

Should You Consider Homesteading?

There has been so much written about surviving the aftermath of a TEOTWAWKI event. This is, in part, because preparing for such an event also tends to make us prepared for any lesser disasters that might come along. Even so, I think there might be a little bit of whimsy included there, with many preppers looking forward to that day when we can leave “normal life” behind, and enter a full-time life of survival. Essentially switching over from “preparation” mode to putting everything we’ve learned to practice.

I have to wonder though, just how many of us would survive such a transition. Actual survival living is much harder than training and preparing for it. There is so much that we need on an everyday basis, which we take for granted. When all those things aren’t delivered to our homes, just how well will we do in getting them for ourselves?

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Yes, I know that’s what we prepare for; but preparing for it and actually having to live in survival mode are considerably different. The reality is much harder than our worst imaginations; and unless we’ve had an opportunity to live it, we really don’t know what to expect.

However, there are a small minority of preppers, who have already taken steps to live as if they are in survival mode. These people are raising some, if not all, of their own food and some have gone so far as to cut themselves off from the grid, living without the support of the electrical grid and

the rest of the infrastructure that we are all accustomed to. I am referring, of course, to homesteaders; and while not all homesteaders are living off the grid, nor are they all preppers, they may as well be.

It is these people, who are already living as if they had gone through the apocalypse, who will have the greatest possibility of surviving in a post-disaster world. That's mostly because they will already be doing the things they need to do, in order to survive. There will be very little transition for them, from a "normal" lifestyle, to "survival mode."

But does that mean that we should all become homesteaders? Perhaps a more important question is whether we could all become homesteaders? Let's take a look at a few key questions, before making a decision about that.

How Much Time Are You Going to Devote to Your Homestead?

Anyone who has even started on the road towards homesteading, say by having a sizeable vegetable garden, quickly learns just how much work there is involved in raising your own food. It can be challenging to hold down a regular job, while putting in the necessary time to your gardening and other homesteading activities. The more homesteading you do, the less time you're going to have available for what most of us call a steady job.

This is a large part of what holds people back from homesteading. Granted, that wouldn't be an issue in a post-disaster world; but it is in the here and now. Trying to find a way to make that transition, where you are doing more and more homesteading, generally means giving up the regular job.

Another thing, which ties in directly with this, is that homesteading requires more land than the average suburban home has, meaning that most homesteaders live outside of town. That

means more time commuting, putting more pressure on the schedule. Of course, there is a simple solution to that, at least for some people; working remotely, from home.

As your homestead grows, adding additional activities, such as raising animals, you will find that it requires more and more time. This will lead to other lifestyle changes, especially in the way that you earn money.

How Much Money Do You Need?

This brings us to one of the big issues – the money question. That's going to affect many other parts of your homesteading experience. We all work to make money... and we make money to spend on things that we need or want. How much we spend is generally controlled by how much we can earn, which usually means that we buy less than we want to, simply because we can't afford it.

Most people who successfully transition to homesteading start out by reexamining and changing their spending habits. They recognize that they will need to live on less, in order to be able to live the kind of life they want to live. Of course, homesteading is going to save them money too, between growing much of their own food, going off-grid, making things for themselves, rather than buying them, and leaving behind a lot of the frivolous things that eat up our money.

This is actually a great place to start your homesteading experience, long before buying a piece of property and moving out of town. How exactly you choose to reduce your monthly budget will depend a lot on the skills that you already have. There are many options, such as doing things for yourself, cutting out unnecessary entertainment and luxury expenses, and living a simpler life. The money you save, can go into a fund for buying your property.

How Important is Comfort to You?

One of the first questions we need to ask ourselves, even before talking about things like time and money, is just how important comfort is to us. Much of what we call “modern society” is built around things that mankind has invented, for the purpose of making our lives more comfortable. People survived for centuries without running water and air conditioning. The question is, can we?

While homesteading isn't actually about making those sorts of sacrifices, it often requires them. That's especially true if you're thinking of off-grid homesteading, either in whole or in part. Paying for energy is a major part of anyone's monthly expenses. Living on a homestead, it will probably be necessary to cut energy consumption, even if you're still connected to the grid.

The other part of this deals with purchased goods. With lowering monthly costs being an important part of our ability to homestead, we need to take a serious look at cutting some of our purchased goods out of our life. At first, that's going to mean unnecessary things, such as seven-dollar cups of coffee, but as time goes on and we move more into our homesteading experience, it may also mean things like making our own clothing, rather than buying it.

What Homesteading Skills Do You Already Have?

It's normal to think about homesteading in light of doing things, like raising food, but the ability to do those things is all based in the knowledge of how to do them. So, the big question we have to ask ourselves, is just how many of those homesteading areas we already know how to do. It's all too easy, as city dwellers, to think that growing fruit trees or

keeping chickens for eggs will be easy. But until we try it for ourselves, we won't have any idea of the challenges associated with those aspects of homesteading.

This brings up an important point we must consider. That is, just what homesteading activities are we going to do and in what order are we going to add them? It might seem like a good idea to start all the various parts of your homestead as quickly as possible; but it's not. Each new area you add is going to not only require a huge investment in time and energy, but have a learning curve as well. Therefore, trying to do too many things at once is setting yourself up for failure.



Besides the day-to-day chores of dealing with all the various aspects of your homestead, there are three main times when there is an extra-large investment of time. they are:

- When you are setting that area up and getting it started
- Harvest time, including preserving the food that you harvest
- When you run into a problem, such as your livestock getting disease.

Dealing with one such problem is bad enough; but what if those problems cascade? Dealing with one area of problem can take time that's necessary for basic maintenance of the homestead. The resulting lack of attention can cause another area of the homestead to fall into problems, meaning that you then have two different areas requiring extra time. If you can't keep on

top of it, that could very easily become three or four areas, resulting in some areas of the homestead failing. It has happened to others and can happen to you.

Before You Start

Before starting into homesteading, take the time to figure out your plan. Just what are you going to include in your homestead and just when are you going to add each of those areas to your already existing homestead? Plans might change; but you have to have a good plan before you start. As the old saying goes, "Failure to plan is planning to fail."

The other thing you want to do is experiment with just how little you need, in order to get by. I've mentioned several things in this article, dealing with the need to cut down and cut back. Expect that to be a part of your homesteading experience and start living that now, so that you can see if you can really live without those things. If you can't, you'll need to come up with a realistic plan to make it possible for you to have those things on your homestead.

Go slowly, as you go ahead with your homesteading plans. More than anything, homesteading is a change in lifestyle. That means coming up with a new way of living, where your thoughts, attitudes, and day-to-day activities are different than they are now. If you're not ready to make that big a change, you're not ready for homesteading.