



When the Economy Gets Tough...

Notes from the Porch for November-December Hobby Farms

Photo by Stephanie Staton ... the tough get learning. This is an idea that becomes more obvious each day here in the Hobby Farms office. From e-mails by readers who are trying to raise a different livestock or crop on their farms to discussions started on our HobbyFarms.com community message board about how to use abundant garden bounty, you folks are digging for information to make your small farms the best—no matter what those academic economists tell us is happening beyond our property lines.

Learning is central to success on a farm, and your appetites for more, more, more information totally endear you to me. Our learning continues in the office, too. Together, we laugh about dog-training experiments gone awry, cry about what we've been taught by lost horses and pets, and share what we've learned in our gardens and on our farms. Every time we read a new article for the first time, we realize how much we've learned in our own experiences and how much there is yet to know. That's something about farmers in any economy, but especially in one like this—we get learning.

I read Cherie Langlois's "Back to Goat School" article and couldn't believe a weekend so packed with education could be offered at such an affordable price. (I've already checked my calendar for next year!) I love the "Hobby Farmer's Bag of Tricks" article that Cherie compiled, too, because how often can you be privy to the secrets of 15 veteran stewards of the land, all in one place?

One article that always serves as not only a great resource for information but also inspiration is "Reader Resume." The stories of how our readers are living their farming dreams are something I look forward to in every issue. As you retreat indoors earlier each day this time of year, consider submitting your own "Reader Resume" here and tell us how your appetite for learning has gotten you where you are today.