

GARAGE SALES

What is a Farm Swap?

Many people are starting to grow their own food and raise food animals such as chickens even in suburban neighborhoods.

According to the American Pet Product Association's 2021-2022 survey, backyard chicken flocks increased from 8% to 13% and is predicted to grow more. Poultry food maker Manna Pro says that 38% of new poultry owners entered the category because they had more time at home during the pandemic or wanted a hobby to do with their children and 23% cited coronavirus-related food shortages as a reason to try raising their own birds.

With more interest in hobbies such as raising a family flock of chickens and gardening, more and more suburban families are exploring farm sales or swaps that were traditionally only visited by farmers and homesteaders. Here's what you need to know about farm swaps.

KNOW YOUR REGULATIONS

Some states tightly regulate the sale of animals. Make sure



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before you venture out to swap or sell your eggs, chicks or other birds that you know the rules behind that. You may have to have an inspection by animal control officials to certify your flock as saleable in

your area or may have to purchase a permit to sell. These rules are in place to avoid the spread of highly contagious diseases that can threaten the country's food supply, such as the avian flu outbreak that lad

to a spike in egg prices recently.

If you're looking to buy birds or other animals, there are three regulating bodies you should first check in with: your city, county and your

homeowner's association. Make sure you know regulations from all three bodies concerning the animals you wish to keep, their habitats and any registration protocols that are in place.

ATTENDING A SWAP

Farm sales or swaps tend to be like garage sales but with farm animals and sometimes supplies. You'll find people selling chicks, full-grown chickens, ducks, geese, goats and even the occasional larger hoofstock such as cows or pigs. These sales are often hosted by feed stores, farm supply stores and other places that have skin in the farming game.

You should bring cash with you and, if this is your first foray into keeping farm animals, plenty of questions. The people there with animals to sell are experts and can answer many of your questions. Make sure if your area requires any registration paperwork for farm animals that you obtain the proper copies from the previous owners. You should also ask questions about what they've been fed, how they've been fed and any veterinary care and vaccinations the animal has received. Get copies of all of their medical records if you can.

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BUYER'S TIP

Introducing New Chickens to a Flock

Chickens, in particular, form their own social hierarchy called a pecking order and the youngest and smallest birds tend to be at the bottom. Introduce new birds to an existing flock carefully, especially if they're smaller breeds or younger than the resident birds. Quarantine all new birds to make sure your new feathered friends don't spread diseases to your existing flock and so the birds can get to know each other safely without fighting.

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