

Isolation and Safety on a Farm

The Importance of Isolation and Safety on an Urban Farm



A breakdown of the Nursery/Isolation Coop at Mezzacello
This is my hatchery, nursery, isolation coop at Mezzacello. Earlier I posted a blog about the [layout of the coop and run](#). This is my way of integrating new hens into the flock, and keeping sick birds safe until I can better heal them. This is a critical bit of infrastructure on an urban farm. You will always be cycling hens into the brood. They need to come in slowly and safely. Isolation and integration are critical, otherwise, the “pecking order” can be brutal. When the cycle is complete, the entire area can be scrubbed and sterilized and used however it needs to be used.

Typically this space will be used to raise fryers; chickens or ducks as meat. This has a whole separate set of parameters as it also has to be designed as a nursery and acclimation space for chicks. Chicks (and ducklings) are small wily creatures! They can compress their little bodies down to the diameter of a screwdriver handle. So every space here needs to be tight and safe.

I went with 1/2" plastic netting for the solid wall to the east of the closet doors. This is cheap and it doesn't rust. It also allows the chicks to see, hear, and smell the other chickens but their tiny bodies can't squeeze through that netting. I bought the closet doors and their hardware at [Habitat for Humanity Restore](#). That's a great resource if you don't know about it. And side note: I found the wood in a discarded headboard in my alley.

Keeping It Clean

Sanitization and ease of use are critical. To ensure this, every surface is removable, replaceable, and or sterilizable. Chick/duckling waste is toxic; So a breeder has two choices here – clean trays regularly or add deep litter to the trays. With the trays and their 3cm sides I have both options. There is also an extra layer of protection below: the floor is linoleum. With the outer door, all wastes can be swept out to the French Drain and leech pit in the run.

The Point of the Doors

The last innovation here is the triple door access. This is a very human-centric coop. a human can enter this coop from three ways: the interior sliding door, the run-facing outside door, and the sliding closet doors. The sliding doors cost me \$10 at Habitat for Humanity Restore. The guides cost twice as much as the doors! This will allow me the flexibility of:

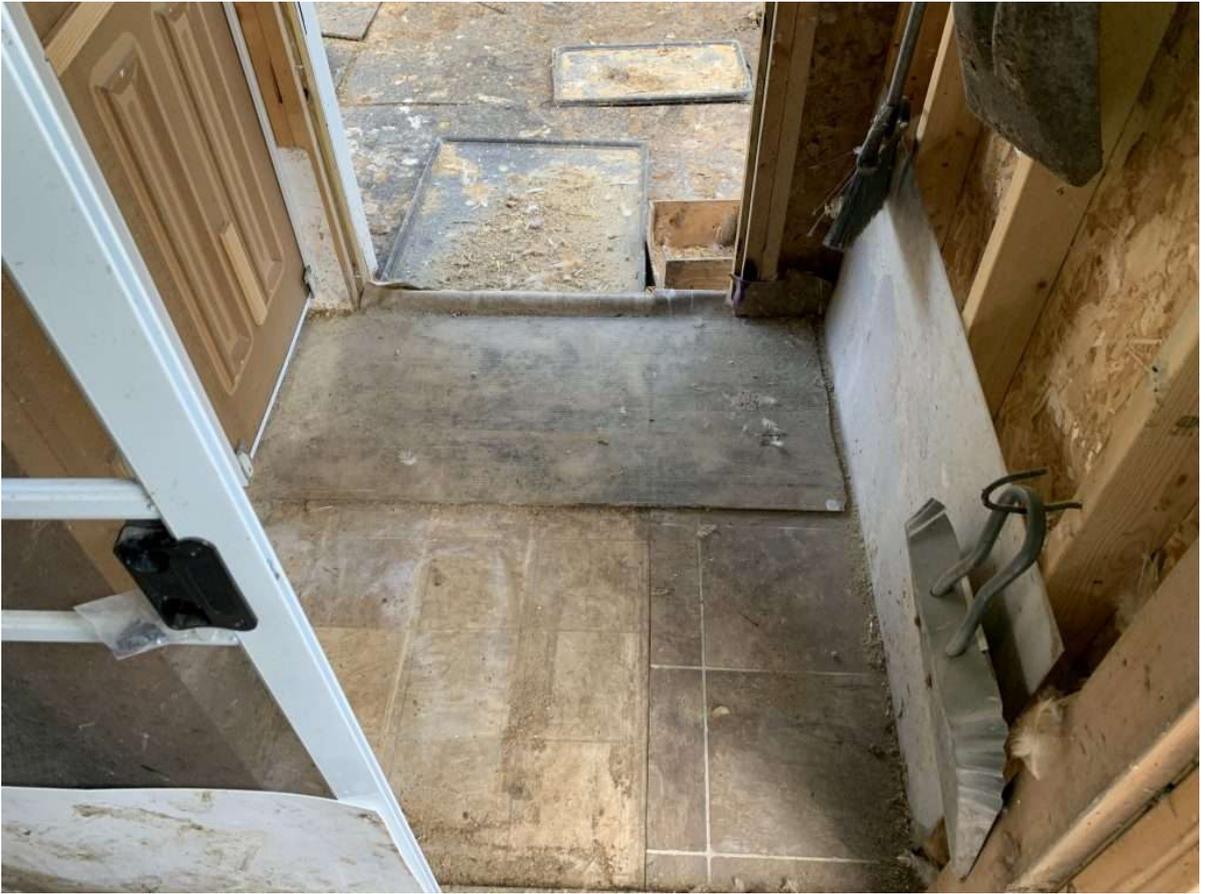
- Removing the doors when I don't need them
- Controlling access between the two coops

- Easily cleaning and sterilizing the entire coop

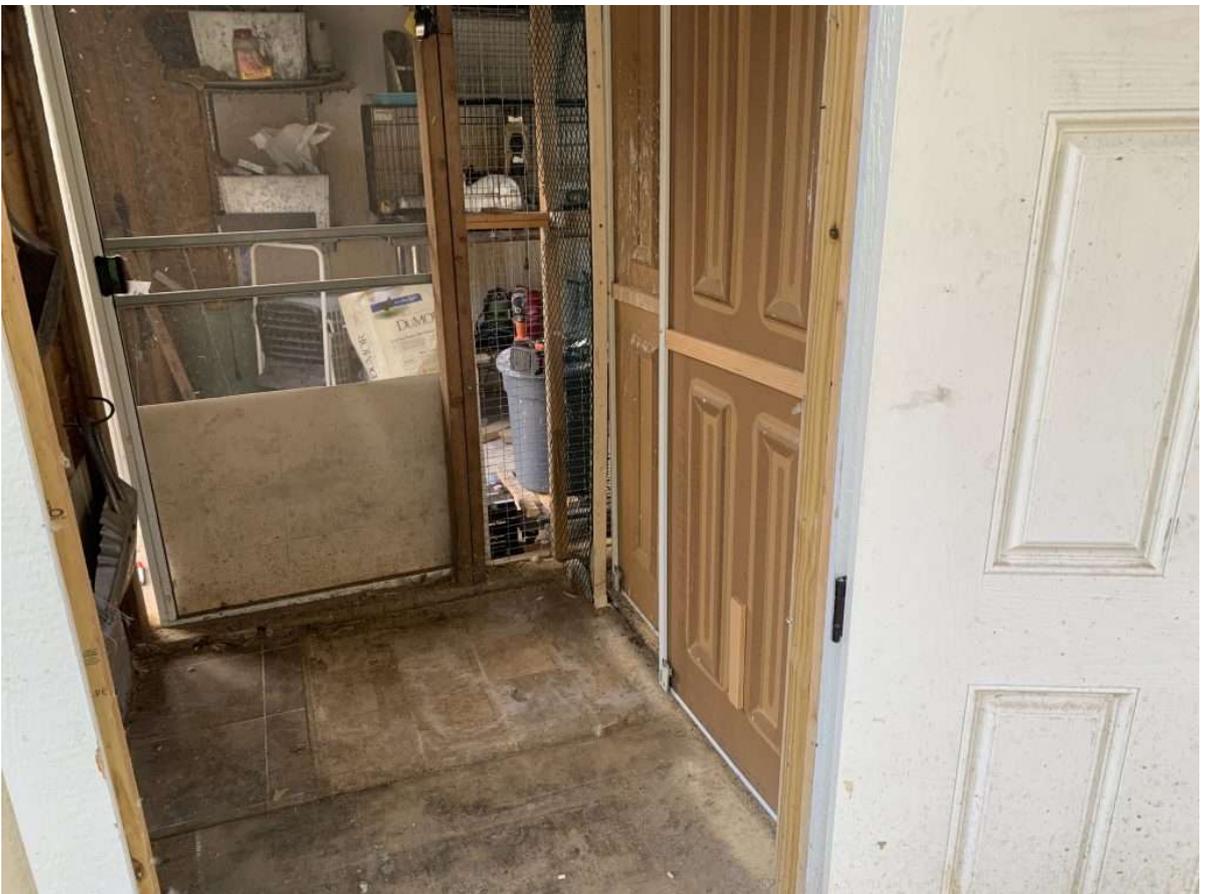
Since this coop is designed to be human-centric and bird adjacent, these three aspects are critical. What do you think of my \$40 isolation, breeding, hatcher coop set up? Do you have better thoughts on how I should do this? Share them with me in the comments.



▪ A view from the interior of the livestock shed



A straight out view into the poultry run



A great view of the linoleum floor and plastic sheet



The removable plastic floor trays and the health and wellness supply shelf in the livestock shed

A quick gallery of this morning's adaptation.