

Hobby Farming with Livestock Expectation Reality Check

This reality check has virtually nothing to do with the logistics of buying or running a hobby farm but more to do with some of the thinking and conversations you should have before you buy a farm and livestock. This by no means will prepare you for a full scale commercial operation. Both you and your partner should answer these questions separately and then you should exchange your answers. Finally you should discuss areas where you differ dramatically in your answer. If you cannot resolve those differences you might want to delay buying a hobby farm and or livestock. If you have dependent children still living at home, you will want to include them in this exercise.

Sharing of Labour Reality Check

How old are you ____ your partner ____?

Square bales of hay weight 40-50 lbs; full water buckets can weigh 50 lbs.

Is your health good enough to do heavy manual labour? Yes No

Is your partner's health good enough to do heavy manual labour? Yes No

Who will do the following chores (be realistic)?

Chore	You	Spouse/ Partner	Hired Help
buying animals with all background research etc			
animal health			
animal nutrition			
cleaning manure			
building and fence construction and maintenance			
house chores			
cooking			
machinery maintenance			
hiring help			
Other			

7. If you become sick or disabled in any way, who takes over your chores?

8. What chores will you hire someone to do? _____

Who will do the chores when you want to get away for a short period _____

long period_ ?

Financial Reality Check

Have you developed a long term financial plan? Yes No

Can your retirement income subsidize a farm? Yes No Don't know

Will unexpected or unusual farm expenses jeopardize your financial security in retirement? Yes No Don't know

Do you expect the farm to subsidize your income? Yes No

If the farm is not capable of subsidizing your income, will that affect your decision to have a farm? Yes No

If the farm is a drain on your income, will that affect your decision to have a farm? Yes No

Skills Reality Check

Do you or your partner have any skills or experience with livestock? Yes No

Do you or your partner have any skills or experience with machinery? Yes No

Do you or your partner have any skills or experience with building maintenance or construction? Yes No

Are you and/or your partner willing to take training or gain experience in these areas? Yes No

If no, can you afford to hire someone to do these activities? Yes No

Livestock Ownership Reality Check

While there are rarely areas of Ontario that do not have access to full veterinary services, these come at a cost and often vets expect the owner to continue extended care as required.

Are you comfortable around livestock? Yes No

Is the answer the same if your animal turns and challenges or attacks you (and it will happen)? Yes No

Are you comfortable or willing to learn to treat a sick or injured animal including giving injections, dressing wounds etc? Could you do first aid until the vet arrives? Yes No

Are you squeamish around or disturbed by blood, injury or obvious distress in an animal? Yes No

Are you willing to take the training and/or gain the experience to manage health, nutrition and well being in your animals? Yes No

If no, can you afford to hire someone to handle these activities? Yes No

Rural Neighbours Reality Check

Would you be willing to help your neighbour if they ask for assistance? Yes No

Would you be willing to ask your neighbour for assistance if required? Yes No

What would your reaction be to the following situations?

Your dog chased and injured your neighbour's livestock

Your neighbour is spreading liquid manure and the wind is blowing your direction

Your neighbour is plowing, planting or harvesting late into the night

Your neighbour's cattle have come through the fence into your garden

Do you :

- get on the phone and complain/apologize
- offer to compensate your neighbour for damage/ or request compensation
- threaten to sue
- accept that the country is dirty, noisy and smelly and say nothing
- organize a sit down and chat and work for compromise

Do you want to become involved in the community events and activities? Yes No

Will you prefer to shop locally to going to the city to shop? Yes No

Whose Dream is it? Reality Check

Who's dream is it to own a hobby farm with livestock? Yours Your partner's

If this is your partner's dream, are you willing to give up your dreams for the farm? Yes No

If your partner dies or leaves, will you stay on the farm? Yes No

If your partner dies or leaves, will you keep livestock? Yes No