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Child Friendly Livestock

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On May 26, 2011 @ 3:30 pm

Category: Homesteading, Micro Farming, Micro Livestock

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As our move to the new [homestead](#) ^[1] draws near, I have talked with the children about the idea of caring for livestock, the responsibilities we will each have for these animals, and what the animal's purpose will be for our family.

We have discussed how these animals will *not* become part of our family. But, I keep wondering if they will be. Anyone who have raised animals are aware of the relationship that develops between human and animal. With that in mind, I worry about the emotional attachment my children will have to them. Especially when it comes to time to butcher some of the livestock.

Lately, a large devotion of my time has been in researching the different [types of livestock](#) ^[2] that would suit our family's needs. Knowing that animals have their own unique personalities, my focus was on finding livestock that served a multitude of purposes for our microfarm, as well as livestock that had a good temperament around my three children.

I came across an article in a parenting magazine that discusses the idea of why some livestock animals would be an ideal alternative to the family pet. While I do not agree on livestock animals becoming the family pet, I do appreciate the research that went into which animals are child-friendly. The magazine article indicates that these pet alternatives would be ideal if anyone in your family suffers from allergies from dogs or cats.

Chickens

- Cheap
- Easy to keep
- Do not require much space (a small shed and room to strut outside).
- Females are calmer and quieter.

Rabbits

- Easy to housebreak
- Even tempered
- Quiet

Goats

- Playful and affectionate
- Active and silly
- Can be compared to a dog
- Needs a small space (at least 20 x 20 pen) and some solid, high fencing.

Consequently, these micro livestock can be used for meat purposes, the manure can be used for composting or gardening beds, the milk from goats can be made used as a dairy source, or soap, and of course, the eggs from chickens can be used for food purposes.

In conclusion, when we end up moving to our little homestead, we will raise livestock. My children will learn to care for animals, and to their dismay, learn to clean up after them. I want to emphasize to my kids who important is to respect life and care for all creatures. But, I also want to teach them that the purpose of some of those creatures we care for is to feed the family. Knowing which animals will be gentle and child- friendly is a great place to start our homesteading adventure out. Do you have livestock that are child-friendly?

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URLs in this post:

[1] homestead: http://readynutrition.com/resources/characteristics-of-a-survival-homestead_04102010/

[2] types of livestock: http://readynutrition.com/resources/how-micro-livestock-can-be-used-for-suburban-and-rural-sustainability_08042011/

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