



Donated by Allen & Myra Charleston

WHAT IS A FARM?

Farms are defined a dozen different ways.

One resource says the average size farm in the U.S. is 15 acres. Another says it is a plot of ground that produces a minimum of \$1,000.00 income per year. Still another says that it isn't a farm unless it provides the sole support of the owner. The one thing that everyone seems to agree on, even though their figures don't match, is that big farms are absorbing the small ones.

Several generations used to make their living on the same farm, but it rarely happens anymore. Why? It isn't cost effective. That's it in a nutshell. If you have 100 acres, and it costs over \$100,000.00 for a cotton picker, are you going to buy one? No. You'd never get it paid for. So, what you do is rent the land out to a larger farmer and take a job in town. You have a vegetable garden, maybe a cow or chickens for a while. But you can buy the milk cheaper than you can feed the cow, so she goes. You let the man that's renting from you store hay in the barn, but he doesn't take care of it. Eventually you have to tear it down. Depressing isn't it?

Going farm to finish with an alternative agriculture is one way to hang onto the family farm and our heritage. In our opinion (and experience), emu farming is a viable way to generate income on small acreage.