

## Lifestyle

It's all about lifestyle. If your lifestyle allows you to be at your poultry house at sunrise to open the door for your birds 365 days of the year, and if your lifestyle also allows you to be at your poultry house one half hour after sunset every evening to remove your delectable birds from the menu of all the nighttime predators, you are living a great life. A life that most of us can only dream about. Don't change a thing. If however, your lifestyle doesn't permit that kind of total dedication to the welfare of your birds for any of several reasons. Perhaps you have to be at work before sunrise, or perhaps you are still at work after sunset. Perhaps you like to go away for a long weekend occasionally. Well, in that case, just keep reading, you are going to like what I have to say.

I have had a completely automatic door on my poultry house for about 25 years. My wife and I used to do a great deal of square dancing, often traveling several hundred miles from home for a long square dance weekend. Depending on someone else to do our chores for us, despite their best intentions, sometimes did not work well. The results were occasionally disheartening. Having an automatic door will give you peace of mind. You will like it, and your birds will like it, too.

The purpose of this book is to provide you with the necessary instruction to solve this problem by demonstrating how to build a completely automatic, safe and reliable door for your poultry house. My personal goal in designing this system is to show you how to build the door with very little or no expense.

I'm going to do this by utilizing unused items that I feel many of you may already have on hand in your basement or

garage. Or, if not on hand, at least readily available at garage sales, Salvation Army, Goodwill, Helping Hands, etc. for little more than a song.

## The Door

The first thing you are going to need before we worry about opening and closing a door automatically, is a door that can be opened and closed safely and reliably for years.

Chickens scratch the bedding around constantly searching for something to eat. I've known them to pile wood shavings against the wall a foot deep. Chickens also will plod right through ankle-deep muck without a thought, and I've yet to see one wipe its feet before entering the house. Lastly, all birds poop anywhere the urge strikes.

The standard "drawbridge" style door does not stand a chance in this environment. You need a door and adjacent surfaces that will stay clean all by them themselves. We're going to use a door that opens straight up.

When I built my first poultry house many years ago, the thing that irritated me the most, at cleaning time, was getting all the bedding out from between the studs in the walls. So, when I built my second poultry house, I took the time to bevel the edges of sections of 1x6's at a 45° angle and staple the sections between each stud. In fact, every flat surface that could collect dust (windowsills, doorsills, above windows, tops of nest boxes, etc.) was either built on a 45° angle or had one of these sections added. The result is a poultry house that is very easy to keep really clean.

Whether that is something you would like to incorporate into your poultry house is entirely up to you. However, for the