6-1-1967

It's Not That Easy

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Recommended Citation
Richardson, Ron (1967) "It's Not That Easy," Green Revolution: Vol. 5 : Iss. 6 , Article 14.
Available at: https://research.library.kutztown.edu/greenrevolution/vol5/iss6/14

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Flight From The City

By Ralph Borsodi (first published 1932)

The annual food contribution of our poultry-yard, after it was once established, usually averages twenty or twenty-five capons, an amount sufficient for our family's food needs. There is always a surplus of eggs in the spring. Sometimes we sell them or turn them into our grocer, but usually we prefer to put them down and let them grow larger. It is often necessary to fit them for cooking purposes for the fall and winter when the production of fresh eggs falls off. However, this is largely because of wartime construction and especially if it is electrically lightened in the winter as so to give the hens a full day at the feed-boxes a plentiful supply of fresh eggs can be secured the year round.

A small flock of chickens, kept up each year by raising about a hundred new chickens, all that an average family needs. The dividends per dollar of investment are really enormous, even if all the food for them has to be purchased. Owing to the fact that land in our neighborhood is not always available to grain farming and the fact that we have had to clear every bit of land for garden purposes, we have produced a large part of our food. The result is, however, no reason, however, why the feed should not be produced on the homestead if it is possible. Simply by raising the hens we are currently earning and proportionately reduces the family's dependence upon income and purchases from the outside. The labor of feeding and caring for such a flock of chickens is not great, especially if good equipment and housing is provided. A large poultry project from which money is to be made, is an altogether different affair. The poultry business seems to have a universal popularity. It looks like an easy way to make a living, but it takes much more experience and much more ability than the average man possesses to make money at it. We tried it one year and, while we lost no money on the project (on the contrary, because of one single chicken's iniquitous habits of laying eggs and chickens for the market. So that year we had the opport­

tunity to raise a flock of six dozen eggs in size to something like commercial proportions. The eggs raised sold well and were given as prizes. The six dozen eggs sold and were paid in the fall sold to a restaurant in a city. Yet when we were through with the year there was precious little to show for the labor which had been put into them. By the time the eggs were paid for, pocket money was all that my brother had to show for his summer's work. We had, however, lost our belief in the notion that eggs are a success, it was one of the experiences which made us decide against any further experiment of this nature.

A few years after we moved to the country a brother of mine was ordered to the country by his doctor. We invited him to come to "S豆瓣" and raise chickens. We made him raise eggs and chickens for the market. So that year we had the opport­

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