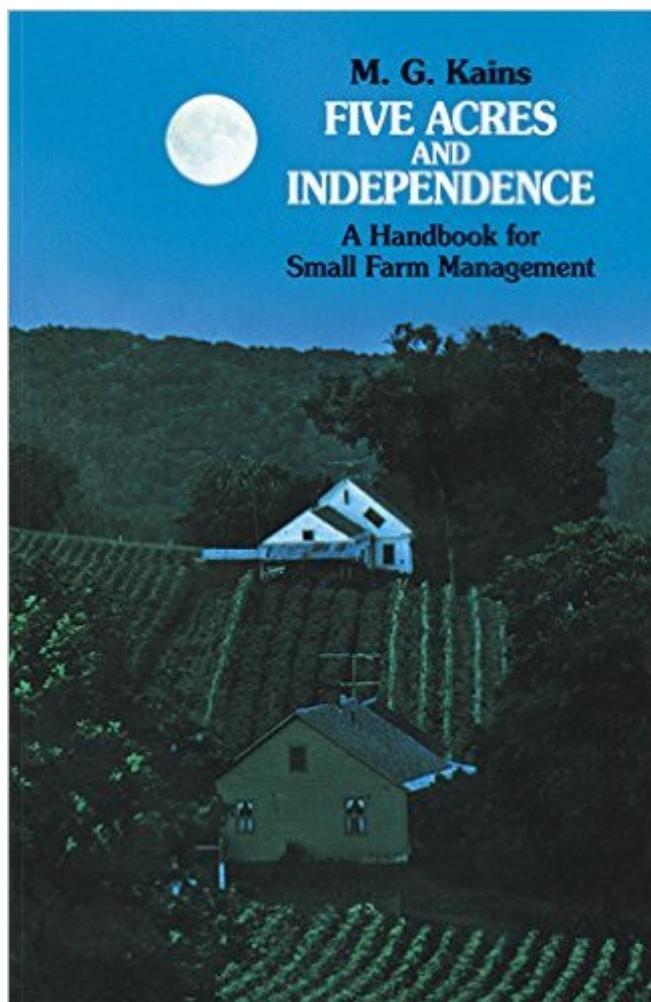


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# Five Acres And Independence: A Handbook For Small Farm Management



## Synopsis

Everyone who has ever dreamed of getting back to the soil will derive from Maurice Grenville Kains' practical and easy-to-understand discussions a more complete view of what small-scale farming means. Countless readers of Five Acres and Independence have come away with specific projects to begin and moved closer to the fulfillment of their dreams of independence on a small farm. Whether you already own a suitable place or are still looking, Five Acres and Independence will help you learn to evaluate land for both its total economic and its specific agricultural possibilities. There are methods of calculating costs of permanent improvements — draining the land, improving soil, planting wind breaks, putting in septic tanks, cellars, irrigation systems, greenhouses, etc. — and methods of carrying out those improvements. There are suggestions for specific crops — strawberries, grapes, vegetables, orchards, spring, summer, and fall crops, transplanting, timing, repairing what already exists — with methods of deciding what is best for your land and purposes and techniques for making each of them pay. There are suggestions for animals for the small-scale farmer — goats, chickens, bees — and means of working them into your overall farm design. And there are suggestions for keeping your small farm in top production condition, methods of continually increasing the value of your farm, methods of marketing your produce and of accurately investing in improvements — virtually everything a small-scale farmer needs to know to make his venture economically sound. Some things, of course, have changed since 1940 when M. G. Kains revised Five Acres and Independence. But the basic down-to-earth advice of one of the most prominent men in American agriculture and the methods of farming the small-scale, pre-DDT farm are still essentially the same. Much of the information in this book was built on USDA and state farm bureau reports; almost all of it was personally tested by M. G. Kains, either on his own farms or on farms of the people who trusted him as an experienced consultant. His book went through more than 30 editions in the first 10 years after its original publication. It has helped countless small farmers attain their dreams, and it continues today as an exceptional resource for those who want to make their first farming attempt.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

I have a 1946 edition of this book which my father used as a reference in supplying our family all of our food from 1948 until 1962 and a large portion of our food thereafter. I have referred to it on a regular basis since 1972. While the precise numbers for costs and quantity of production are dated, the basic principles for successful small farming are clearly elucidated. You can update the costs and quantities yourself. Some of the information on animal breeds should be updated by additional research. But the principles are all here. The chapters on "City vs. Country Life" and "Tried and True Ways to Fail" are essential reading if you have never been involved in agriculture previously. I have many reference books, and this is one of the best...with a tattered cover and yellowed pages!

This book was one of my father's favorites, even though he never took up farming. For those considering a rural lifestyle, perhaps even self-sufficiency, this has to be the starting point. However, it is the pre-war, 1940 edition. I literally cringed when I read about lining the cistern with sheet lead, or using mercuric chloride to sterilize wounds on fruit trees (it's a wonder our ancestors lived long enough to have children). I'm sure this book has a lot of good advice, but if this city boy ever moves to the farm my father never had I'll try to check all facts with a second or third source. Is there anyone who's qualified to write the 21st Century edition?

I found the info on cropping and farming to be excellent. It was very in depth and accurate, and pretty easy for a novice to follow along. I have some problems with some of the author's advice regarding livestock, however. For instance, he recommends Belgian Hares for raising for meat. This is quite possibly the WORST rabbit for food production, being strictly a show breed notorious for it's nervous disposition that inhibits weight gain, breeding, and quite often leads to the rabbit breaking it's own legs within it's cage from panic attacks. His section on chickens is pretty good though. The production figures he offers are evidence of the time period in which it was written, however, being

nearly half what is often attainable by homesteaders of today. Overall this was a good book, especially with regards to raising fruit trees, veggies, and pasture crops, but I would recommend that other books were purchased in addition to it if one needs help learning about livestock.

I looked at every book about Farming I could get my hands on and this one came out on top. I grew up on a farm and am hoping 30 years later to buy the old homestead back. I loved the detailed diagrams and explanations. Maurice went into detail on important areas like soil types and care and feeding of soil, irrigation, even waste disposal systems. He refreshed my memory on a lot of important points and taught me some things I don't even think my father knew. If I were to ask for any changes, I wish he would have included a lot more about livestock and perhaps less about orchards and growing fruit. But all in all, it deserves 5 stars. Buy this one first!!!

This is a classic text covering all of the areas of the small farm. He provides very good advice about everything from where to put your buildings to what to put in them. He provides very practical advice about plants, animals and capital expenses. For example, his comments on raising chickens for meat is very pointed, if you can't kill a chicken, don't raise them for meat. But he also goes on to describe how to house them. He advises not to be too cheap as it will cost you in the end. This practical thorough description of every aspect of a working small farm is a must for every small farmer's library. Don't be fooled by the copy right date, this book is a classic!

I have the 1973 version of this book (still available through ). The 1973 version is really the original 1935 text (published in 1940) with a forward written in 1973. I suspect the 2007 version is much the same. The chapters are many and include: City vs Country Life, Tried and True Ways to Fail, Who is Likely to Succeed, Figures Don't Lie, The Farm to Choose, Where to Locate, Lay and Lay-out of Land, Windbreaks - Pro and Con, Essential Factors of Production, Renting vs Buying, Capital, Farm Finance, Farm Accounts, Water Supply, Sewage Disposal, Functions of Water, Drainage, and they go on and on for a total of 51 chapters with fairly small print so there's a lot packed into this book. The Appendices is roughly 40 pages and offers information about things like the number of plants you'll need per acre (or any size portion of land), how to figure what farm equipment really costs to own, and much more. Although the prices quoted to use in the formulas are laughingly low by today's costs - the math and theory behind them is still applicable. I felt it was worth the price for all that's packed into it that is still applicable today (although I bought mine in good used condition for about half the cover price). If you want to know more about this book, just read the reviews for the

previous version.

This book contains easy-to-follow guidelines and plans for those who wish to free themselves from dependence on utility companies. With five acres and hard work, the author shows the reader how to live an independent lifestyle and be self-sufficient. A required read for those who still dream about living life as unfettered people.

I was looking for a book that could give me the ins and outs of a country property today and how to make it productive. This book, however, is more of a look back at farming in the 1940s and did little to educate me on what to do with our small farm. If you are looking for a period piece, this might be an interesting title to read. On the other hand, if you are looking for modern advice, there must be better books out there.

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