



Sheep, Horses and Corn - Learn About All Three!

Storey's Guide to Raising Sheep, Horse Housing and Corn: Roasted, Creamed, Simmered + More

Storey's Guide to Raising Sheep

If you have a yen to raise livestock but don't have the space for cattle, the authors of Storey's Guide to Raising Sheep have news for you: You can breed sheep on a relatively small amount of land, and their book can help you do it.

Author Paula Simmons has been raising sheep her entire life, and co-author Carol Ekarius has also raised sheep in addition to being a livestock writer. Together, the team has created a book that serves as an excellent primer for keeping sheep, whether your goal is producing wool, meat, milk or pelts.

Storey's Guide to Raising Sheep begins by giving good reasons why sheep make excellent livestock for small farmers. On the amount of land that can carry one cow and calf, five to seven ewes and lambs can easily live.

In order to successfully keep sheep, however, you need the right facilities and know how. This is where the book comes in. The authors start out with an overview of sheep farming, behavior and breeds (including black and white photographs of each), and segue into facilities. Pasture plants and land management have their own chapter, and rightfully so. The quality of facility management can make or break your sheep operation.

Following are two chapters focused on animals other than sheep: herding dogs and guardians. The chapter on herding dogs serves as an introduction to the concept of training and keeping a herding dog—an incredibly valuable asset to the large flock owner. In the chapter on predators and guardians, the authors do a great job of emphasizing the use of nature-friendly means such as guardian animals like dogs, donkeys and llamas and predator discouragement methods, rather than poison and guns.

In keeping with the book's theme of being a thorough guide to raising sheep, the authors include chapters on nutrition, health, flock management, lambing, showing and marketing sheep products. While each of these topics could warrant an entirely separate book, Simmons and Ekarius do a good job of providing beginners with a general overview of everything involved in the keeping of sheep.

—Audrey Pavia

Horse Housing

"I wrote this book to horse owners, but for horses," says co-author Richard Klimesh in his introduction to Horse Housing, How to Plan, Build, and Remodel Barns and Sheds. His point is well taken—if you've got building aspirations remember you're the one who will have to do the work, but it's the horses that have to live in the barn. Klimesh, along with his wife and co-author, Cherry Hill, don't let readers of their book forget that basic fact.

However, owing to their backgrounds, the authors are also extremely sensitive to the importance of functionality and human comfort when it comes to good barn design. After all, Klimesh and Hill know horse barns. Klimesh studied architectural design at Iowa State University, is an accomplished carpenter, and has built and remodeled horse facilities throughout the United States and Canada. For her part, Hill has written several books on horse training and has been a trainer for over 30 years. She was also an instructor of university equine courses in the United States, as well as Canada, and has judged horse shows for over 25 years.

Whether building a new barn or just remodeling, the authors take you through the planning, design and building stages in great detail—from how to get a building permit to estimating and ordering concrete. Since most people have some budget constraints, Horse Housing provides extensive information regarding various building materials (along with the pros and cons associated with each option) in addition to 17 design plans to help get you started. From bare necessities, to the elaborate show barn, the authors never lose sight of important safety, comfort, efficiency and health standards. A vast resource directory for locating services and products, along with a glossary of more than 300 terms to help you better understand the "start-to-finish" process, can be found. Along with barn building, the book provides design and construction ideas for wash racks, tack rooms, arenas, hay and feed storage sheds, utility rooms, veterinarian/farrier areas and more. Horse Housing also has useful color photos (taken by the authors) so you can visualize the concepts being discussed.

For me Horse Housing is like my favorite gardening book: It collects a lot of dust just sitting on a shelf, but once I get started on a project, the book becomes a comprehensive tool I just can't do without. Even if you don't read it cover to cover, you will probably find some handy tips in Horse Housing that are well worth the read.



—TM

Corn: Roasted, Creamed, Simmered + More

The next time you consider serving corn as a side dish for supper, think again. Instead of the usual—corn with a little salt and butter (okay, maybe lots of butter)—how about “tasting-up” that side? Maybe a delicious blend of corn, oysters and a handful of exotic spice (better known as a little dish called “The Red Fox’s Cornmeal Oysters with Salsa and Remoulade”)? Or how about “Baked Tomatoes with Corn Custard”? Better yet, my personal favorite, “Shrimp Ceviche with Corn.”

If you need inspiration when it comes to serving corn for supper (or breakfast and lunch for that matter), be sure to check out *Corn: Roasted, Creamed, Simmered + More* by Olwen Woodier. With 140 luscious, imaginative, easy-to-prepare recipes using corn (including those mentioned above), this book offers something for every palate and every meal. Woodier gives us corn for breakfast, breads, soups, salads, starters and sides, main courses, snacks and sweets.

“I add corn to many dishes not only because I love its sweet flavor but also because it provides a splash of color when combined with dark green vegetables or when tossed on top of a salad or into soup,” says Woodier. “You can add a cup or so of whole kernels to practically any dish—meat, fish, or poultry—without diffusing the flavor or altering the liquid content. You will increase the nutritional quality and have more servings to go around.”

In addition to recipes, Woodier celebrates corn and all its glory with a brief chapter dedicated to the history of this important grain. Did you know that in 1950, fossilized wild corn pollen was discovered 200 feet below Mexico City and radiocarbon dating determined the pollen was 80,000 years old? This discovery confirmed that corn predated the arrival of humans in the Western Hemisphere and substantiated that corn is indeed indigenous to the North American continent.

The author also gives us lots of helpful hints regarding how to buy, prepare, freeze, dry and grind corn. So no matter what the weather brings, you can extend the summer season by enjoying the freshness of corn year-round by using tips from the book.

Woodier also provides detailed information regarding the various corn varieties, so depending on your region, you can learn to choose a corn that is sure to tempt your taste buds. In addition to the most common corn varieties, Woodier dedicates several pages to the subtleties of popcorn and flint or Indian corn (the decorative variety usually on full display at roadside produce stands this time of year).

As Woodier points out, besides savory flavor, corn provides high-quality nutrition. As a complex carbohydrate, corn is a low-fat energy booster that supplies protein, thiamin and fiber to the diet. Even the staunchest vegetable haters seem to go for corn (just ask any 8-year-old). So if maybe you’ve never considered corn to be an exciting food—or sole subject matter for a book—this seemingly simple sustenance is really quite complex as Woodier reminds us.

For some fabulous recipes calling for corn, along with tidbits of engaging background information regarding this hugely important staple, this cookbook is a great choice.

—TM