

Self Sustaining Living - Reusing Chicken Coop Trash



Self Sustaining Living on our farm means I try to reduce the amount of waste that the farm sends to the landfill. It's not always easy and I try to think creatively in order to reduce the waste.

Every week our chicken coop residents eat through two fifty pound bags of feed. Every week that is two poly bags that end up in the refuse pile waiting for trash pickup. The longer we farm, the more conscious I am of how much waste we produce. I doubt I will ever get it down to zero, but if I can continually reduce the amount of stuff that comes from our homestead and goes to a landfill, I will be satisfied that I tried my best.

Some things we naturally have always used at least twice before it heads to it's final destiny. Although newspapers

are recyclable, I normally use them again to line the rabbit hutch floor, or the chick brooder in the spring. Cardboard boxes usually are recycled through the chicken coop as a nest box or hiding spot for smaller chickens. And then there is the issue of all those poly bags that are now the way chicken feed is sold. Two bags a week, fifty two weeks per year, 104 feed bags total and that is just from the chicken feed!

Extra tidbit > there are over 19 billion chickens in the world! For more fun facts on chickens check [this post](#). That's a lot of chickens and waste from chickens!

I see the pile of feed bags accumulate every week on our farm and it bothers me to send them to the landfill.

Coming up with some additional uses was fun and creative. Basically, many of the uses you have for a purchased vinyl tarp can be replaced by using an empty poly vinyl feedbag.



Timber Creek Farm

Here are some ways you can reuse empty feed bags and increase your level of Self Sustaining Living

Tote bags and reusable shopping bags – Take these to the grocery store, library, any place that uses those tiny annoying plastic shopping bags that only hold three items.

Reuse the empty feed bags as trash bags, instead of garbage bags. We always have an empty feed bag propped up in our feed room. We use it to collect the tops from the feed bags, and any other trash.

Use the poly fabric feed sack as you would any wipe clean

fabric. Make place mats, coasters, stadium seats, covers for patio furniture cushions.





Around the farm or barnyard, reuse the feed sacks to line the nest boxes for ease of cleaning. I also use the bags to cover open windows for storm protection, or to cover the duck house open space at the top during the coldest part of winter. We do the same with the top parts of the rabbit house too. The large wire covered “windows” are great for summer ventilation but leave too much space for cold winds during winter.



Using Poly Feed Bags for other Animal Housing.

In our [rabbit hutch with runs](#) we use the feed bags under a few inches of dirt and mulch or bedding. The poly vinyl bags help protect the wooden floor in the hutch. In the run, having the old chicken feed sacks under the dirt, keeps the rabbits from digging out under the fencing.

I haven't thought of any ways to reuse the poly vinyl feed sack with any activities for the sheep and goats, but give me

some time to think about it!

At the end of the day, the important thought is that we should be aware of what we use and throw away. Even if you are being careful about how much you consume and throw away, there is waste. Thinking about the waste products and coming up with a way to replace another item with something recycled from the poly vinyl feed bags will help keep some trash out of the landfills.



Compost, the Ultimate Reusable Product from the Coop

Making sure we are responsibly caring for the coop manure and used bedding is very important. Not only cleaning the coop out regularly, but turning the waste into dark [healthy compost](#) is the healthy way to control the waste. After a year, the

compost added to soil will provide nitrogen and other nutrients to the soil in your garden.

What products do you reuse from the coop, to help control the amount of waste that heads to our landfills? Share your experiences with farm style, self sustaining living in the comments.



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