



PLOT & PURPOSE

GROW • TEND • THRIVE

CHICKEN

Startup Blueprint

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
TO START YOUR FLOCK WITH CONFIDENCE



PLAN



PREPARE



PROTECT



THRIVE

A simple step-by-step guide for new chicken keepers.

Before You Buy Your First Chickens

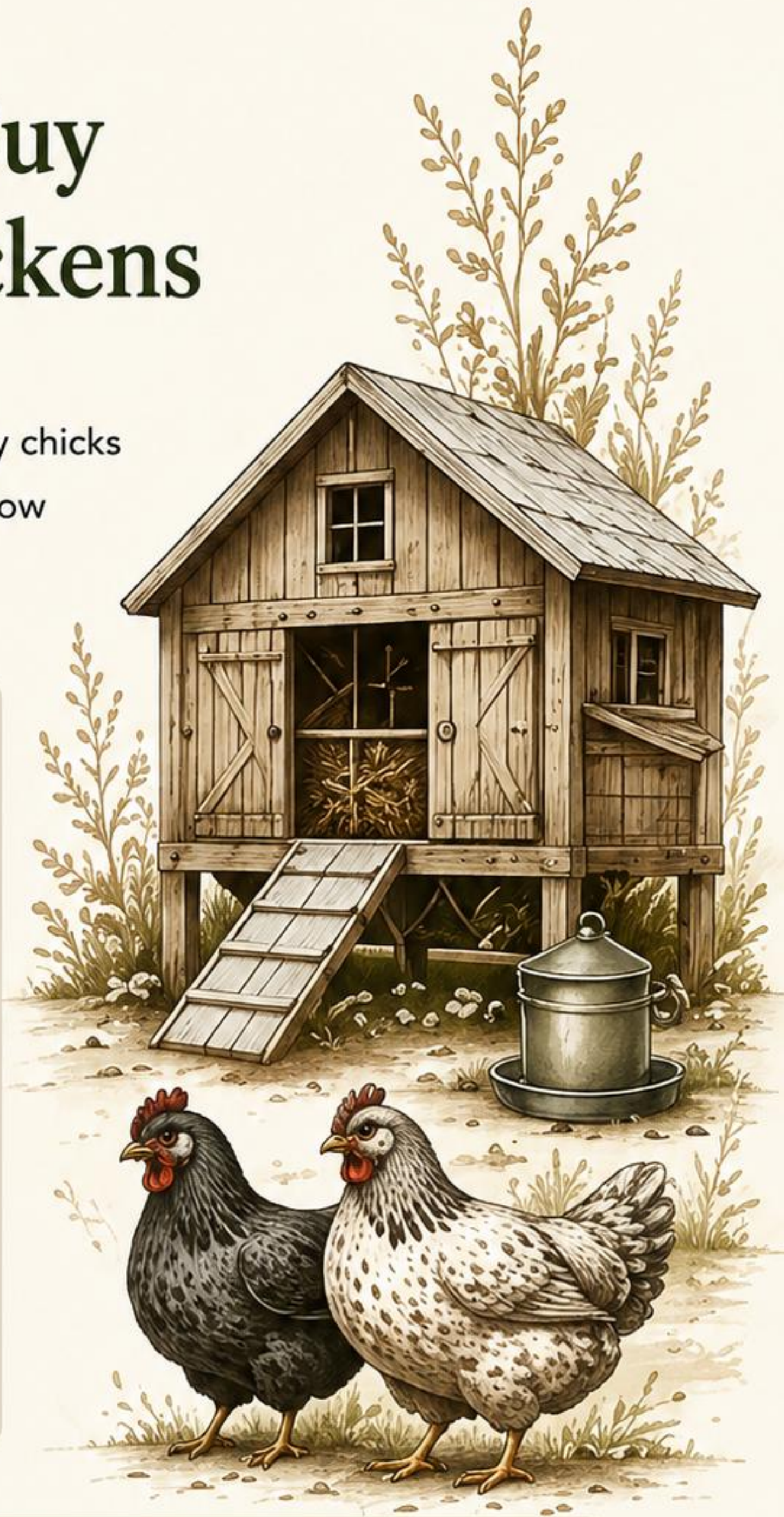


The excitement is real—those fluffy baby chicks are hard to resist! But a little planning now will save you stress (and money) later.



THE MISTAKES ALMOST EVERY BEGINNER MAKES

- ✓ Bringing home chicks unprepared
- ✓ Underestimating time and cost
- ✓ Choosing the wrong breed
- ✓ Skipping coop and run planning
- ✓ Predators catching you off guard
- ✓ Getting overwhelmed and giving up



PLAN FIRST. ENJOY MORE.

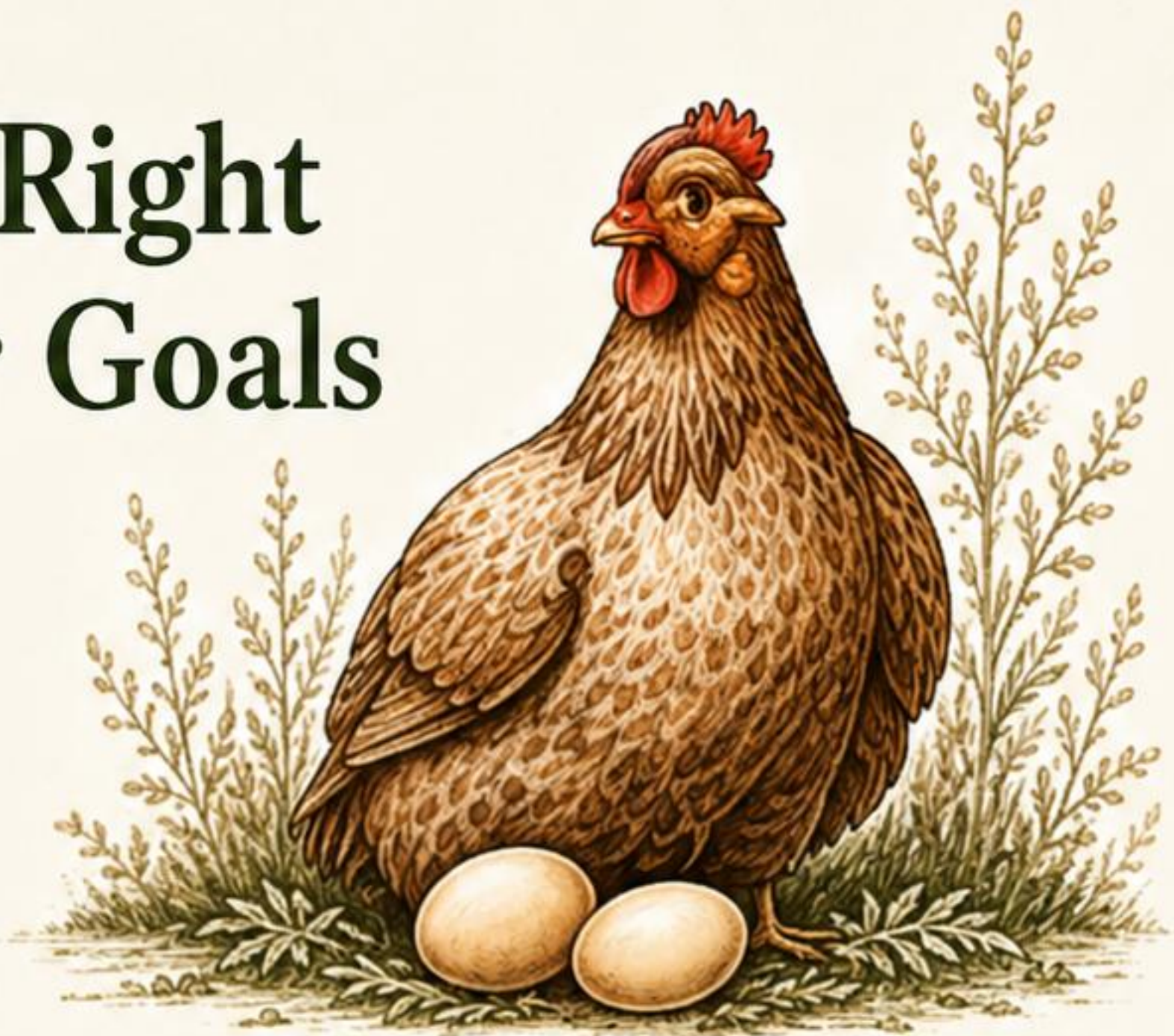
A few days of planning = years of enjoyment.

Let's make sure your flock gets the best start possible!

Choosing the Right Breed for Your Goals



Not all chickens are the same. Pick a breed that fits your goals, your climate, and your lifestyle.



POPULAR BREEDS FOR BEGINNERS				
BREED	BEST FOR	EGG COLOR	TEMPERAMENT	COLD HARDY?
 Rhode Island Red	Eggs	Brown	Calm, friendly	
 Australorp	Eggs	Brown	Gentle, easygoing	
 Buff Orpington	Dual Purpose	Brown	Sweet, docile	
 Plymouth Rock	Dual Purpose	Brown	Calm, reliable	
 Easter Egger	Eggs	Mixed	Curious, friendly	
 Sussex	Dual Purpose	Brown	Quiet, hardy	

There's no "perfect" breed—just the perfect breed for you!



How Many Chickens Do You Actually Need?



More isn't always better. Start with a number that fits your space, your goals, and your budget.

FLOCK SIZE		GOOD FOR	EGGS/WEEK (ESTIMATED)
	2–3 chickens	Individuals or couples	6–9 eggs
	4–6 chickens	Small families	12–18 eggs
	7–12 chickens	Larger families	18–30 eggs
	13+ chickens	Families who love extras or preserving	30+ eggs



KEEP IN MIND
You can always add more later. It's easy to start small and build confidence.



SPACE MATTERS
Make sure you have enough coop and run space for the number of birds you choose.

The Real Cost of Getting Started



One of the biggest surprises for new chicken keepers is the upfront cost. Here's a realistic breakdown:

	Baby Chicks	\$3 – \$6 each
	Coop	\$200 – \$600+
	Brooder Supplies	\$75 – \$150
	Feeders & Waterers	\$30 – \$60
	Feed (first month)	\$20 – \$40
	Misc. Supplies	\$30 – \$50
TOTAL STARTUP COST		\$358 – \$906+



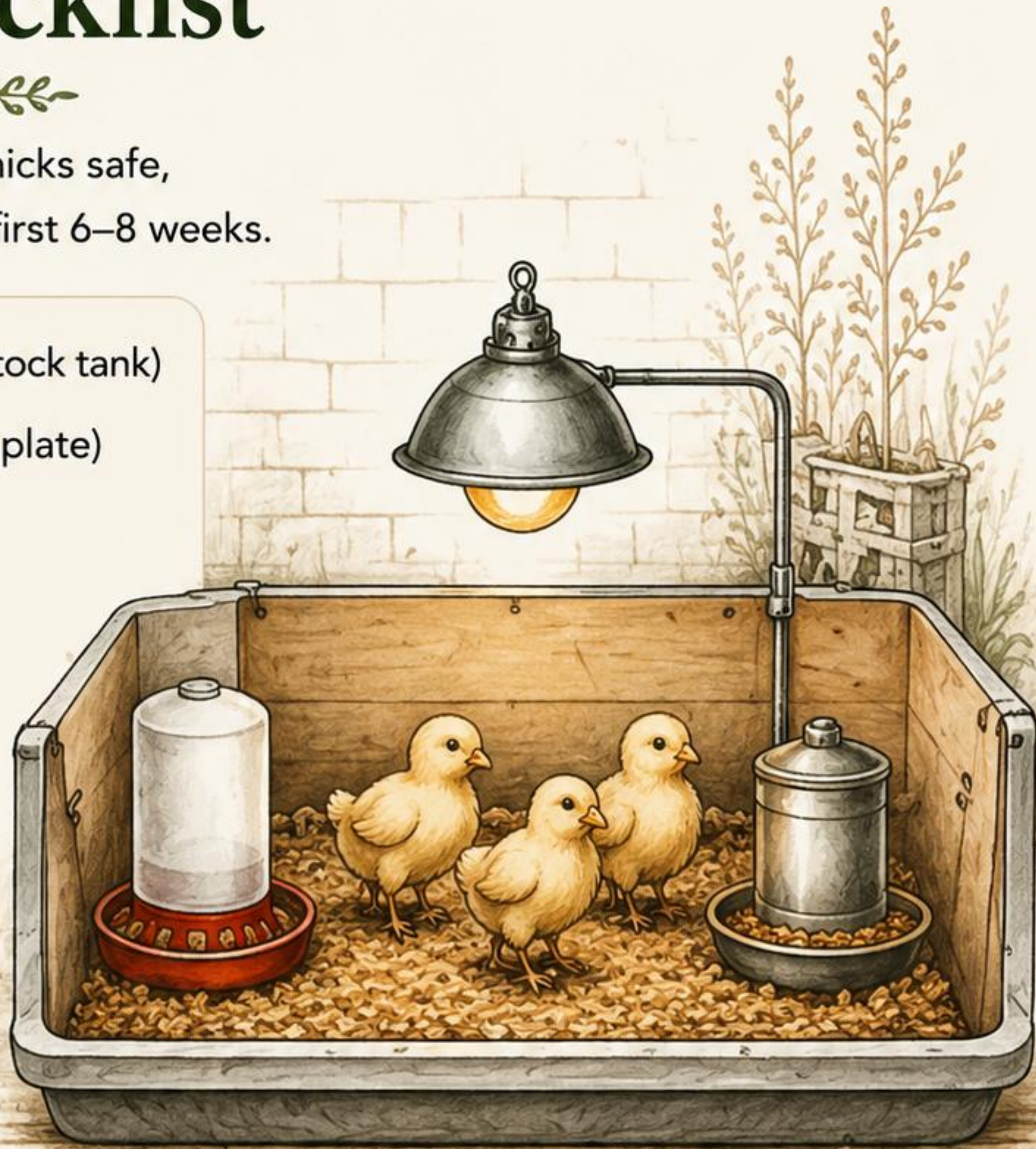
TIP: Shop used, DIY what you can, and buy quality where it matters (like feeders, waterers, and predators protection). It will save you money in the long run!

Brooder Setup Checklist



A proper brooder keeps your chicks safe, warm, and healthy during their first 6–8 weeks.

- ✓ Sturdy container (totes or stock tank)
- ✓ Heat source (heat lamp or plate)
- ✓ Thermometer
- ✓ Pine shavings (not cedar)
- ✓ Chick starter feed
- ✓ Waterer
- ✓ Feeder
- ✓ Room temp: 70–75°F
(lower 5° each week)



REMEMBER:

Chicks should be warm, not hot!
If they're piled up, it's too cold.
If they're far away from the heat,
it's too hot.

Coop & Run Basics



Your coop doesn't have to be fancy, but it does need to be safe, dry, and easy to clean.

COOP CHECKLIST

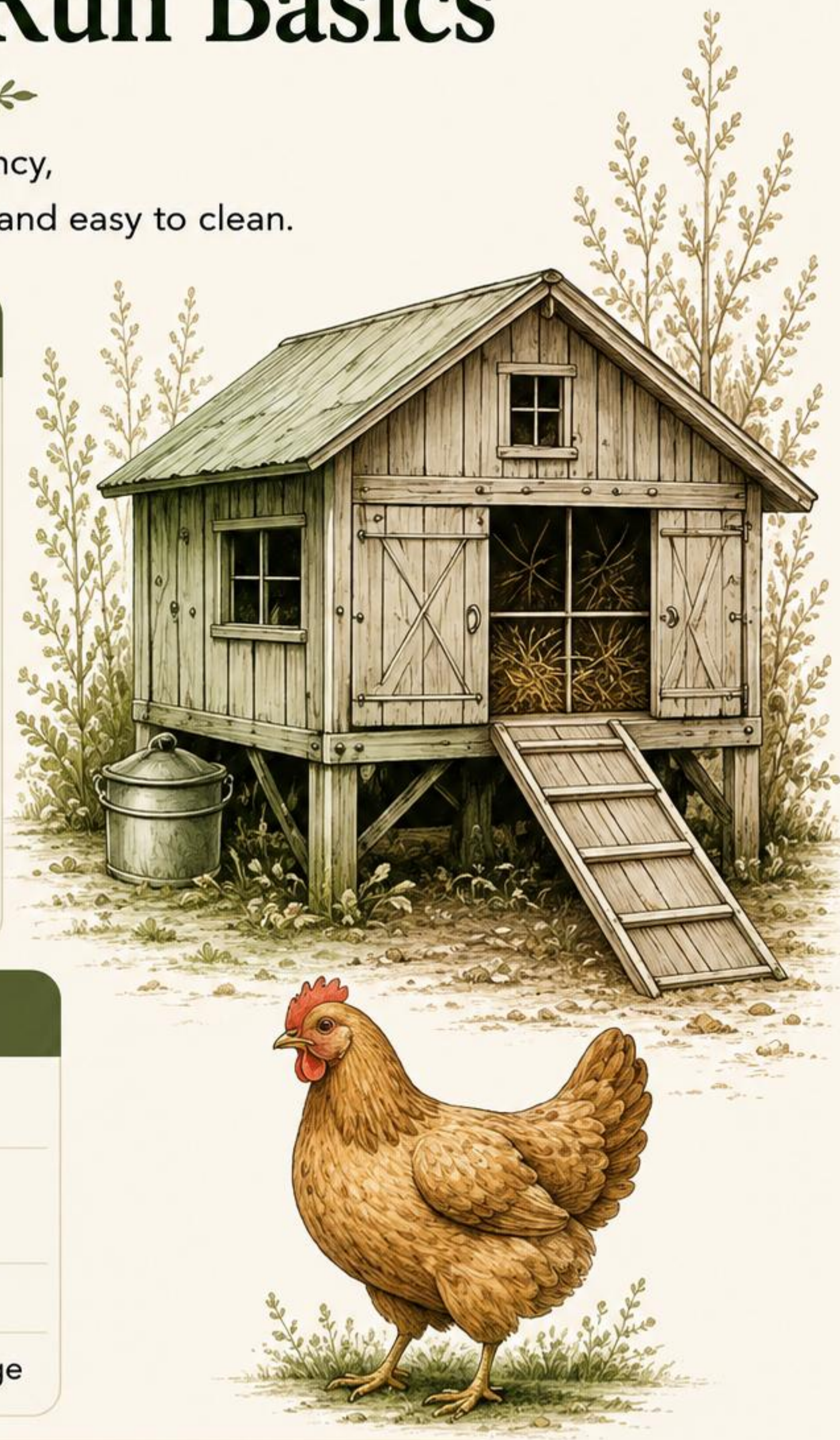
- ✓ Dry, well-ventilated
- ✓ 3–4 sq ft per bird inside
- ✓ Easy access for cleaning
- ✓ Nest boxes (1 per 3–4 hens)
- ✓ Roosting bars (6–10" off ground)
- ✓ Secure latches

RUN GUIDELINES

- ✓ At least 8–10 sq ft per bird
- ✓ Fencing or hardware cloth (not chicken wire)
- ✓ Covered top or partial cover
- ✓ Plenty of space to move and forage



TIP: The more space you can give, the happier and healthier your flock will be!



Predator Protection



Predators are a reality. Good protection gives you peace of mind and keeps your flock safe.



- ✓ Use hardware cloth (not chicken wire)
- ✓ Bury or bend fence outward (dig barrier)
- ✓ Secure the coop at night
- ✓ Lock run doors
- ✓ Check for weakness regularly
- ✓ Common threats: raccoons, coyotes, dogs, foxes, hawks, snakes, weasels

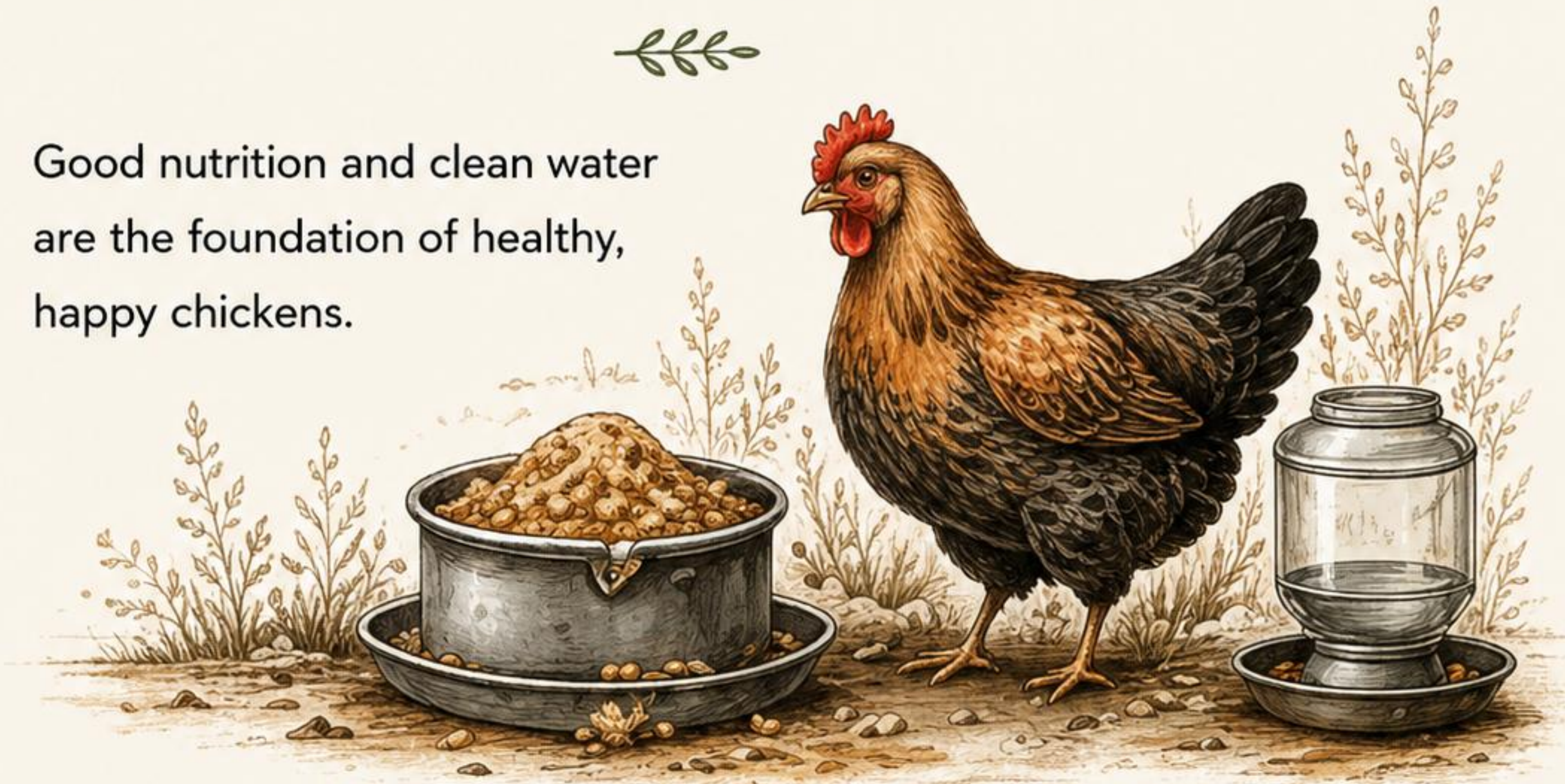


A little prevention today prevents heartbreak tomorrow.

Feed & Water Essentials



Good nutrition and clean water are the foundation of healthy, happy chickens.



FEED BASICS

- ✓ Start with a quality layer or grower feed
- ✓ 16–18% protein
- ✓ Avoid feeds with fillers like corn as the first ingredient



WATER BASICS

- ✓ Always provide clean, fresh water
- ✓ Change daily (more often in summer)
- ✓ In winter, use a heated base or insulate



KEEP IT SIMPLE:

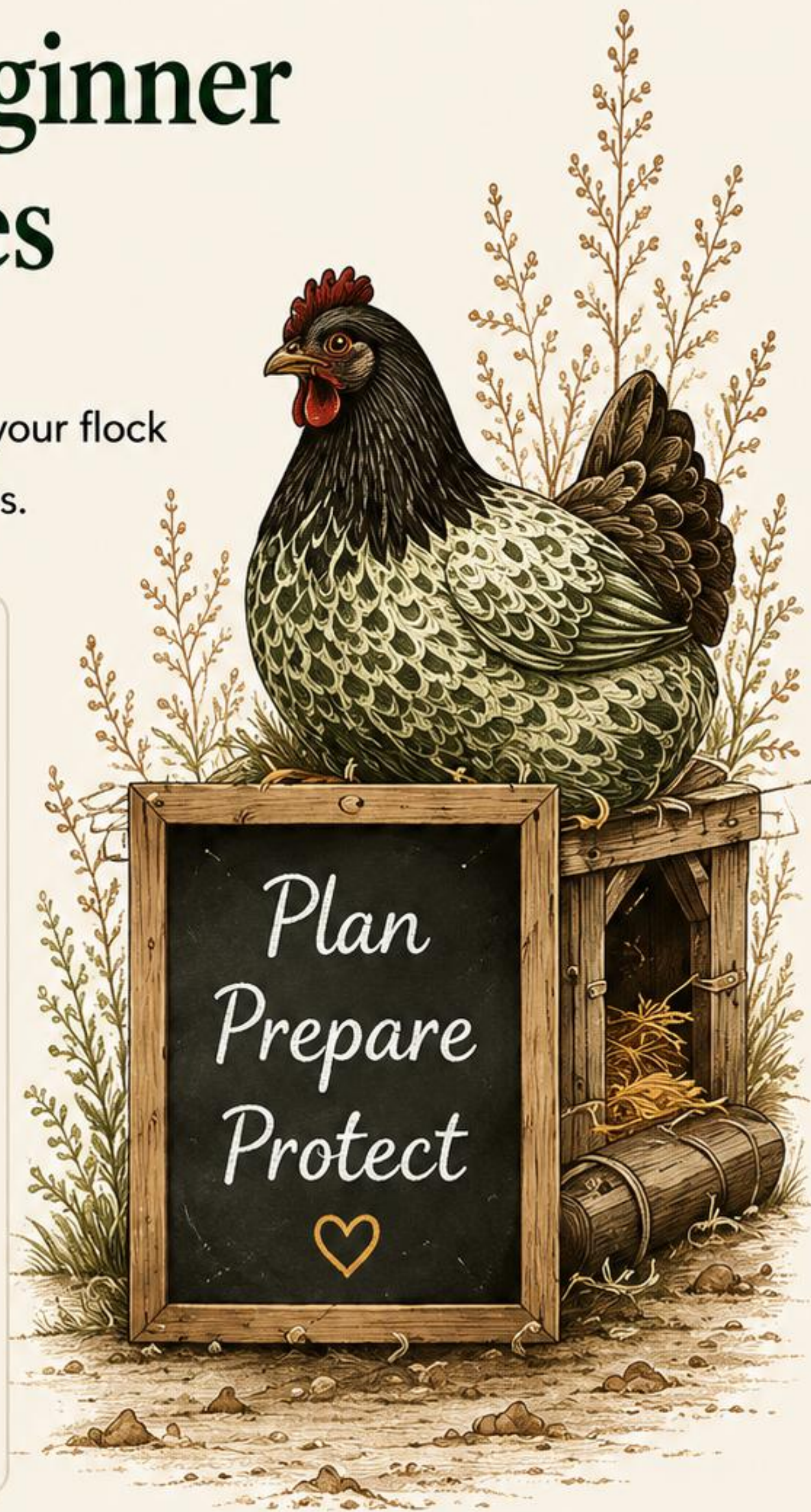
Good feed + clean water = a safe place to live = thriving chickens.

Common Beginner Mistakes



Learn from others so you can enjoy your flock instead of fighting constant problems.

- ✗ Buying too many at once
- ✗ Skipping the research
- ✗ Ignoring predator risks
- ✗ Poor ventilation
- ✗ Not budgeting for the extras
- ✗ Feed, bedding, and repairs add up.



REMEMBER: There's no such thing as a perfect chicken keeper—just prepared ones.

Your First-Year Timeline



Here's what a typical year with chickens looks like.



SPRING

Get your chicks or pullets.
Set up your coop and brooder.
Focus on growth and bonding.



SUMMER

Enjoy eggs (if your girls
are laying) and focus on
heat management.



FALL

Collect fresh eggs, prepare
your coop for colder weather,
check for drafts.



WINTER

Shorter days mean fewer eggs.
Focus on flock health, clean
water, and predator protection.



You don't have to do it all at once.
Just keep showing up for your flock every day.



Starter Supply Checklist



The basics you need to get started right.

FOR THE BROODER

- ☐ Brooder box or tub
- ☐ Heat source (lamp or plate)
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Pine shavings
- ☐ Chick starter feed
- ☐ Chick waterer
- ☐ Chick feeder

NICE-TO-HAVE EXTRAS

- ☐ Oyster shell
- ☐ Diatomaceous earth
- ☐ Electrolytes
- ☐ Treats
- ☐ Dust bath
- ☐ Heated waterer
(for winter)
- ☐ Tarps or shade
cloth (for summer)

FOR THE COOP & RUN

- ☐ Coop
- ☐ Hardware cloth
- ☐ Bedding
- ☐ Nest boxes
- ☐ Roosting bars
- ☐ Feeders & waterers



TIP: You don't need everything on day one.
Buy what you need now and add as you grow.

Record Keeping Made Simple



Good records = a healthier,
more productive flock.

WHAT TO TRACK

- ✓ Hatch dates
- ✓ Breed
- ✓ Health issues or treatments
- ✓ Egg production
- ✓ Feed changes
- ✓ Notes on behavior or changes



TIP: A simple notebook or phone note works perfectly. You don't need anything fancy!

Troubleshooting Guide



Quick solutions to common beginner problems.

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
 Not laying eggs	Too young, stress, poor nutrition, not enough light	 Be patient, check diet, ensure 14–16 hrs of light in winter
 Bullying	New flock, not enough space	 Add space, distractions, or separate if needed
 Dirty eggs	Dirty nest boxes or coop	 Clean boxes regularly, add bedding
 Frostbite	Too much moisture, no ventilation	 Improve airflow, reduce moisture
 Bad smell	Wet bedding, not enough cleaning	 Use deep litter method and clean regularly



When something feels “off,” trust your gut and take action early.

KEEP GROWING WITH PLOT & PURPOSE



Your chicken journey is just getting started.

We're here to help you build a happy, healthy flock
and a life you love—one step at a time.

EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES



Chicken Guides & Tools



Duck Guides & Tools



Homestead Planning Resources



Beginner-Friendly Education

FOLLOW ALONG



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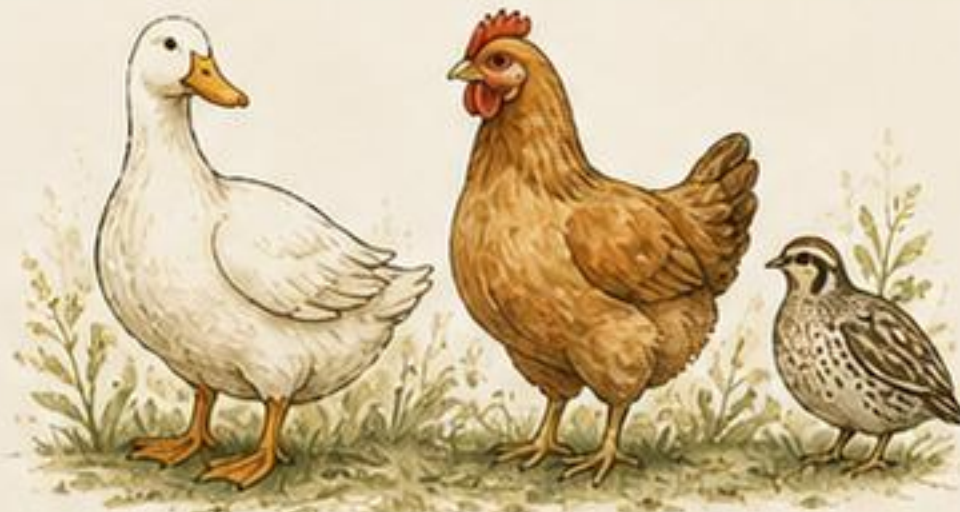
theplotandpurpose.com



theplotandpurpose@gmail.com



PLOT & PURPOSE
GROW • PLAN • THRIVE



Helping ordinary families build
practical homesteads
one step at a time.

