

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. Today's episode is a crucial one. If you have any sort of dream or goal to someday purchase a homestead property of your own, whether it be big or small. I'm going to walk you through the thought process that we went through when we were looking for our own homestead property and talk about some of the things that maybe I wish we would have considered a little more carefully before we dove in. I'm your host Jill Winger and for the last 10 years I've been helping folks learn how to leave the rat race and create the life they really want by taking the very best of the old ways and weaving them into our everyday modern lives. Okay, so this is going to be a fun episode. I know a lot of you are dreaming of homestead property, whether it's getting just a bigger backyard in the suburbs or you're wanting the full, you know, 40 acres with a barn.

Speaker 1: [01:08](#) It really doesn't matter how big or small you are dreaming of. There are some things you want to keep in mind and there are definitely some deal breakers when it comes to homestead property that I want you to be aware of. We purchased our property about 10 almost 11 years ago. We have definitely changed in our perspectives and our goals and so on since that initial time. But we've also learned a lot of the things that are really beneficial to have in a property and that's what I get to share with you today. So let's dive in. The first thing I want you to think about when you are shopping or dreaming for homestead property is consider the covenants or the home owners associations attached to that property. Now, this was a really big deal for us in our area, especially in the towns in our area or around the towns, I should say.

Speaker 1: [02:12](#) There's a lot of farm land or ranch land that split up into subdivisions. And this may or may not be as prevalent in your area, but for us they call them ranchettes and they're usually like 20 to 40 acres. Sometimes there's smaller ones too, and they're not a bad option. Like you can usually get your chunk of ground, it's closer to town. You're not completely isolated. But the one drawback to the, that sort of setup usually is the homeowners associations. Now I'm not completely dogging on HOA's because they do serve a purpose, right? They ensure that the neighborhoods or the areas are kept clean and cohesive and tidy. So they definitely serve a purpose, however they can be a little bit limiting when it comes to homestead stuff. And I know, you know, as we looked at different properties and different covenants locally when we were shopping, some of them were really restrictive and they really vary depending on where you live and what sort of neighborhood you're looking at.

- Speaker 1: [03:20](#) But some of them restrict how many animals you can have, what type of animals you can have. Um, you know, even how many buildings you can build on your property. So if you're able to kind of look ahead into the future and know, you know, how many animals are your target and you know, think I'm just gonna need a chicken coop in a barn and I never will want another building. And so that's gonna keep me within those sort of limits, then that could be a great fit for you. Now for us, we really were pretty adamant that we didn't want that sort of setup just because we felt like our goals were a little more open ended with our homestead. We didn't know what we'd end up with or how many cattle we'd want or if we were going to become like great crazy goat people or whatever.
- Speaker 1: [04:08](#) So we wanted to have more possibilities. That's why we chose a property without the covenants. Now the downfall to that is usually, at least in our area, properties without covenants or HOA's are farther out so you have more distance to drive. Which kind of brings me to another point. It's really easy when you're shopping for homestead property to get caught up in the romance of whatever farm or, or location you have your eye on. Uh, and there's nothing wrong with being far from town. So a lot of you know that we are about 35 minutes, 40 minutes from let's say a grocery store like the heart of the towns near us. So it's a little bit of a drive to get groceries to go to a doctor's appointments to run to the bank. You know, it's, it's a project to get there for us.
- Speaker 1: [05:05](#) That is a good fit. We like being a little more isolated. We don't mind driving. I actually have really come to enjoy the driving because I can listen to a book on tape. Book on tape. Do people even say that anymore? It's such an old phrase. I just realized audio book. How about that? Like there's no such thing as tapes anymore. Um, anyway, that was funny how that came out of my mouth. But I can listen to an audio book, I can listen to podcasts. I kind of like that decompression time either going to an activity or coming home from an activity. So I don't mind the 35, 45 minute drive home or you know, to town. For some folks that's a deal breaker. If you're working in town, if you have a ton of kid activities, that's definitely going to be a challenge. So kind of balance and weigh out the distance versus you know, homeowners association rules and kind of you're going to have to decide which is more of a priority for you.
- Speaker 1: [06:10](#) One other thing to consider with the distances is it's easy to think it's going to be okay at the beginning, but it can be a little more challenging as your family grows. Like if you're a young family like we are, it wasn't a big deal when my kids were really

small. It was actually pretty easy just because I'm not the type of mom who does a lot of playgroups or mommy and me type of activities. You know, we just kinda kept closer to home so it didn't feel like that big of a deal. Now my kids are a little older, you know, my oldest is nine, she's starting 4-H we're doing homeschool co-ops. So we're in the car more, which is fine. I'm ready for that. I've been mentally preparing myself for that. But it's definitely considerable. So depending on your stage of life, the ages of your kids, if you even have kids, that's going to be a big factor.

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So just weigh that out carefully. I'm not saying there's a right or wrong answer, but just I want you to be aware of all of those considerations as you making your decision and thinking about where you want to buy that homestead property. Okay. My next tip to consider or keep in mind as your buying or dreaming or planning for a homestead property is always keep the potential in the back of your mind. Basically don't think too small. And that was something that Christian and I, we're really mindful of when we bought our property. There was a lot of places for sale when we were looking that were two, three, four, five acres, which for some of you that's going to be the perfect size. Again, there's not a right or wrong size of homestead. However, for us at that point we knew that at some point we wanted to expand into perhaps more cattle, which we have indeed done or get more horses or build more buildings or whatever.

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So we wanted to have room to grow. It's really easy to box yourself in at the beginning stages when things all feel so foreign and new and you have no idea where you're going to start or even how you're going to start. And you might think, Hey, I just need a teeny bit and I'll be good to go. And again, there's not a right or wrong answer and if that's in your budget, awesome. But I really encourage you to think long term. Where do you want this homestead journey for you to go? What do you want to ultimately accomplish? And make sure that the land or the backyard or the acreage that you're buying will be able to sustain that. Um, now we got 67 acres. We wanted as much land as we could afford and that was about it at that point in our budget as newlyweds 10 years ago.

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So we got the land, a larger chunk that we wanted. Our compromise was a smaller house, which again, that's going to be up to you and what your priorities are. We didn't have children when we bought this home set initially, so we got a 900 square foot house with shoe box size rooms, but we got that bigger chunk of land that's worked out well for us because we

eventually, as many of you know, remodeled the house, added a lot of square footage onto it and we have really enjoyed having the flexibility and the possibility that came with those 67 acres. And honestly, here's a little secret I haven't shared elsewhere up at this up to this point. We're actually looking to expand even more right now and considering the possibilities of either purchasing more ground elsewhere or leasing more ground elsewhere. And so we're continuing to grow and expand.

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But the 67 acres have really been a good fit for us thus far. Okay. One more big consideration. I want you to keep in mind, and this is something you don't really have a lot of control of actually probably hardly any control of. So really, really pay attention to it when you're purchasing a property or shopping for a property and that is weather and water. You want to make sure that, and this was probably just going to depend on your location, maybe you're already in the area, you want to stay in that area or perhaps you have a wide open possibility map in front of you and you can pick anywhere in the country that you want to go. But consider the weather patterns. Obviously those are going to be very different depending on which part of the country you base your homestead in.

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There's downfalls and good pieces I think to pretty much anywhere with maybe a few exceptions. But for us, Wyoming is not known for its lush crops as far as like fruits or nuts or things like that. Wyoming is more of a grassland, or at least our part of Wyoming is with cattle. So when we're considering gardening and such here, I had to, you know, do a little bit of extra work to make that happen as compared to somewhere like Texas or Florida or somewhere that's gonna have more temperate climates and not as cool weather and maybe not massive hail storms every two days like we're having right now oh my word. Uh, but that's been a little bit of a hardship to work around. Also, some areas have different micro-climates so I know not too far from us. When the elevation drops, it's much easier to grow vegetables.

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We're on kind of a Hill and we're in a part of the County that's higher elevation and it's windier and it's colder. And so, you know, that's been a little bit of a trial sometimes. If we had purchased a place, you know, a hundred miles South or 30 miles East, things would be a little different. I also know there's a few spots along the road. The highway that goes near our home, you know, 20 miles to the North of us. There is this stretch of road that is so windy, it's just insane. It blows semi-trucks over every single year, multiple times. So purchasing, for example, a

homestead right in that stretch would have definitely made our lives a little bit more complicated. So it's going to vary in your location, wherever you choose to settle, but talk to locals, visit that area beforehand. Figure out the sweet spots but not so sweet spots and you know, be mindful of that if you're planning on growing vegetables or fruits or what type of animals you're raising and just see and make sure that the area you're choosing will be conducive for that.

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The other thing to consider on a more micro scale is think about the growing possibilities on the piece of land that you're looking at. You want to take into account if there's a lot of Rocky soil or heavy clay soils or Sandy soils, you want to take into account the amount of shade on the property. Now that might not be a very big deal if it's a very large property that if you're dealing with a half acre lot and the whole thing is covered with shade trees, that's gonna definitely be problematic. If you want to grow a huge vegetable garden, it might be great for chickens and goats in the backyard, not so much for corn and potatoes. So take that into account. Also look at the amount of rainfall in the area and maybe plan for additional irrigation or watering or sprinklers. So those are the things that are a little bit difficult to change later, I. E. Rocky soil or no rain and just have a plan going into it doesn't necessarily mean it's a complete deal breaker, right?

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There's always ways to work around those challenges, but just have it in, in the back of your mind so you are prepared going into it and you don't have false expectations. So all in all, as we wrap up, I want you to keep in mind that there is no such thing as a perfect homestead. There is always something to overcome, but I believe that's the beauty of this whole homestead life, right? It gives you a chance to overcome challenges, fail, yes, fail. Because you will pick yourself back up, try again and learn new things. And you know, some of you see our homestead property in the pictures or our YouTube videos or on the blog. And I know you think it's, it's just like perfect. But you know what guys? It's not, it has its downfalls. There's pieces of it I don't like even to this day, it's not my favorite.

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There's just parts of it that annoy me still. Like our wind in the winter time is insane. Uh, we get hail, like I mentioned earlier, just aggressive, damaging hail and it seems to be increasing in frequency, which is not fun. Sometimes we get freak frosts really late in the year or really early in the fall and we have to work around those. But with all of those things that are there that make it a little more challenging, we're still able to produce plenty of vegetables, lots of eggs, and homegrown meats and

dairy and really thrive on our little imperfect homestead. So your homestead is out there. If you haven't found it yet, keep on trucking, keep on pushing, and you will be there before you know it. So if you're ready to dive into this homestead thing, you're listening to this podcast and getting inspired, but you're still feeling a little bit unsure of where or how to start. Well, that is my specialty and you are in the right place. I happen to have an entire library of resources I've put together for homesteaders, whether you're new or experienced, and you can get complimentary access to this library theprairiehomestead.com/grow and we'll drop that link in the show notes and that's it for this episode. Guys, thanks for listening. Remember to subscribe, and I'd love for you to leave a quick review over on iTunes. I will see you in the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.