



## Saying “No”, One Egg at a Time

BY ROGER HUDSON

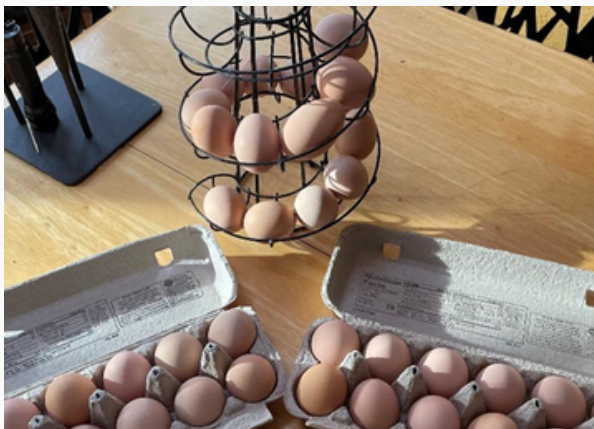
A rooster is calling out across this country famous for Woody Guthrie’s song, “This land is your land, this land is my land.”

Can you hear it?

He’s sounding the alarm that, in fact, this land is in danger of being betrayed, of being neither yours nor mine. It’s in peril of its very soil existing to **serve only the few**. Its’ air, and water too.

But the rooster’s call is not to them, the few. It’s a summons to you and me, the many, to whom this land belongs. We the people. Each early morning crow is an invitation to action, to consider what roosters care deeply about. Chickens. And the gifts they bring. Eggs.

Anybody checked what the price of eggs are today? Think they’re coming down any time soon?

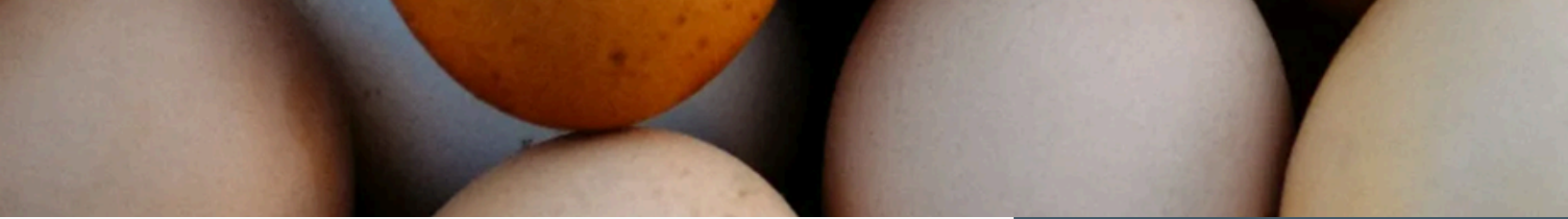


**Figure 1** Eggs from the author’s four chickens fed on food scraps and purchased feed. The design challenge is for the garden to produce its’ own chicken food.

I don’t quote them often, but consider what Joel Salatin, in an interview with Joe Rogan, said recently.

*One city in Belgium offered three free chickens to anybody who wanted them. 2000 families responded. So, 6000 chickens were distributed. Two things happened. One, the first month it dropped 100 tons of food waste from the landfill. Secondly, with all the household chickens laying eggs, it is estimated if one in three households in the U.S.A. had enough chickens to eat their kitchen scraps, there would not be an egg industry in the United States.*





That's an astounding claim. One in three households with chickens would do away with the whole egg industry in the U.S.A., locating egg production right in the backyards of America! If accurate, this is an amazing opportunity for grassroots action, and we should *carpe diem* (seize the opportunity).

## At Stake:

At stake is the resilience of the **Household Economy** of America in the face of rising prices and out of control animal health. Our homes could become the place families retake control not only of our egg supply, but of the health of our soil, the health of our food, the health of our bodies, and the health of our household budgets. Put another way it might represent the start of households being empowered to say no to Big Ag, Big Box grocery chains, Big Pharma, and Big Banks.

David Holmgren has this to say about such an opportunity. *"Permaculture, [or carefully designed backyard gardens], is revolution disguised as organic gardening, gently upending the status quo with regenerative systems that serve both the people and the planet."*

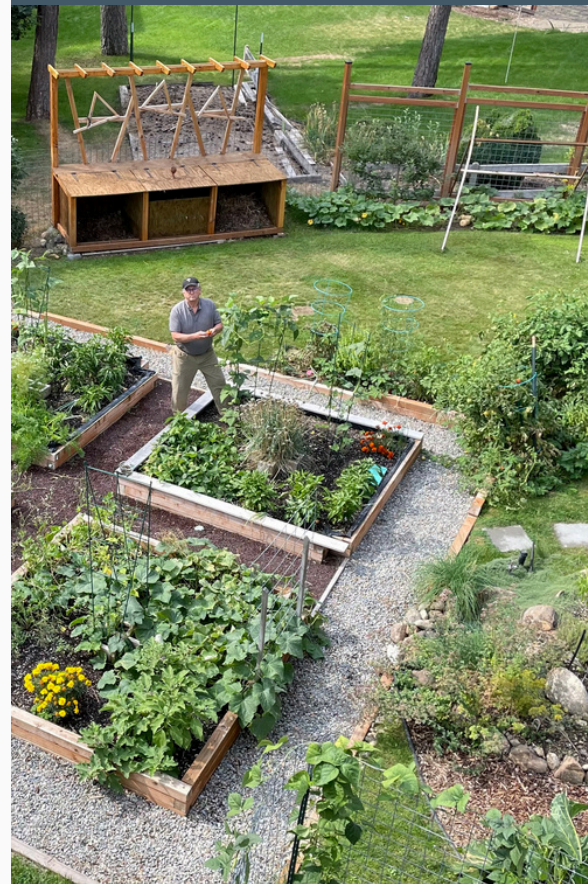
Think of it. People taking charge one garden, one chicken, one egg at a time by investing skill and energy in their own household economy. As one commentator recently noted, "No oligarchs, no billionaires, no institutional backers, no ads, and no corporate sponsors. No trolls." Just us, choosing in our own backyards to make a start at prospering, together, by caring for planet and people.

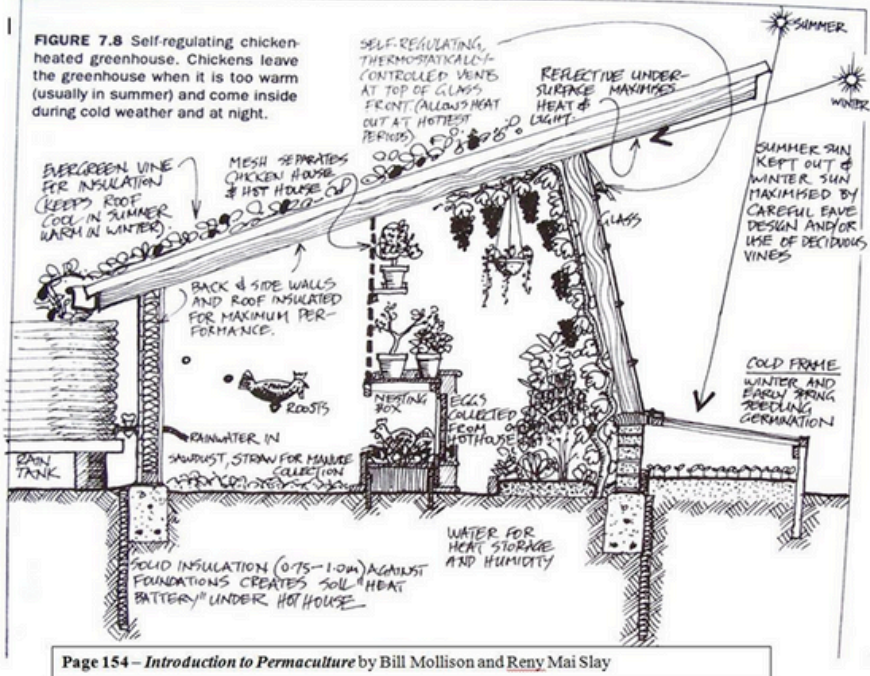
## Home Egg Production

It's simple really. Home egg production - like Gandhi's homespun cotton cloth, and the production of salt from the sea by the people of India in defiance of the British Empire's monopoly of it - could be the way we begin to bring control back to where it belongs. At the grassroots. On our land. In your hands and in mine.

And we should not think too small. For envisioned is so much more than just chickens producing eggs. Permaculture design is about making the appropriate connections between the different components of a garden. For example, chickens are linked to a chicken house, linked to a greenhouse, to the kitchen table, to kitchen waste, to compost bins, garden beds, and food forest, all designed and placed to mutually serve each other, like nature does.

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**New Story Spokane** - a collaborative of local organizations - wants to help expedite this. Working with **Spokane Zero Waste, Spokane Edible Tree Project, Growing Neighbors**, and others, plans are afoot to help develop 10 to 15 gardens over time that can model backyard sustainable egg, veggie and fruit production. These gardens can then become standards of the right combination of plant and animal species (i.e. plant guilds) that can readily be replicated in our area.

**Figure 2** An example of intentional design - combining a chicken house, greenhouse and cold frame into one building that can be connected to a food forest of chicken food, and to a composting system to process manure for vegetable beds.

# It's Time For Action

Perhaps the dream of resilient Household Economies across Spokane and the Inland Northwest needs a new verse to the song "One Man's Hands" made famous by Pete Seeger and Alex Comfort back in the 60's.

**One home garden can't bring egg prices down  
 Two home gardens can't bring egg prices down  
 But if two and two and fifty make a million  
 We'll see that day come round  
 We'll see that day come round.**

It is time for action. Time to speak the "no," and enact the "yes." Yes to what Bill Mollison calls the greatest change we need to make, "from consumption to production, even if on a small scale, in our own gardens." He adds, "If only 10% of us do this, there is enough for everyone. Hence the futility of revolutionaries who have no gardens, who depend on the very system they attack, and who produce words and bullets, not food and shelter."

In the face of the destructive centralized systems that only disempower the many for the benefit of the few, home and community gardens in Spokane and the Inland Northwest can begin to root local resilience in the home once again, one chicken, one egg at a time.

Now that would be something worth crowing about.