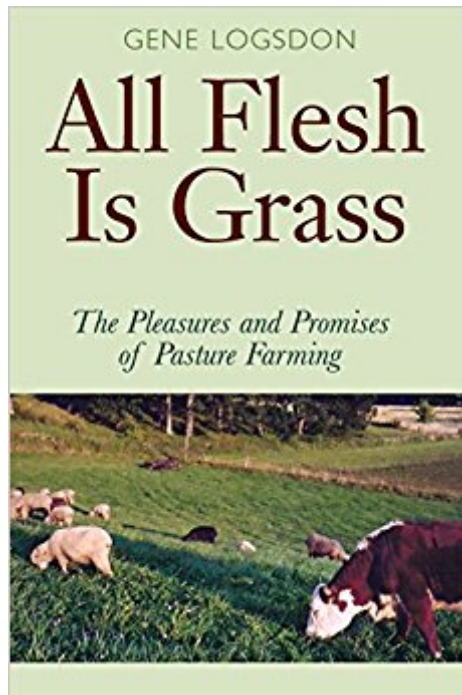




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All Flesh Is Grass: The Pleasures And Promises Of Pasture Farming



Synopsis

Amidst Mad Cow scares and consumer concerns about how farm animals are bred, fed, and raised, many farmers and homesteaders are rediscovering the traditional practice of pastoral farming. Grasses, clovers, and forbs are the natural diet of cattle, horses, and sheep, and are vital supplements for hogs, chickens, and turkeys. Consumers increasingly seek the health benefits of meat from animals raised in green paddocks instead of in muddy feedlots. In *All Flesh Is Grass: The Pleasures and Promises of Pasture Farming*, Gene Logsdon explains that well-managed pastures are nutritious and palatable; virtual salads for livestock. Leafy pastures also hold the soil, foster biodiversity, and create lovely landscapes. Grass farming might be the solution for a stressed agricultural system based on an industrial model and propped up by federal subsidies. In his clear and conversational style, Logsdon explains historically effective practices and new techniques. His warm, informative profiles of successful grass farmers offer inspiration and ideas. His narrative is enriched by his own experience as a "contrary farmer" on his artisan-scale farm near Upper Sandusky, Ohio. *All Flesh Is Grass* will have broad appeal to the sustainable commercial farmer, the home-food producer, and all consumers who care about their food.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Logsdon, an Ohio farmer who has written more than 20 books, brings his gentle iconoclasm to the case against the grain feeding of livestock in favor of pasture farming. His arguments against grain feeding: the too-heavy investment in machinery for sowing and harvesting

of grain, the need for pesticides to protect monocultural grain crops, the environmental costs required to haul grain to livestock farmers, storage costs, the need to dispose of manure from livestock feedlots, and the steep labor costs to manage all of this. His arguments for pasturing: "The animals do the harvesting, apply their manure for fertilizer, and eat most of the weeds." As it has for years, Logsdon's conversational style makes his material immediately appealing, but there is also solid advice on how to pasture various kinds of livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, horses, mules, donkeys, chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys), how to rotate grass crops, which grasses work best, how to water livestock, how to incorporate some grains into the animals' diets, and which fences make for the best neighbors. A deceptively important book for the working, the would-be, and the armchair farmer alike. Alan MooresCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"In an era of growing concerns about our food, Gene Logsdon offers a practical way to steer American agriculture in a direction that ensures a livelihood for family farmers, takes care of the land, and provides fresh, healthy food for all. Over the years, industrial farming methods and grain-based livestock operations have led to the decline of family farm agriculture. All Flesh is Grass is a how-to manifesto for family farmers and food activists alike committed to taking back control of our food and farms." #151; Willie Nelson, President and Founder, Farm Aid"All Flesh is Grass explains the immense benefits of taking our livestock out of the feedlots and raising them in a natural setting on their native diets. It's all there: the history, the politics, the practices, and the passion." #151; Jo Robinson, creator of www.eatwild.com

All Flesh Is Grass by Gene LogsdonThis book is a must read/own for anyone considering grass farming (pasture based livestock). In the book he discusses:How to set up a rotation of pasturesWhich plants he prefers and ones that will do well in other climatesHow to graze the pasturesWhat problems specific pastures (plant type) might pose to livestockHow to cut pastures for hay and silageHow to seed pastures with the minimum of equipmentHow to divide permanent pastures and temporary pastures (used for gardens, hay making, growing grains, etc.)How to build and maintain fencesStocking rates for animals (though this varies by region and quality of the soil)What plants to avoid in your pasturesWhich trees are good on pasturesGood and Bad weeds for grazingHow to make a haystackHow to build a reserve of plant material for winter grazingHow to approach year round grazing with minimal hay or grain feedAnd most importantly how to let the animals do most of the workThis book is aimed more at a garden farmer who is trying to maximize

self sufficiency than the production minded market/commercial farmer. For commercial farmers who are willing to sacrifice some of the quantity for quality, then this book will work for you too. Most of the discussion is framed around farms in the 5-50 acre range. It is still helpful for those who will have less land for a few animals and is also scalable for farms in the 50-500 acre range. Gene is not anti grain , he just believes in planting it with other crops like clover and letting the animals harvest and feed it to them selves. Instead of 90% grain and 10% pasture he advocates for 80% pasture and 20% grain. Though on his farm he only dedicates about 10% to corn in one of his temporary pastures. This corn he recommends sheep graze first, then hogs, and finally dry cows and draft animals. What is not covered, and for good reason, is how many animals to stock on how much land for how long in a rotational grazing system. The reason is it will be different fro every farm. Depending on what mix of animals you have, the quality of the soil, how much rain, what plant types and which species of those plants is how you need to base those decisions. That can only be done by the eye of the farmer and knowledge gained from years of experience. For this reason he suggest that someone who wants to get into commercial pastured meat products first start with a small farm and learn the technique, before investing lots of money and learning the hard way. This book is good for a laugh and knowledge for beginners, as well as a reference to other books and publications on pasture based farming.

I have All Flesh Is Grass and also Joel Salatin's Salad Bar Beef. As a new farmer, I have never raised cattle before and my future pasture is currently woodland. So I need to know what to plant to get pasture started. In All Flesh Is Grass, Logsdon discusses different grass types (eg: the difference between bluegrass and fescue) and also discusses grazing for goats, pigs, and sheep. This is the information I need to get started. Rotational grazing is discussed in some depth. In Salad Bar Beef, when discussing what types of pasture plants to use for grazing, Salatin says to "look at whats growing in the ditch and that's what you feed your cows". There's no more information on what type of grass or herbs to grow. That may work on a current farm, but when starting a farm from woodland, it doesn't help much! While I like Salad Bar Beef, it seems to focus more on how to make a profit selling grass fed beef and how to get the most out of each acre of pasture. Both books are valuable and do compliment each other. I have both and I recommend others get both.

I would rate this a 4.5. While it seems that Mr. Logsdon was writing this to a wide audience, beginning to experienced farmers, the usefulness seems to be for someone who has been small scale farming for a few years. This is because Lodgeson points out his mistakes and explains how

his modifications improved his farm. Similarly, one would see the same mistakes in their enterprise and have a much fuller understanding and appreciation of his suggestions and antidotes with that foundation already laid. But if one was starting out and decided to buy the book, I'd recommend read it, and then in a few years come back to it and reexamine ones enterprises compared to the his recommendations and observations.

I liked Logsdon's specifics on the effects of different kinds of pasture. I think he misses an important opportunity with his unstructured grazing--See Joel Salatin's Salad Bar Beef for balance. The intense management of grazing (Salatin) makes a more sanitary environment and eliminates the need for antibiotics. Salatin is indifferent to the choices of grass variety on which Logsdon devotes so much time. The two authors provide complementary perspectives, including different details. Logsdon discusses fencing in some detail--I share his reluctance to depend on electric fence for boundaries--Salatin dismisses it and goes all electric. Both authors are persuasive advocates for grass fed beef.

I enjoy all material by Gene Logsdon and this book is no different. In a hectic world where so many are removed from farming culture, it is nice to read someone that promotes farming the way my grandparents did it. I remember it well, but to have someone who has studied it and can relate scientifically and anecdotally how well it works is refreshing and encouraging.

Anyone having a few acres is presented with the responsibility and the riddle of how to be a good steward and use the land well. Logsdon's approaches are the most practical I've seen . . . and it doesn't hurt that he is SO much fun to read. I refer to this book often, and lend it to help broaden others' understanding.

An excellent read for those who want to farm "smart", healthy and do it right. Also for those who would understand the food chain better. Mr logsden has once again with his humor and practical knowledge given us a treasure.

Again, another great book for small farmers, homesteader, and foodies alike. A must read!

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