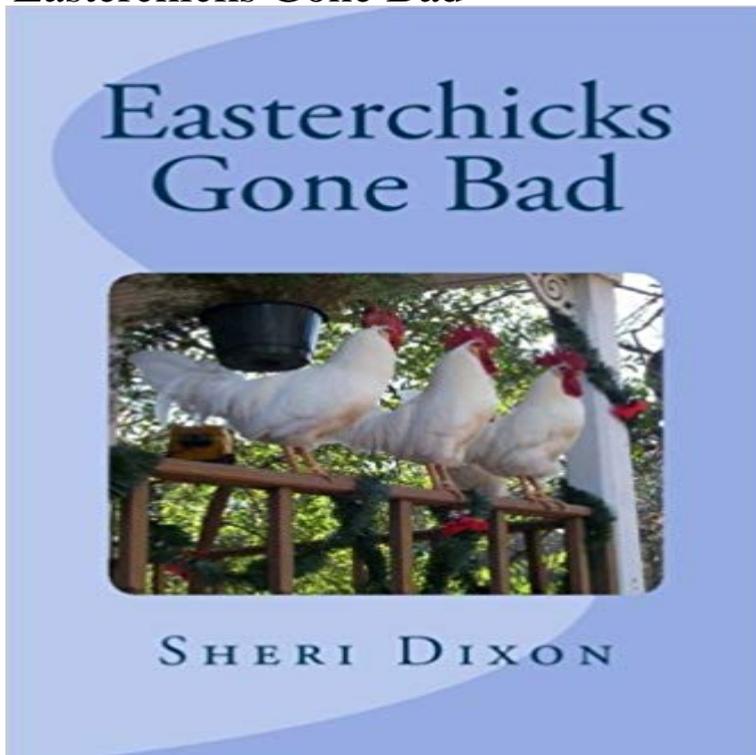


## Easterchicks Gone Bad



Easterchicks Gone Bad was the first of 31 articles written by Sheri Dixon for Homestead.org from 2004-2009, all of them included in this volume. From Homeschooling to Home birth, milking goats to hatching chickens, Easterchicks Gone Bad explores and celebrates a simple way of life that really isn't simple at all. The intent of each story is to be informative and perhaps even educational, but mainly to be entertaining. On milking a goat- In the movies and the pictures in homesteading books, the Goatherder strolls into the milkhouse early in the morning; birds singing, sun just peeking over the horizon. She is carrying her milkstool and her milking bucket. At the quaint dutch door of the immaculate barn, she calls her goat, who comes daintily dancing into the barn to the sound of distant bells ringing. A rosy glow infuses the milkhouse as the Goatherder gently places her stool next to the goat, who stands still as carved granite with a little goat smile on her face. The milkhouse is filled with the sound of warm fresh milk hissing rhythmically into the bucket. After a few peaceful minutes, the Goatherder lifts the bucket and pats the goat on the side. The goat gives an affectionate little mmmmaa, and dances back out the door, which is quietly shut by clean little mice who wear tiny t shirts (like on Cinderella). This is an accurate portrayal, with the exception of the birds, sun, bells, glow, peace, and smiling well-behaved goat. The little mice really exist, or at least you will be positive that you see them as you careen out of the barn, covered in sweat and mosquito bites, hay in your hair, hair in your milk, milk most everywhere but the bucket, and the sound of laughter (the goats) ringing in your ears. Actually, these are both correct, depending on the day. On a steamy summer morning, with the flies already biting, the sweat pouring down your nose, your goat clearly not amused, and visions of row upon row

of chilled milk gallons at the air-conditioned Walmart, it can be hard. But on a brisk pre-dawn winter morning, with your goat happily munching and your ear resting against her warm furry side, its so quiet you can hear her tummy gurgling. You glance up at your home, one light on in the kitchen. Your family is inside, still sleeping or just waking up. You can smell the coffee over the good smell of clean healthy livestock and hay. And the little mice in t-shirts smile and wink.

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