




## Overview of the Species: Pros & Cons

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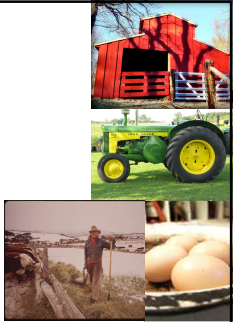







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## General topics to consider

- Space Needed
- End Product
- Start up/Maintenance Expense
- Marketing of End Products
- Labor & Equipment Required
- Care Needed
- Integrated with other enterprises

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## Overview of the Species The Pros & Cons



Rabbits      Goats      Cattle

Poultry      Sheep      Pigs





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## ENTERPRISES: RABBITS






Raising rabbits for meat, fiber, breeding stock, pets

PROS:

- Easy & inexpensive to get into
- Housing & land needs minimal
- High reproductive rate (50-75/year)
- Meat rabbits fast turnaround (1 mo. gestation, harvest 10-12 weeks)
- Demand for breeding & pet rabbits

CONS:

- Finding a steady market for rabbit meat can be challenging
- If selling meat, you likely will need to do your own processing
- For successful fiber sales, knowledge of rabbit fiber (angora) & uses required
- Vulnerable to predators – need protection

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## ENTERPRISES: POULTRY

Raising chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys for meat, eggs

PROS:

- Easy & inexpensive to get into
- Minimal land required
- Housing can be minimal
- Quickly improves soils and helps with parasite control in larger species
- Pasture can be up to 30% of the birds' feed
- Fast 8-24 week turnaround for meat birds
- Nearly everyone eats eggs or poultry - finding customers relatively easy

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## POULTRY cont.

CONS:

- Meat birds - high daily labor, short term
- Egg layers - lower daily labor year-round
- Pastured birds must be moved to fresh grass frequently
- Need grains to supplement pasture
- If selling meat birds, you may need to do your own processing
- Everybody likes poultry! Bears, raccoons, skunks, weasels, coyotes, dogs, hawks, owls. Good protection required.







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## ENTERPRISES: GOATS

Raising goats for meat, milk, fiber, breeding stock, pets

### PROS:

- Multiple births common
- Fast turnaround (5-month gestation)
- Kids can reach market weight in 6-8 months on mother's milk & good pasture
- Growing market for local goat milk & cheese
- Fibers (mohair & cashmere) can be sold commercially or direct marketed to hand spinners.



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## GOATS cont.

### CONS:

- Excellent fencing essential. Taller woven wire or panels, reinforced w/electric better, electric mesh.
- Dairy operation requires facilities & practices for cleanliness, must meet legal requirements for sale.
- For successful direct-market fiber sales, knowledge of goat fiber and its uses required.
- Direct marketing meat can be a challenge if ethnic markets not available.
- Vulnerable to predators – protection may be required.



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## ENTERPRISES: SHEEP

Raising sheep for meat, fiber, breeding stock

### PROS:

- Multiple births common
- Fast turnaround (5-month gestation)
- Lambs can reach market weight at 6-8 months on mother's milk & good pasture
- Lamb meat more popular than goat, may be easier to direct market
- Wool breeds produce more fiber than goats (6-12 pounds wool/year)
- Fiber can be sold commercially or direct marketed to spinners.



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## SHEEP cont.

### CONS:

- Good fencing required. Woven wire field fencing best. Electric mesh or 3-4 strand electric. Powerful energizer needed.
- Knowledge of wool & uses required for successfully direct-marketing fibers.
- Vulnerable to predators – protection may be required.



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## ENTERPRISES: PIGS

Raising pigs for meat, breeding stock

### PROS:

- Prolific. 8-14 piglets/litter, 2x/year.
- Fast turnaround. Gestation 4 months.
- Can reach market weight (260-300 lbs) in 6-8 months.
- Omnivores = Can supplement diet with farm waste: Extra milk, whey, eggs, veggies, fruit, field crops, pasture, brush.
- Pork a popular meat, fairly easy to direct market.
- Many pigs raised in small outdoor pens, but pigs can thrive in pasture or rough ground unsuitable for crops.



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## PIGS cont.

### CONS:

- Can chill & overheat easily. Shelter required year-round. Bedding in winter, shade in summer.
- Will likely require some purchased feeds for optimal growth.
- Year-round breeding operation requires sturdy facilities & equipment.
- Vigorous rooters & diggers. Will eat all plants, roots, & destroy pasture quickly if kept in too small an area for too long. (Can be a plus.)



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## ENTERPRISES: CATTLE

Raising cattle for beef, dairy, breeding stock

### PROS:

- Beef breeds can reach market weight easily on good pasture alone.
- With good genetics & high quality pasture, dairy cows can produce excellent milk with little or no grain.
- Good market for grass-fed/grass-finished beef, milk & cheese.
- Barbed wire fencing works. Can be trained to 1-strand electric fencing for interior pastures.
- Hardy & self-sufficient.



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## CATTLE cont.

### CONS:

- Slower turnaround. 11-month gestation. Most calves born as singles, harvested at 18-24 months = 2-1/2 to 3 years, breeding to harvest.
- Year-round breeding operation requires sturdy facilities & handling equipment.
- Dairy operation requires facilities & practices for cleanliness, must meet legal requirements for sale.
- Require more land.



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## When evaluating potential livestock enterprises, look for animals that . . .

- Have low initial start-up cost relative to the ability to generate income
- Match your time & labor resources.
- Complement your other enterprises' labor, resources, marketing.
- Are marketable in your area.
- Are profitable.
- You like being around!!



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## Questions?



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