

your farm and homestead **VISIONING GUIDE**

*A simple method for
articulating your goals
& making all your
decisions easier*





HI, I'M MAEG.

Ready to make your goals come true?
First, get clear on what they really are.

When you think about producing your own food, whether you're just starting out or are taking things to the next level, it can be hard to know what to do next. There are SO many options for designing a productive space on any scale, from backyard to sprawling farm. How do you decide which elements to add or prioritize?

Since you got this guide from us, we're guessing chickens are at the top of your list, but we're also guessing they're only part of your plan! Are goats the answer to more self-sufficiency? Beehives and an orchard? More vegetable beds, or perennial herbs? Wouldn't it be awesome to know exactly where you were headed, and if any or all of these items made sense for getting you there?

Keep reading, I'll show you how we figured it out!

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WHAT'S INSIDE

A three step process to help you get clear on your goals and guide you through all your decision making processes!

Includes fictional and real life examples!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

A writing utensil, some paper, and a solid 30-60 minutes of good, quiet writing and thinking time.

And some tea or coffee, if that's your thing.

WHO WE ARE

I'm Maeg. My wife, Sarah, and I run Silver Fox Farm in Western MA.

We proudly provide small scale chicken keepers with hatching eggs and chicks from well-loved, carefully selected breeding stock.

We are in love with helping you create the same moments of joy and self-sufficiency that mean so much to us, and together creating a new food system in the process. We believe that producing your own food, on whatever scale is possible for you, can collectively change the world.

THE PAPER

We have a piece of paper in our kitchen which is THE most important piece of paper on our farm. It's a piece of paper where we articulated our goals and laid out a vision to guide us, our work, and each element that we add to our farm. **Each idea or decision is held up against this simple piece of paper to see if it fits.**

How did we make this piece of paper? I'm going to show you! It's a simple exercise called goal articulation. Through each of the three steps below I will provide an example from the same fictional property, and then give you a little behind-the-scenes insight into our own process.

Important note:

I learned about Goals Articulation in a permaculture class at my local community college. Since then I have discovered that permaculture itself is an appropriation of indigenous practices.

Learn more in [this article](#) and [this podcast](#).

STEP ONE

Think about your farm, homestead, or backyard--
this exercise works on any scale.

Picture your property five years from now.
What do you see?

Write down all the elements of the productive
space you envision.

example

A large perennial vegetable garden
Small peach orchard
A chicken coop with 20 birds
Sugar Maple stand
Farmstand at end of driveway
Large treehouse



STEP TWO

Take these design elements and distill them down to their function, and rewrite your list. Meaning--what do these items actually do? What benefits do they provide?

example

element



function

A large perennial vegetable garden

Low maintenance produce production

Small peach orchard

Produce our own fruit

A chicken coop with 20 birds

Produce our own protein

Sugar Maple stand

Provide our own sweetener

Farmstand at end of driveway

Provide cash income

Large treehouse

Opportunities for privacy & solitude

STEP THREE

Rewrite and simplify the benefits from step two into a present-tense vision for your productive landscape. Writing in the present tense will bring your vision to life!

I recommend shaping your vision into three points, and encourage you to consider including how you want to feel, or the quality of life you are trying to create through your goals.

example

We enjoy food security and financial resilience by producing a large portion of our own food, including fruit, vegetables, protein, and sweetener, and selling any extra locally.

We have an abundance of free time and are aging in place due to lower maintenance choices in crops and livestock.

Our homestead is a sanctuary where we bask in privacy and solitude.

By expanding your goals from the specific to the general, you give yourself a simple vision that can be used to think about any design element or project. You will have more, not less, possible solutions!

For instance, in step one of the hypothetical example above, these homesteaders wanted a sugar maple stand. The bigger purpose of the sugar maples was to provide homegrown sweetener--fantastic! By focusing on the benefit of this design element instead of the element itself, they have more options to make their vision a reality. Instead of maple trees, they might decide to keep bees instead, which provide sweetener and also have the benefit of providing pollination to their gardens and orchards.

Understanding your larger vision not only gives you more options, it allows you to know when an option isn't really a good fit. In the example above, these homesteaders initially want a farm stand on site. But, after going through the goals articulation process, it's clear that quiet and solitude are important to them. Considering this, they might ultimately decide that a farm stand is not the right solution, and look for other ways to sell their surplus or create more financial resilience.



A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

At Silver Fox Farm, our initial design did not include a chicken farm! This goal has evolved from the broader vision we created through these three steps.

Our vision

We produce a lot of our own food, selling and sharing the surplus with others, thereby boosting both our economic and food resiliency.

We work to create a lower maintenance, low input farm that grows more lush and productive each year.

We enjoy our farm as part of a broader life design that grants us more health, well-being, freedom, and resiliency as time goes on.

A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

We realized that expanding our flocks and sharing them with others fit perfectly into our big vision on all three of these points:

Food Security & Economic Resilience

With an abundance of birds comes an abundance of meat and eggs, not to mention a wonderful product to share with others.

Low maintenance & Low Input

Our birds are hard work, but different than other farm models--having time for our family and being able to age in place later is huge for us. And let's just say, we'll never have to buy compost again.

Bird poop for the win!

Quality of Life

One of the reasons we decided to lean into the chicken thing was the realization that our laying flock brought us the most joy of any other venture.



you did it!

So...now we've gone over the three simple steps to articulating your farm or homestead vision. We've gone over some examples and I've shared with you the real-life example of how this framework can help you make decisions!



It's time for you to go forth, and articulate!

Create that vision--and bring it to life!

I would LOVE to hear how your Visioning turned out!



Drop me a line and share your goals with me!

xo, Maeg
Silver Fox Farm