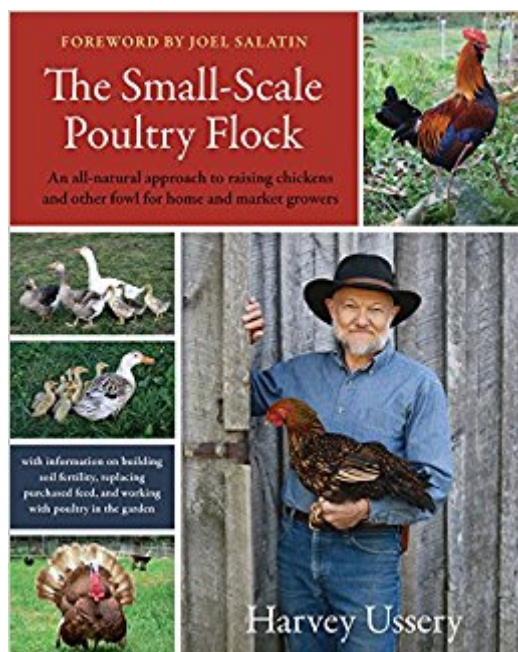




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# The Small-Scale Poultry Flock: An All-Natural Approach To Raising Chickens And Other Fowl For Home And Market Growers



## Synopsis

The most comprehensive guide to date on raising all-natural poultry for the small-scale farmer, homesteader, and professional grower. The Small-Scale Poultry Flock offers a practical and integrative model for working with chickens and other domestic fowl, based entirely on natural systems. Readers will find information on growing (and sourcing) feed on a small scale, brooding (and breeding) at home, and using poultry as insect and weed managers in the garden and orchard. Ussery's model presents an entirely sustainable system that can be adapted and utilized in a variety of scales, and will prove invaluable for beginner homesteaders, growers looking to incorporate poultry into their farm, or poultry farmers seeking to close their loop. Ussery offers extensive information on: The definition of an integrated poultry flock (imitation of natural systems, integrating patterns, and closing the circle) Everything you need to know about your basic chicken (including distinctive points about anatomy and behavior that are critical to management) Extended information on poultry health and holistic health care, with a focus on prevention Planning your flock (flock size, choosing breeds, fowl useful for egg vs. meat production, sourcing stock) How to breed and brood the flock (including breeding for genetic conservation), including the most complete guide to working with broody hens available anywhere Making and mixing your own feed (with tips on equipment, storage, basic ingredients, technique, grinding and mixing) Providing more of the flock's feed from sources grown or self-foraged on the homestead or farm, including production of live protein feeds using earthworms and soldier grubs Using poultry to increase soil fertility, control crop damaging insects, and to make compost-including systems for pasturing and for tillage of cover crops and weeds Recipes for great egg and poultry dishes (including Ussery's famous chicken stock!) And one of the best step-by-step poultry butchering guides available, complete with extensive illustrative photos. No other book on raising poultry takes an entirely whole-systems approach, or discusses producing homegrown feed and breeding in such detail. This is a truly invaluable guide that will lead farmers and homesteaders into a new world of self-reliance and enjoyment.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**Booklist**-Whether prompted by the economy, a do-it-yourself philosophy, or a concern for the good earth, more Americans are contemplating, when codes and ordinances permit, raising fowl.

Long-time poultry farmer Ussery shares his and "guest" experts' expertise and tips in a remarkably easy-to-follow text featuring lots of black-and-white photographs of flocks, structures, feeding, and even methods of slaughtering. The language is straightforward, even entertaining at times. (How could you not chuckle at "Reading the Poops," a guide to fecal health?) What's more, Ussery provides an encyclopedia of chicken and other fowl care, encompassing everything from anatomy and species selection to feeding, breeding, and selling in the local market. The other experts add their perspectives, as in "Adventures in Slug Heaven" (about slug control). Altogether, there's no better introductory reference on the joy of home-raising chickens. Appended material covers making trap nests, a dustbox, and a mobile A-frame shelter; duck confit; a feed-formulation spreadsheet and spreadsheets for tracking egg and broiler costs and profits; and a comparison of natural and industrial eggs.

**Book News Review**- This colorful and informative volume on small-scale poultry farming provides a comprehensive reference for homesteaders and urban farmers covering the details of raising chickens for eggs and meat. Most useful for intermediate poultry keepers, the volume offers professional advice in flock planning, housing, feed, health, processing and developing small commercial opportunities, and provides detailed practical information, including step-by-step photographs of important processes and procedures. A series of appendices include detailed plans for poultry structures, recipes, and sample documents for flock management. Ussery is an experienced poultry farmer and is the author of numerous articles and other works on the subject.

**ForeWord Review**- 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.

"The Small-Scale Poultry Flock is the only complete guide available to using your poultry as an integrated part of a self-reliant farmstead—a topic not addressed at this depth and breadth in any other poultry book. Author Harvey Ussery combines his clear, down-to-earth writing style with creative strategies throughout. He comprehensively explores a wide range of topics including chicken behavior, anatomy, holistic health care, making your own poultry feeds and finding alternative home feeds, breeding your own poultry stock, butchering poultry, and much more. This book covers it all."--Elaine Belanger, Editor, Backyard Poultry magazine

"This book is packed with practical advice on raising poultry by someone who has not only done it all, but has learned from his broad experience and knows how to communicate that wisdom clearly and in a lively, readable style. Harvey Ussery has written one of the most comprehensive guides out there, but what places it above the rest of the crowd is that he shows you how to work with nature rather than against it in ways that will minimize work while ensuring the health and happiness of the flock.

Whether you're a beginner or an old-time poultry farmer, you shouldn't go any further without this excellent manual."--Toby Hemenway, author of *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture*"The Small-Scale Poultry Flock is about establishing a free-range poultry flock fully integrated into a healthy homestead ecosystem. Based upon the author's decades of hands-on experience with many breeds and species, it covers all the basics about raising poultry, and fills some important gaps not usually covered well enough elsewhere, including chicken behavior, poultry breeding, raising chicks with broody hens, managing free-ranging, dealing with predators, using electric net fencing, feeding poultry with home-grown feeds, and integrating the poultry with soil mineral balance, gardens, lawns and pastures, orchards, worm bins, and soldier fly (larvae) production. If you want to raise chickens and can afford just one book, I recommend this one."--Carol Deppe, author of *The Resilient Gardener* "Ussery's outstanding book is certain to withstand the test of time both for its encyclopedic and practical information, and for its acknowledgment that the future of our culture and our food security is in the hands of the small farmer and backyard producer. If you are starting out with your first flock, this is your book. And when you've been keeping poultry for 30+ years, this will still be your best book."--Shannon Hayes, author of *Radical Homemakers*"Harvey Ussery has spent a lifetime developing and showcasing a truly viable poultry model that is ultimately carbon-sequestering, hygienic, neighbor-friendly, and food-secure...this book is about a call to heritage, to the wisest of wise traditions in food security and relationships. Harvey brings the latest tools and practices within the grasp of any aspiring flockster. It is this functional spirit that will make this book a classic in the small-scale poultry rearing genre."--Joel Salatin, Polyface, Inc."No other book on small-scale poultry provides so integrated an approach to issues of soil health, home economy, resource conservation, food quality, and animal welfare. Harvey Ussery's tireless passion for experimentation and empirical observation offers a wealth of information based on decades of first-hand experience. This is the big picture of poultry; no homesteader or backyard chicken enthusiast should be without a copy."--Kate Hunter, of [livingthefrugallife.blogspot.com](http://livingthefrugallife.blogspot.com) "Anyone interested in practical, experienced, insightful information about how to select, breed, care for, manage, feed, protect, process, eat and/or market small-scale or personal poultry flocks for their own eating pleasure or selling to others---and have FUN---should read this book."--Frederick Kirschenmann, author of *Cultivating an Ecological Conscience: Essays From a Farmer-Philosopher*"Harvey Ussery delivers all the practical information you need to grow your own eggs and meat birds, in a style and format that will keep you interested and amused. Plus, he raises the larger question: what kind of world do we want to live in? One that treats animals as units of production, or one that honors all life, especially that farmstead marvel, the domesticated

chicken?"--Sally Fallon Morell, President, The Weston A. Price Foundation"There is a revolution going on, and it is the popular return of keeping poultry to provide food for our home tables. Ussery's *The Small-Scale Poultry Flock* helps lead the way by integrating the small flock with its natural environment, the homestead, or small farm. Nowhere else will you find such valuable information on putting poultry to work in the garden, producing much of their feed, and producing healthful food for ourselves."--Don Schrider, author of *The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy's Chicken Assessment for Improving Productivity* and Storey's *Guide to Raising Turkeys*"Here's the ultimate book for those who want to know everything there is to know about raising poultry. And every detail is backed up by the author's own (and often entertaining) experiences. I could not find--in this encyclopedic array of chicken knowhow--one detail that I could quibble with."--Gene Logsdon, author of *Holy Shit* and *The Contrary Farmer*.

Harvey Ussery has been developing his whole-systems poultry husbandry for decades and has been writing about chickens and other fowl for *Backyard Poultry* since the inception of the magazine in early 2006. He has also written numerous articles for *Mother Earth News* and *Countryside & Small Stock Journal*, and has published in *American Pastured Poultry Producers Association's* newsletter, *Grit!*, over the years. Ussery has presented at national and local events on poultry, homesteading, and energy and sustainability issues, and maintains a highly informative website, [themodernhomestead.us](http://themodernhomestead.us). He lives with his wife, Ellen, in Virginia. Joel Salatin and his family own and operate Polyface Farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. The farm produces pastured beef, pork, chicken, eggs, turkeys, rabbits, lamb and ducks, servicing roughly 6,000 families and 50 restaurants in the farm's bioregion. He has written 11 books to date and lectures around the world on land healing, local food systems.

If you are looking for a book on poultry READ THIS BOOK FIRST. It has made me completely rethink how we are going to manage our small flocks. This book is the real deal. You know it's got to be good when Joel Salatin writes your intro. These are the men I respect when it comes to natural, sustainable agriculture and livestock husbandry. I'm thrilled they are teaching the new wave of farmers that are adopting their practices. This is the exact information we need to start the long road of ending, or at least reducing, the factory farm conglomerates that are detrimental to our health (as well as the animals), and our food supply chain. Long live small, independent, natural farming the way it was intended to be! I have read many books on backyard flocks but nothing compares to Harvey's book. I love Harvey's stories in *Backyard poultry*, *Mother Earth News* and *Countryside*

magazines and was always hoping he would write a book. I have been anxiously awaiting for this to be published. I preordered immediately when it became available and waited patiently. It has by far passed all my expectations. The book chock full of pictures is simply amazing in it's depth and scope of knowledge for the small homesteader/farmsteader. From general poultry health, natural feed, promoting small farm sustainability and production, to using your chicks as a farming partner as composters and tillers, Harvey covers it all in depth and humour. Old wisdom with today's advancements thrown in makes the THE book to have in your livestock library. I cannot state enough how good this book really is. Flock management used to be commonplace when we grew most of our food, but has been a dying art. Thanks to guys like Harvey and Joel a new wave of flock owners will have that knowledge passed on to them. I received it three days ago and it has become one of my favorites. Who would have thought I would be so excited over a book about poultry? I have been looking for a book like this for years. It will be revisited many times as we gear up for next Spring's hatching and gardening adventures. Follow our adventures online at Drowning Creek Homestead. Just google it..Now, just click that button and add it to your cart. I guarantee you will be extremely happy you did!

I have spent four summers with laying hens. I can't bring them to my winter quarters, or believe me, I would!!! It has been challenging getting laying hens each spring, but I've managed, and it has been so worth it. So, I'm not a novice, but no expert. I absolutely LOVE this book. I read books about chickens and gardening all winter, then go at it again with new information in the spring. This book has taught me more than any other, and I just can't wait to get going again. If you are considering chickens, books like this one are absolutely mandatory to read. The thing you won't understand until you actually have them, though, is how much fun they are. I'm talking about smaller flocks where you get to know each chicken. I had nine last summer, and that was the absolute top for me. At that number, you start losing that individual feel for the personality of each chicken. Seven was better. But, you keep thinking if I had more, I'd have more eggs to give away and have more fun. This book will help you enormously whether you want more chickens or just a few. Regardless, you will have the best eggs imaginable! I wish we could raise broilers, but that's not going to happen. No one in my household is eating our chickens, who all get names. I wish I had friends that raised chickens and we could trade. 8-) We give the chickens to someone who cares for them in the winter, and get back the survivors (really cold here). I am sad every day that there aren't chickens in my life. Plus, it makes me feel so good that our chickies have such a good life, the way nature intended. Makes the eggs taste doubly good.

If you need a book on raising chickens, get this one. It is all you'll ever need. Covers ducks and geese too, but the main focus is on chickens, covering all aspects of raising them, maintaining their health, housing and feed for them, and how terrific they are in restoring the earth to the condition it was in before mankind came along and thought he knew better than Mother Nature. Chickens will help you restore the soil, but I don't know if anything will ever help mankind achieve sanity. Linda Kerth

A lot of reading thru non-important stuff to get to the jewels of wisdom. I like something that gets down to the core of something without the little stories that go along with it. Other than that it does have a good amount of knowledge in it.

This book is awesome. It's written by a guy who has been raising poultry for decades and has friends who have been doing the same. Lots of advice and personal experience on how to do it the natural, non-chemical way and trying to save as much money as you can by letting the poultry do what poultry does best. I would recommend this book for a beginner farmer or homesteader considering that that's what I am and it helped tremendously.

Having known exactly nothing about chickens this book was a real eye opener. The style of writing was easy to read and grammatical errors and typos were very few (if any). Besides the information within the book, it points you to other useful resources. Several times something was mentioned in the book briefly and I stopped reading to go google it or hit the website the book referred to. I have ordered a dozen Buckeye hatching eggs and I am very excited! (Order early - apparently the demand outstrips capacity.) If you want to have chickens I highly recommend this book.

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