the place where chickens will go to sleep, roost, lay eggs and hatch their young. It is a place that should make them feel safe, and that's why it is important to get the design right.

Elevating the Coop

In some cases, you may want to elevate the coop from the ground. This can help to protect against predators. By keeping it at least a foot off the ground, it will discourage many predators. We'll discuss more about keeping the chickens safe from predators in Chapter 6.

The elevated coop can provide some additional shelter as well. The chickens that want to be outside of the coop, but that also want to be out of the sun or rain, can retreat beneath it.

Another reason that having an elevated coop is a good idea is so that you can avoid the issues of a potential flood.

A Nice Chicken Run

A chicken run is the area outside of the coop where the chickens are free to roam. They can look for bugs, feed, and simply do all of the things that chickens do in this area. As with the coop, you need to make sure this area is actually large enough to accommodate the flock.

This area needs to be enclosed and secure as well, so the chickens do not get out and so nothing gets at the chickens.

Nesting Boxes

The nesting box is just what it sounds like. It is a place for the chickens to build their nests and lay their eggs. They give the chickens more security, and the chickens are more likely to lay their eggs in the box. One nest should be large enough to hold three to four chickens, but you do not want to try to crowd too many more hens into the space. You can use wooden boxes or even plastic tubs as the basic nesting box. The plastic actually proves much easier to clean.

Some good examples of things that you can use include:

- Cat litter boxes
- Five-gallon buckets on their side
- Plastic trash cans on their side – shallow ones
- Wooden crates
- Pet carriers
- Use your imagination – quite a few things you can find around the house might actually make good nest boxes.

You can line the nest with wood shavings, shredded paper, and even grass clippings. While some might want to use hay, you need to be careful. Hay tends to become moldy before long, and this can cause issues with your chicken's health.

Roosting Bars

The roosting bars in the coop are where the chickens will sleep. Chickens don't sleep on the ground or the floor. They know that it's dangerous to be at a predator's level. The roosting bars need to be off the ground. Many people will just use a 2x4 as the roosting bar.

Doors

The chicken coop should have two doors or entrances, and it's easy to understand why – predators. If a fox were to come into the coop and block one entrance, the hens could flee out the other door. The extra door simply provides additional safety.

Lighting

Proper lighting is also important. When the hen goes into the hen house, she wants to be able to see. A darkened hen house during the daytime is not a pleasant place for the hens. It can also help to make them lay eggs.

Make sure you have windows in the coop. Try to put them on the southern wall for the best lighting without the coop becoming too warm during the summer.

Ventilation

Chicken coops need to have proper ventilation. You should make sure they have vents along the ceiling, or have some windows that you can open up to allow a breeze to flow through the coop.

Find a Great Building Plan

You will be able to locate a number of plans on the Internet for building the chicken coop of your dreams. Most of these plans have a cost associated with them, but if you find the one that works for your needs, it's well worth it to buy a pro plan and follow it.

However, you can also find free plans online. One of the dangers of choosing a free plan is that there is really no guarantee that it is a good build.

One of the best sites to find some great inspiration, as well as plans directly from site members is backyardchickens.com. Best of all, the plans on this site are free. Of course, since they are member submitted, it can be difficult to know whether they are worth your time or not until you read the plan.

Basic Coop Styles

Let's look at a couple of the basic types of coop styles out there. From these basic styles, it's possible to create a variety of different looking coops that simply use the basic design ideas presented here.

The one that you choose will depend on a number of different things, such as your space available and the size of your flock.

- A-Frame - The A-frame is a relatively small coop, which can be a good choice for those who have only a small number of birds in their flock. This features a long triangular design.

- Hoop Coop – The hoop coop is quite similar to the A-frame. The only appreciable difference is that it has a curved top rather than a pointed peak.
- Tractor – Another term for this is a portable chicken coop. These are similar to other coops, but they are usually built on wheels, making them easier to move.
- All-In-One – These are somewhat larger and often look like a shed. They are often large enough for a person to enter to collect eggs and make cleaning easier. They are still small enough that relocation should not be an issue though.
- Walk-In – These are the largest of the coops and can come in a number of different aesthetic styles, just as all of the other coops can. Because they are larger, they can naturally accommodate larger flocks.

Buying a Coop

Of course, for some people out there who want to start raising chickens right away, you might not have the time or materials right now to build your own chicken coop. You might not have the skills currently either, and this means that buying a coop that's ready to put in your yard is the best and easiest solution.

Fortunately, you have quite a few options when it comes to searching for the best coop for your property. Head online, go to your favorite search engine, and simply look up chicken coops to see some of the options available. The costs vary, but they typically start at around $250 to $300 when it comes to a smaller coop. If you need something larger for a larger flock, it will naturally cost a bit more.

Let's look at some of the advantages of buying a premade coop.

Advantage #1 – Faster and Easier

Chances are good that you want to start raising chickens sooner rather than later. If you decide that you want to build your own coop, it could take longer than you think if you do not have much building experience. When you buy one and put it up, it generally takes a fraction of the time, which lets you buy some chickens sooner.

Advantage #2 – Tend to Be Lightweight

When you use your own building materials, chances are they are heavier than the lightweight materials companies are using to build these coops. Because the premade coops do tend to be lightweight, it makes them easier to move around your yard or property to the perfect spot. This might be something that you want to consider.

Of course, if you are building your own, you can always attempt to find lightweight materials to use.

Advantage #3 – Tons of Options

While it might not affect the success of your chicken raising ventures, having more options when it comes to aesthetics can be nice. You will find some great looking chicken coops for sale out there that might look almost as nice as some homes! Additionally, you can find coops of different sizes available to accommodate the size flock you want to have.

However, even though you will find quite a few options out on the market today for your coops, building your own will give you full control over the size and the way it looks.

Advantage #4 – No Design or Construction Issues

If you have never built a chicken coop before, your first attempt might be… less than impressive. In fact, if you are not extremely careful and thorough with your build, it could actually be a danger to your chickens.

Unless you are very comfortable around tools, you are willing to put in the time to learn, or you are willing to create more than one coop until you get it right, going with a premade option might be the best choice for you.

Cleaning Your Chicken Coop

Once you take the time to build a nice and functional coop for your chickens, you need to make sure you keep it clean. Ensuring cleanliness is extremely important for the health of the flock. If you do not clean the coop, it could cause disease to spread, and it could wipe out many, or even all, of your birds.

Let's look at some of the things that you have to do with your coops.

Keep Them Dry

First, you have to make sure that you keep the space for the chickens dry. In fact, unless you have drains in the floor – which a typical coop will not have – then try not to get the areas wet unless you are positive they will dry before the night arrives. Chickens do not want to roost in a wet environment. It is bad for their well-being.

Keep the Nesting Area Clean

The nest boxes and the litter need to be cleaned frequently. It is important to replace lost bedding the chickens use to make nests. By replacing the bedding regularly, it ensures a healthier environment for the chickens and their eggs.

If you have hens sitting on eggs, then don't clean the nest. Leave them to sit on and hatch the eggs. After they've hatched, you will then be able to clean the nest. Though you will not want to remove the hen from the eggs, you can still clean around the nest to tidy up and remove droppings.

Once the eggs actually hatch, then you will be able to clean out the nest properly.

Clean the Water and Food Dishes

Another element of keeping clean is in regards to the food and water dishes you are using for the coop. Wash and rinse them regularly. Something that you might want to do

right now is stock up on some antibacterial spray cleaners that you can use on the water and food dishes.

In a survival situation, you might find that you don't have the luxury of an antibacterial spray. In that case, you can use water and soap if you have it. Just make sure to rinse everything off well.

You will want to check and change the water often. Look for buildup or algae and slime and make sure to keep it clean.

Most of the time, general purpose cleaners will work well for the chicken coop. However, you should make sure that you do not use anything with ammonia in it though, as it can damage the chicken's lungs.

Some Parting Tips for Creating a Great Coop

Before we move on to the next chapter, let's look at a few additional tips that you should keep in mind when you are building your coop no matter what style or size you ultimately choose.

- Shade is just as important as the sun. By placing your chicken coop beneath a tree, if possible, it gives them a bit more shade in the summer. In the winter, after the leaves fall, it will allow for the sun to stream through.
- Consider putting some lighting on the inside if you have the capabilities. Make sure it is a warm glow rather than a harsh blue light though, as the blue light can inhibit egg laying.
- Consider putting metal latches on the doors of the hen house, so you can latch them at night. It helps to keep the chickens safer.
- The outdoor space around the chicken coop needs to be just as safe and secure as the coop itself.
- Larger coops will make your job of cleaning easier.

- Look at materials you have in your environment already and see what you might be able to repurpose for the coop so you can cut down on the cost of the construction.

Chapter 5

Raising Chickens and Keeping Them Healthy



When you are first starting out, it is a good idea to keep things as simple as possible. This gives you a chance to get a better understanding of what raising chickens entails without spending too much or getting in over your head.

Ideally, you will start with three or four young hens that are just starting to lay eggs. You could also choose to start with some baby chicks or even fertilized eggs if you want to get an incubator.

Going the incubator route is interesting, but it might not be something that would make much sense if you want to learn how to raise chickens in a survival setting when access to such technologies would be limited. Again, going the simpler route – hens or baby chicks – is your best option.

Before you bring your chickens to your property, you should already have the coop and run ready for them. Most chickens will take to their new environment quickly so long as you have attended to their needs with a roosting bar, nesting box, and a safe environment.

What Do Chickens Need to Eat and Drink?

If you want to have great tasting eggs and great tasting chickens, then you have to pay attention to what you are feeding your birds.

Water

They need to have clean water, and they need to have plenty of water each day. Hens will drink about two cups of water per day. Having this much water keeps them hydrated and healthy, so they can continue laying eggs.

Check on their water source a couple of times a day during the summer to make sure it does not dry out.

Feed

The feed is as important as keeping them hydrated is. In order for a chicken to thrive, it needs to have grains, as well as greens and a source of protein. While chickens will certainly be able to forage out in the run for much of their protein, such as bugs and the like, and they can eat weeds and grass for the greens, the biggest part of the diet where you need to help is with the grains.

In addition to providing them with grains, you should also consider making sure some of the leftover or additional greens that you have from the garden go to your chickens. Make sure it is fresh, but adding some tasty greens to their diet can be a real help in the taste of the meat and eggs.

In the winter, when it might be difficult for them to forage for as much protein on the ground, consider adding some leftover meat scraps, with bones or finely cut, to their feed. Just don't feed the chickens the remnants of their brethren.

You need to make sure you are supplementing their diet with some proper grains. Wheat, corn, and oats are all good choices. If you are growing your own wheat, make sure you are setting enough aside for your chickens.

In general, it takes about 1.5 pounds of feed every week – combined grains, greens, and protein – for the bird to remain healthy. Keep in mind that when they are smaller they will be eating less.

To determine how much feed you will need to have, you can simply multiply the number of birds you have by 1.5 to get the number in pounds you will need weekly.

Keep in mind that it is an inexact science, and depending on the breed and the size of the chickens, they may eat more or less. This is merely a guideline from where you can start.

Something else that chickens need, although it is not food, is grit. Since they have no teeth or saliva to break down food, they ingest small pebbles, sand, and the like to help break down the food. If they are eating outside and grazing, they should get this naturally. If they are fed inside or via a hopper, you will have to supply the grit along with the feed.

A Helpful Guide

Here's a quick guide for feeding your chickens at different stages of their life.

- Newborns up to 8 weeks should have a feed that contains about 20% protein to aid them in their growth. This is the highest percentage of protein they will need in their life.
- Those chickens 8 to 18 weeks should have slightly less protein – between 16% and 18% of their diet.
- Chickens 18 weeks and older will do well with about 16% protein in the diet, with the rest made up from grains and greens.

Treats

Additionally, you may want to give the chickens a treat on occasion. They like all sorts of different treats, but treats should not be a regular part of their diet. Here's a quick list of a few things you can consider for your chickens.

- Apples
- Asparagus

- Bananas
- Berries
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cucumbers
- Watermelon

Foods to Avoid

Here are some foods you want to avoid, as they can be dangerous and even deadly to your chickens.

- Green potato peels
- Uncooked beans
- Sweet treats, and anything that contains sugar
- Salty foods

Dealing with External Parasites

Parasites can be a real problem when it comes to your chickens, and many flocks will develop them. Some of the telltale signs of external parasites include sores and red spots on the chicken, reduced production of eggs, a general sick appearance, or even having the parasites bite you. You may even see them.

First, provide them with a wallow. In the case of chickens, all they need is a deep box of sand that they can use. This can help to smother the parasites and to reduce the oils that they use to feed. If you have free-range chickens, they are generally smart enough to create their own wallows.

Lice and Mites

Lice are visible to the naked eye. These long insects will dart around trying to avoid detection when you look at the chicken's feathers. You can see their eggs, too. They will

look like tiny globes that attach to the feathers. These lice feed on the feathers and on skin cells.

Mites are biting insects that can cause anemia, damage to a chicken's feathers, and skin, and reduce their egg laying ability. Mites and lice can make life miserable for a chicken. In today's world, you would treat the chickens with a chemical treatment or consult a vet. You would not have those same luxuries in a survival situation.

Fortunately, there is a natural way to deal with these pests. Simply use cooled wood ash and rub it over the birds. This can help to remove the pests, but you may need to perform this treatment several times if you do not have any over the counter meds that can help as well. Still, in a pinch or a survival situation, wood ash is a great choice.

Keeping Chickens Warm in the Winter Months



If you live in an area that gets cold in the winter, as so many do, you need to make sure your chickens remain safe and warm through the winter months.

No Heater Needed

First, be aware that you do not need to have a heater to keep your birds warm. In fact, having a heater could actually be a danger to the chickens and you, as it could start a fire. Chickens will huddle with one another for warmth, and as long as they have a quality coop, they should be fine.

Deeper Litter

In order to ensure that they can stay a bit warmer, all you really need to do is make sure that you are adding enough litter for them.

Add Extra Light If Possible

In the winter, when the days are shorter, the chickens tend to lay fewer eggs. A good way of combating this problem is by adding some extra light to give them an artificial full day.

Create a Sunroom

Another good idea is to use a clear sheet of plastic to create a sunroom for them outside of their coop. The sun will stream through the plastic and create a miniature greenhouse effect that can help to keep them a bit warmer during the winter.

Add Some Hay to the Yard

In some cases, your chickens will not like walking on snow, and they may not want to leave the coop. A good way to help them with this issue and to make sure they get outside is simply to add some hay to the yard.

Preventing Frostbite

In particularly cold climates, there is a chance that chickens with larger wattles and combs could develop frostbite. A good way to prevent this from happening is simple. Add some petroleum jelly to the wattles and combs if you have it on hand.

Make Sure Your Chickens Are Not Inbred

One of the things that many new backyard chicken breeders and survivalists do not ever consider when they are raising chickens is the danger of inbreeding. If you are only choosing egg layers, and you do not plan to have a rooster for breeding, then this would not be a concern to you.

However, many survivalists will want to have a rooster so they can keep their flock going for years. This presents the danger of inbreeding if you are not careful. If

inbreeding occurs and becomes rampant, it can actually lead to a degradation of the genetic material. This results in sickly birds.

One of the best options, and one that's been used by farmers for ages, is simply utilizing the concept of rolling mating. During the breeding season, separate the flock into two smaller flocks. Have separate roosters for each. If you currently have just a single rooster, have him breed with only one of the smaller flocks. Hope for some additional roosters so you can have them for breeding down the line.

Whenever you have the opportunity to add new "foreign" chickens to your flock, take the opportunity, as this will help to deepen the gene pool.

Tips and Reminders for Keeping Your Chickens Healthy

Here's a roundup of some of the best and most important information you will want to have in mind when you are breeding your chickens. These reminders from elements covered in the book are some of the information that you should commit to memory.

- Make sure you add greens to the birds' diet, whether it is some weeds or some vegetables.
- Raising your roosters from chicks helps to make them more docile toward you.
- Learn as much as possible about the breed of chicken you choose.
- Make sure you have a nice roost for your chickens that's at least 2 feet off the ground and at least 2 inches wide for their comfort.
- Chicken coops should have two doors.
- Hens need plenty of light each day to hatch properly – about 14 hours – so adding some extra light in the winter is a good idea.
- It's a good idea to make sure each bird has about 5 square feet of space available.
- Only put a couple of hens in the same nesting box to help encourage egg laying.
- The coop needs to have ventilation, but it should never feel overly drafty.
- The coop needs to be dry for healthy birds.

Chapter 6

Keep the Chickens Safe from Predators

Chicken is on the menu of… just about everything with sharp teeth. Keeping your flock safe from predators can be a real pain if you do not know where to begin, but it is essential if you hope to use the birds for survival.

Everything from coyotes to weasels will want to get at your chickens, and you need to make sure they are safe and secure. The last thing you want is to come home from a day of hunting or fishing to find a mess of blood and feathers. Your flock feeds you and you need to take good care of them.

In this chapter, we'll cover the things that you need to do in order to keep your chickens safe from the big bad wolf and all the other big bad predators out there.

Most Wanted Chicken Predators

First, let's look at some of the different predator types you might have to deal with when it comes to your chickens. Knowing the enemy will help you learn better ways of securing your chickens, and it can help you track down the culprit in case something goes terribly wrong.

Carnivorous Canines

Dogs, even your faithful pet, might find the temptation to go after your chickens. In some cases, the dogs might just want to give chase because they think it is fun. They may kill accidentally, snapping a neck or stomping on the chicken, but a domesticated dog will not generally eat the chicken afterwards.



Other times, a dog might actively be hunting your chickens for food, but this generally only happens with wild dogs, foxes, and coyotes. They will attack the birds, one or several, and you will often find feathers leading away from the coop thanks to the animal darting off with its prize. Sometimes, they will kill all of the birds in the coop, which results in a catastrophic loss for the survivors.

Raucous Raccoons

Many people do not realize it, but raccoons are chicken predators as well. Because they have nimble little paws, it is often easier for them to get into latched cages and coops, and they can be a real pain. It might be a good idea to put a more complicated latch or a double-latch on your coop to help keep your chickens safe. Some have even gone as far as putting locks on the coop.

Raccoons that get into the coop will often kill more than one bird. They typically go for the neck as so many predators do. They eat at the crop and the neck most of the time. The masked marauders also happen to be quite fond of eggs, and they could very well start stealing eggs if they see it as a regular food source.

The dead birds will generally be left in the coop because the raccoon has a difficult time taking them with him.

Obstinate Opossum

This marsupial maniac can cause quite a bit of trouble if it gets into the chicken coop. They will go after adult birds occasionally, but that's not their MO. Most of the time, they want to attack the food of least resistance; in this case, that would be the baby chicks or the eggs.

Opossums have the same trouble as raccoons when it comes to fleeing with prey. They might be able to take chicks or an egg in the mouth, but those times when they do go after an adult bird, you'll find that they leave the carcass in the coop and only eat a bit of it.

Horrible Hawks



Hawks can and do eat chickens, and they can be quite a big threat if you aren't careful. Chickens and the roosters that protect them are on ground level, and that means they are usually looking for ground level threats. They don't look up into the sky, and that's where the hawk will strike.

While most of the predators will attack under the blanket of night, a hawk will attack in broad daylight, swooping down into the yard to snatch unsuspecting chickens. You will generally know that a hawk was after your chickens if you have some that are missing, but there are few to no feathers or telltale signs of their death.

They will sometimes attack the chicken but not be able to get away with the bird. This can leave your bird, alive or dead, with deep stab wounds and gouges from the hawk's talons and beak.

Ornery Owls

Owls will attack in a way very similar to hawks. The big difference is typically the time of day. Owls are out in the evening, and if your chickens are out in the yard at dusk or after the sun sets, they could become victims of the owl.

Beastly Bears

If you are in an area with bears, they have the potential to become chicken predators. This is true of all of the species in North America, and they can be a real *bear* to deal with thanks to their strength and tenacity. If they have motivation – your chickens, for example – they can tear through the wood and wire housing your chickens.

One of the best ways to keep the bears away is to understand what attracts them in the first place. It's not the chickens themselves that are the focus of the bear's attention, at least not in the beginning.

They are generally more interested in garbage you have around the house, as it leaves a larger and more appetizing scent in the air for them. They also tend to like chicken feed, as it's an easy source of food. When they come to your property, they see the chickens almost as an afterthought, but they will most certainly take one or two if the opportunity presents itself. The best way to keep the bears away is to increase the structural integrity of the chicken coop, keep some dogs around, and make sure the chicken feed and the garbage are contained.

It's generally obvious when a bear turns out to be the culprit. They tear through the coop, and you will likely see their paw prints on the ground.

Sneaky Skunks



Skunks are a pain, but they do not generally go after adult birds. In fact, they are less of a threat than an opossum would be. However, like the opossum, the real draw for the skunk tends to be the baby chicks and the eggs.

They will sneak in through holes and gaps in the coop, so you need to make sure that the housing and the run do not have any gaps or ways for a skunk to get in. A determined skunk, like so many of the other predators here, might also try to dig under the coop or fence to get at the chickens.

Having a dog, or even a cat, is a good way to get rid of skunks that might be getting a bit too close to your chickens.

Ferocious Fishers

Fishers, weasels, and other members of the mustelid family have a hankering for chicken, and if you aren't careful, they could become your worst nemesis. The fishers are larger than weasels, but they are still nimble. They can slink through your yard and climb the fences to get in with your chickens. They will kill multiple birds when they get into the henhouse. They are secretive creatures, and chances are you will not see the beast, only the aftermath.

They tend to hunt from the evenings on through to the early morning. Look for every possible entrance to the coop and the run – even those that you think are surely too small for a predator – and make sure that you seal them as best as possible.

Now that you know a bit more about some of the main predators with which you will have to contend, it's time to look at shoring up your coop, run, and property a bit more to keep your flock safe.

Keeping the Coop Safe

Whether you are using a brand new coop you built or bought, or you are repurposing a shack or other structure on your property, it is essential that you think about predator proofing as a part of your plan. The following are some of the elements you will want to consider when you are building or reworking a coop.

The Flooring

Some people want to have wooden floors, which could be a great choice. Just make sure that the wood on the floor is thick enough that a predator will not be able to chew or claw through it. This goes for the walls as well.

If you have a dirt floor, a good trick to keep the predators from getting into it is to dig a 12-inch ditch around the coop and place chicken wire down into the ground. When the

predator that tries to dig its way in gets to the wire, it will eventually stop and realize that trying to claim your chickens is a lost cause.

Holes

Look for holes around the coop. while it's true that you want ventilation, you do not want actual holes that a predator could slip through to get into the coop after your chickens. You should make sure to use chicken wire on the ventilation areas. This keeps the predators out, but it will still allow for plenty of natural airflow through the coop.

The Roosts

We're touching on the roosts once again because it's important to get them right. You should make sure that they are high enough that the birds can get out of the way of danger. You might even want to have more than one roosting bar to give the chickens more variety in where they sleep.

By keeping the roosting bar high so the chickens can get out of the way of the predators, at least temporarily, it increases the likelihood that you or your dogs will be alerted. This gives you the chance to get out there and perhaps deal with the predator for the last time.

Be Vigilant

A big part of protecting the coop is being vigilant and having a good pair of eyes that constantly looks for signs of potential intrusion. Look for signs of predators around the property and check the coop to see if there are any signs of attempted entry.

Protecting the Run

In addition to the coop, you have to think about the safety of the run as well. You want it to be just as secure as the house, if possible. If you do not ensure its security, you can be sure that predators will exploit the weaknesses.

You Need a Covering and Quality Walls

You have to have some type of covering or roof over the run. You still want the sunlight to be able to get through to the birds, but it needs to be able to keep out all manner of predators from hawks to raccoons. Once again, chicken wire or some similar type of mesh is an ideal material. If you don't have access to chicken wire, look for some other type of metal fencing that might work.

When you use quality mesh and wire along the top and walls of the run, it can greatly enhance the security for your chickens, as animals will not try to gnaw through metal to get to your birds, and any hawk or owl that thought to swoop down for a chicken would be in for a rude awakening.

The Door Latches

The latches that you have are important as well. Many feel that they are fine using hook latches on their doors in the run and on the coop. After all, chickens can't lift a latch. However, raccoons and even bears can figure out simple latches. Choose something a bit more elaborate or use some locks.

Getting a Rooster

We've already talked about the pros and cons of having a rooster earlier in the book, so we won't go over that material again. However, it's important to mention roosters in this section because their job is to keep their hens safe, and having one with your flock could help with this. They can help to keep away some predators, and they can alert you to dangers.

If you are going to keep roosters though, it is important to keep a few things in mind before you add one.

- If you have more than one rooster, you need to be sure each has plenty of hens – at least ten each. If you don't, they could start fighting, and that's the last thing you need.
- You will also need to have more space in the run so the roosters can stay away from one another. When you have more than one rooster, think about having double the space for your birds.
- Raise the roosters and hens together. If you can raise them all from young ages, particularly the roosters, it is easier to make sure they are happy and that they get along well.
- Learn more about the breed to see whether it is possible to keep multiple roosters.
- If one of the roosters is too aggressive, you will have to remove him from the flock. You could keep him separately, or he could become dinner.

Dogs

Many survivalists have dogs, or think about getting dogs. They make excellent companions and excellent guards for the family and the farm. Having dogs on the property, so long as you introduce them to the chickens and they don't become a threat, can be a great way to make predators think twice about trying to get at your chickens.

Most animals, even bears, do not want to tangle with one or more dogs. They are looking for an easy meal, and if they see, hear, or smell your dogs, most will simply move along and look for food elsewhere. Of course, this will not dissuade all predators, and that's why you need to make sure that you do more than just get guard dogs and call it a day.

Safety for the Birds Is Food Security for You

For the most part, it is easy to take care of your chickens. The most difficult part for many is simply keeping them safe from predators. With the tips from this chapter, you should be able to get your coop and run nice and safe for your birds though.

Chapter 7

The Many Uses of Your Chickens

Chickens can provide you and your family and group of survivors with a number of different things to help make your life easier, and these tie in neatly with some of the benefits we mentioned earlier.

Meat and Eggs



Naturally, most survivalists know that raising a flock of chickens means eggs and meat, which is a huge benefit. Your hens are able to lay eggs for several years, and if you keep raising chickens, you will have a limitless supply. You can use the chickens and their eggs for your own food source, and you will find that the eggs and meat can be great for trading.

You can start your own economy with chickens and other things you raise and grow on your property, and knowing that you are truly independent, and that you won't perish, is an incomparable feeling.

You can use the bones for soup stock. You can even use the bones for making things such as needles, fishing hooks, and more if you want to use every part of the bird, as you really should try to do.

Fertilizer

As mentioned, chicken waste is full of nitrogen, and once you mix it with your compost, you'll find that it will help your other vegetables and fruit grow far better. One of the

other benefits of using it for fertilizer is that it doesn't need aging like horse manure does. You can simply put it right into the garden right away if you would rather do that than put it into your compost pile.

Pest and Weed Control

You can also put your chickens right into the garden – as long as you make it safe from predators. They will eat bugs, remove weeds, and even help to fertilize the garden while they do it!

The Feathers

Here's another one of the nice ways that you can use your chickens. If you have a large number of chickens, consider collecting their feathers. You can use the feathers for stuffing pillows and clothing. Just keep in mind that it takes a lot of feathers to do this. You will be collecting for a while.

Another good use of the feathers you collect is to use them for making hand tied flies for fly-fishing.

These are just some of the ways that you can put your chickens to use for you in a survival situation.

Chapter 8

Slaughtering Your Chickens

If you are raising your flock of chickens with some or all of them intended as a source of meat, you will have to learn how to slaughter the chickens.

The Slaughtering Needs to Be as Humane as Possible

You do not want the animals to suffer needlessly. The act of butchering should not be one of joy, nor should it be one of sadness. It's simply a job. You are taking the life of the bird so it can provide you and your family with food. Respect the bird, just as you should respect any animal you hunt.

Make sure the bird does not have anything to eat for about 6 to 8 hours before slaughtering. Give them access to water though so they can at least be comfortable and hydrated.

Bleeding the Bird



Contrary to what you imagine, you don't simply want to lop the head off the chicken. You have to bleed the bird for the best results. Once you capture the bird from the yard, take it to the slaughtering location. Have this be out of sight of the coop.

This is the most humane way to kill them.

Tie the bird's feet to a board or otherwise restrain them so you can have your hands free. Have the board pointed down, and have a bucket below the board to catch the blood. Then, while holding the chicken, use your sharpest knife to cut along the

jugular veins. They will begin to bleed out and lose consciousness quickly. Let them bleed into the bucket for about two minutes. You want to get as much blood out as possible.

By removing the blood, it will actually make plucking the chickens much easier. You can cut off the head after the bleeding.

Plucking

Before plucking, it's a good idea to run the bird under hot water after bleeding. This helps to make the feathers come off the skin more easily. Putting them into a bucket of water that's about 140 degrees F for about a minute is perfect. This opens their follicles, and it makes removal of the feathers a much simpler and faster task. Make sure that you start plucking as soon as you remove the bird from the water.

Eviscerating

After plucking, open the body cavity. You can do this by making a cut near the vent and then carefully extend that cut upwards. Be very careful that you are not cutting into the viscera and intestines, as this could spoil the meat. Once you've made your cut into the abdomen, you can reach inside and remove all of the innards. Keep in mind that the chicken's lungs attach to the back. The cut needs to be large enough that you can get your hand into the bird to remove the lungs.

You can save and use some of the parts from inside of the body, including the liver, gizzard (stomach), and heart.

Cleaning

Once you've removed all of the insides, it's time to wash the bird. Give the bird a complete and thorough washing. Make sure you wash the liver, gizzard, and heart as well if you plan to use them. When you are washing the gizzard, first split it lengthwise and then remove the contents and clean it out.

Cool the bird by placing the carcass into a bucket of cool water. You can then cook it or freeze it for later!

Slaughtering the birds takes some time to get used to, but you will be able to do it. Just make sure you take this next section to heart.

No Attachments

One of the biggest mistakes that people make when they are raising chickens, or any animal, for meat, is developing an attachment to the animal. Naming the animal, spending time with the animal as a companion, and growing close to the animal is a big danger. It means that it can be difficult come slaughter time.

In fact, quite a few flocks out there right now are probably overflowing because the owners don’t have the heart to kill the birds that essentially became their pets. If you plan to use the birds for meat, don’t make them your pets. It’s as simple as that.

Conclusion



When you raise chickens, you have the potential of never being without a great source of protein again, and that should be a very welcome feeling for any survivalists out there. The idea is to build a sustainable life off the grid and away from whatever madness might be overtaking the world. Learning to breed chickens is just the way to do that.

Now that you have enough information to start your own flock, and you know more about different breeds, what you need to know and have to put up a coop, as well as how to care for your chickens, the only thing left to do is take action. They are one of the perfect animals for a survival situation because they are so simple to care for and they can provide so much for you and your family.

You can take the basics that you've learned here and apply them to your life right now. Get some plans and build a coop, or buy one. Research your chickens and get them to your place ASAP. The sooner you start the flock the sooner you can increase your independence, and the sooner you can start having fresh eggs and meat in the house.

Resources:

http://offgridsurvival.com/raisingchickens/

http://survivalblog.com/realistically_raising_chickens/

http://www.survivopedia.com/raise-chickens-for-meat-and-eggs/

http://essentialpreps.com/survivalists-guide-keeping-chickens/

http://www.americansnetworkingtosurvive.org/Chickens.html

http://www.thesurvivalistblog.net/raising-chickens-for-eggs/

http://smallfarm.about.com/od/chickens/tp/Top-10-Tips-For-Keeping-Chickens-In-Winter.htm

http://theprepperproject.com/best-chicken-breeds-preppers/

http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/knowing-how-to-clean-your-chicken-house-and-when.html

http://chickencoopsforsaleinfo.com/premade-coop-for-sale-advantages-of-buying-a-chicken-coop/

http://www.backyardpoultrymag.com/top_10_nest_box_ideas_around_the_farm/

http://poultryone.com/articles/housing-html

http://www.backyardchickens.com/a/large-chicken-coop-designs-pictures-of-chicken-coops

http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/photos/0,,20712574_21354978,00.html

http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-much-and-when-to-feed-chickens.html

http://www.motherearthnews.com/homesteading-and-livestock/raising-chickens-zmaz81jfzraw.aspx#axzz3F3T7hjEl

http://www.backyardchickens.com/a/chicken-treat-chart-the-best-treats-for-backyard-chickens

http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-get-rid-of-your-chickens-external-parasites.html

http://modernhomesteading.ca/blog/poultry-predators-how-to-keep-your-chickens-safe