



# Five Acres and Independence: A Handbook for Small Farm Management

*Maurice G. Kains*

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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.

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