

APPENDIX 1-7

ENTERPRISE SELECTION: LIVESTOCK

Livestock systems include pork, lamb, goat, beef, dairy, broiler, and egg production. Value-added products include milk, cheese, and many processed meat products. Livestock can be raised in a multispecies system to enhance production and marketing opportunities. Livestock also may be part of an integrated crop and livestock farm and a good option for land that isn't suited to growing crops. Livestock need care and attention year-round. Animals require shelter, adequate nutrition and water, safe fencing, exercise, and health care. Proper pasture management is an essential aspect of sustainable livestock production for many small farms. State and local regulations and other legal parameters can affect what and how livestock can be raised on a particular site. Investigate these issues before initiating a livestock enterprise.

Answer the following questions to assess your readiness for raising livestock and what type of livestock business might best suit your situation.

Do you enjoy handling animals and doing daily chores?

Can you care for sick and injured animals? Are you capable of giving injections?

Are you willing to feed livestock on a regular schedule when pasture is not available? If you own dairy animals, are you willing to milk twice a day? If you get sick or are unavailable, can someone else fill in?

Are you willing and able to go out in freezing weather and break ice on the water trough or help deliver a newborn calf?

Are you aware of and able to perform routine management practices such as castration, dehorning, tail docking, feet trimming, and wing clipping?

What is the purpose of your livestock enterprise (e.g., meat, fiber, milk, or multipurpose)?

Are you willing to send animals to slaughter?

Do you have a replacement livestock plan?

Do you own, rent, or have access to enough range or pasture for the number of animals you need to raise to be profitable? Is water available?

Do you have adequate shelter, fencing, and handling facilities?

Are you interested in commercial livestock production, breeding stock production, or both?

Where will you obtain foundation breeding stock?

Will you use natural mating or artificial insemination for breeding? What type of breeding program will you implement?

Do you have access to a knowledgeable veterinarian who will provide service to your farm?

How will you manage livestock manure? Manure is a resource, but it can also be a problem if not managed properly.

How will you dispose of dead animals?
