

Every Homesteader Needs a Journal – Here’s Why

With the new year upon us, resolutions are in the air. If you’re looking for one that will pay dividends for decades, here’s mine: start (or keep) a homestead journal. I’ve been journaling for years – not the “Dear Diary” kind, but a practical, no-rules log of daily life on the land. At the top of each page I write the date and day of the week, then jot down whatever matters: major tasks accomplished, a new pest spotted on the tomatoes, which animals were bred, when I set eggs in the incubator, a new herbal tea I loved (or hated), blog ideas, websites to explore, or that tricky bit of website code I finally solved. It’s a glorious mess – but when I need to look back weeks, months, or years later, it’s pure gold.

I prefer durable, hardbound journals around 9×6 inches with lined pages and a sturdy metal spiral binding that lies flat and survives barn dust and kitchen spills.

Reasons Every Homesteader Should Keep a Journal

- Track seasonal patterns. Note planting dates, first and last frosts, weather quirks, bloom times, and harvest yields. Over years, patterns emerge that sharpen your planning - knowing exactly which tomato variety thrived in a cool, wet spring or which bean excelled in drought.
- Record successes and failures. Log what worked (and what flopped) with crops, livestock, and poultry. Did that new chicken breed lay well through winter? Did the cabbage patch get devoured by slugs again? Writing it down prevents repeating expensive mistakes and speeds problem-solving months later.
- Document self-sufficiency milestones. Track new skills learned, projects completed, and hours invested. Looking back shows how far you’ve come—an ego boost on tough days and proof of growing independence.
- Save time, money, and resources. Past records eliminate guesswork and costly do-overs. Track expenses too, and you’ll budget smarter – knowing roughly what a new fence, batch of chicks, or seed order actually costs.
- Preserve knowledge. Your journal becomes a custom manual for your land, climate, and methods. It’s an irreplaceable legacy to pass to children, future homestead owners, or anyone who follows in your footsteps.
- Cultivate mindfulness. Regular reflection deepens your connection to the rhythms of the land and the meaning of the work you do each day.
- Celebrate achievements. Milestones, breakthroughs, and progress in writing are powerful motivation. When everything feels stuck, flipping back to see what you’ve already overcome can pull you through.

Conclusion

A homestead journal is far more than record-keeping – it’s a practical tool for better decisions, a source of motivation, and a living legacy of your life on the land. Start simple this year: grab a notebook, write the date, and begin. Future-you (and future generations) will thank you.