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## How Micro Livestock Can Be Used For Suburban and Rural Sustainability

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<sup>[1]</sup> The “back to the land” movement that is sweeping this nation has micro farms popping up on the grid left and right. These micro farmers are trying to get back to the basics and their goal is to live a more [simplified lifestyle](#) <sup>[2]</sup>. They live primarily in a [self sufficient manner](#) <sup>[3]</sup> by growing their own food, caring for smaller plots of land, and raising livestock.

The breeds that are typically chosen for homesteads and micro farms are the “heritage” breeds because they have a better survival rate. However, those homesteaders that live on smaller acreage or in urban settings who cannot provide the larger areas for animals to graze have chosen micro versions of these domesticated animals. These micro breeds are bred to not only produce a good supply of meat, but are also raised based upon their temperament, cost of raising the animal vs. it’s price in meat, and how much land the animal will need to graze.

### **Advantages** of raising micro livestock

- For those of us who are unable to keep up with constant price increases at the grocery store, raising livestock that can provide you with meat, milk, cheese and eggs will help you cut your grocery budget down significantly.
- Raising micro livestock teaches us to be more [self reliant](#) <sup>[4]</sup>.
- Is a good [bartering product](#) <sup>[5]</sup>.
- Smaller species tend to use less of the resources from the land.
- Micro livestock grow faster and reach sexual maturity faster than regular sized livestock.
- Their greatest advantage is their compact size which is a result of living in harsh environments where they had to adapt. Therefore, they are highly adaptive to unconventional environments.
- Some breeds of micro cattle have unusually high tolerances to disease, internal and external parasites.
- Goats need less attention compared to other livestock breeds.
- Breeds such as goats, chickens and ducks startle easily and can alert you to dangers in the area.
- Micro livestock can help do work on the [micro farm](#) <sup>[6]</sup>. They are good foragers, and can clear parts of land that are riddled with roots and weeds, and naturally fertilize the land.

**Disadvantages** of raising micro livestock

- Depending on the animal, space could be an issue.
- The smaller the animal, the easier the prey.
- Typically, microlivestock have a higher energy level, and may require more food.
- Smaller breeds may not match the overall productivity of the larger breeds.
- Like all livestock, animals can succumb to diseases if proper conditions are not met.
- Some animals do not thrive well in hot conditions so other living areas need to be built.

**List of Micro livestock Breeds**

- Cattle – Zebu Cattle, Miniature Herefords, Mini Holstein, Red Panda Cow, White Dexter, Lowline, Miniature Longhorns, Miniature Galloways, Jerseys, Ayrshires
- Birds -turkeys, chickens, ducks, pigeons, quail and guinea fowl.
- Goats – Terai, Nigerian dwarf, West African dwarf, Pygmy, Nubian
- Pigs - American Guinea hog, West African dwarf, Chinese dwarf, Criollo
- Rabbits – Cinnamons, Californias, American Chincilla, Creme D'Argents, Blanc D'Hotot, New Zealand, Palomino, Rex, Sables, Satins, Silver fox ([Source](#) <sup>[7]</sup>)
- Guinea Pigs – Long haired, Short hairs, all different color variations
- Miniature Deer – mouse deer, musk deer, blue duiker antelope

What kind of micro livestock do you have on your micro farm?

For more information on starting a [homestead with animals](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, [self sustaining micro farms](#) <sup>[9]</sup>, and [micro livestock](#) <sup>[10]</sup>.

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URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://readynutrition.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/urban-farm-animals.jpg>

[2] simplified lifestyle: [http://readynutrition.com/resources/simply-simplifying\\_06102010/](http://readynutrition.com/resources/simply-simplifying_06102010/)

[3] self sufficient manner: [http://readynutrition.com/resources/urban-backyard-sustainability\\_10122009/](http://readynutrition.com/resources/urban-backyard-sustainability_10122009/)

[4] self reliant: [http://readynutrition.com/resources/freedom-through-self-reliance\\_02022010/](http://readynutrition.com/resources/freedom-through-self-reliance_02022010/)

[5] bartering product: [http://readynutrition.com/resources/the-barter-boom\\_01122009/](http://readynutrition.com/resources/the-barter-boom_01122009/)

[6] micro farm: [http://readynutrition.com/resources/the-micro-farm-revolutionthink-small\\_02112009/](http://readynutrition.com/resources/the-micro-farm-revolutionthink-small_02112009/)

[7] Source: <http://a-homesteading-neophyte.blogspot.com/2011/03/rabbit-kin-or-list-of-meat-rabbit.html>

[8] homestead with animals: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/30054125/Best-Livestock-to-Start-a-Homestead-With>

[9] self sustaining micro farms: <http://www.self-sufficient-farm-living.com/raising-livestock.html>

[10] micro livestock: [http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=1831&page=R1](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=1831&page=R1)

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