PIG NUTRITION

How much feed does a pig eat to market weight (and is mixing your own cheaper?)

A pig eats about 250 kg of feed, or five 50 kg bags, from weaning to market. We compare the cost of complete feeds with mixing your own from maize, soya, bran and a concentrate, stage by stage.

By FeedSport Nutrition Team · Published 19 October 2026 · Updated 28 October 2026 · 8 min read

KEY POINTS

- A pig eats about 250 kg of feed, five 50 kg bags, from weaning to a 95 kg market weight.
- Feed is 70–80% of the cost of raising a pig, and the finisher stage eats more than half of it.
- In October 2026, complete feeds cost about $148 per pig; mixing your own with a concentrate cost about $113, roughly 24% less.
- Home mixing only pays if you follow the recipe exactly, weigh every ingredient and buy clean grain.

Most new pig farmers ask the wrong question first. They ask how much a piglet costs. The better question is this: how much will this pig eat before I sell it?

Picture it. You buy ten weaners, full of hope. Five months later the pigs look great, but your wallet is empty, and you can't work out where the money went. The answer is nearly always the same. It went into the feed trough.

Feed swallows 70–80% of everything you spend on a pig. So let's follow one pig from weaning to market, bag by bag, and count what it really eats. Then we'll tackle a question that could change your profits: is it cheaper to buy ready-made feed, or to mix your own?

Following one pig, bag by bag

It starts small. A newly weaned piglet eats less than a kilogram a day. You could hold its ration in two cupped hands. But that appetite doesn't stay small for long. Each stage needs a different feed too, because young pigs need more protein to build muscle.

Stage	Age (weeks)	Weight (kg)	Feed per day (kg)	Total feed per pig (kg)	50 kg bags
Creep (before weaning)	1–4	1.5–8	a handful	2–3	—
Weaner	4–10	8–25	0.5–1.2	35	0.7
Grower	10–16	25–55	1.5–2.2	85	1.7
Finisher	16–23	55–95	2.3–3.0	130	2.6
Total (weaning to market)				**250**	**5**

So there's the answer: **about 250 kg of feed, five full 50 kg bags, for every pig you take to market.** Read that last row again and let it sink in. Ten pigs means 50 bags. A hundred pigs means 500.

These are typical figures for healthy pigs on good feed with clean water. Sick, cold or stressed pigs eat more, and so does a farm where feed ends up on the floor. Sell porkers at 60–70 kg instead of baconers at 95 kg, and you'll need less finisher: about 150–160 kg of feed per pig in total. To see whether selling lighter or heavier pays on your farm, compare selling weights in the pig farming profit calculator.

Here's the part that catches people out: the bigger a pig gets, the more feed it needs for every kilogram it gains. A weaner turns about 2.1 kg of feed into 1 kg of growth. A finisher needs over 3 kg. That's why the last few weeks before market quietly swallow most of your feed money. For more on matching feed to each stage, see feeding pigs by stage.

Planning your next batch of pigs?

Enter how many pigs you are buying and the weight you sell at. The pig farming profit calculator works out how many bags of each feed you need, the cash to have ready before the pigs arrive, and your profit.

Budget my batch

Option 1: The easy road, buying complete feeds

Complete feeds are the simple choice. You open the bag, pour it into the trough, and walk away. Everything the pig needs (energy, protein, vitamins and minerals) is already mixed in.

But simple comes at a price. Here's what it costs to take one pig to market this way (prices per 50 kg bag):

Feed	Price per 50 kg bag	Price per kg	Feed per pig (kg)	Cost per pig
Creep/weaner meal	$34	$0.68	35	$23.80
Pig grower meal	$29	$0.58	85	$49.30

Feed	Price per 50 kg bag	Price per kg	Feed per pig (kg)	Cost per pig
Pig finisher meal	$29	$0.58	130	$75.40
Total			**250**	**$148.50**

That's $148.50 a pig. For ten pigs, nearly $1,500, on feed alone. (Lactating meal for sows, at $32 a bag, isn't counted here, because it feeds the mother, not the pig you're selling.)

Hold on to that number. Because there's another way.

Option 2: The road less travelled, mixing your own

Plenty of experienced farmers never buy complete feed at all. Instead, they buy the bulky ingredients (maize, soybean meal and wheat bran) and mix them with a small bag of concentrate that supplies the vitamins, minerals and other extras pigs need.

Think of it like baking bread. Maize is the flour (energy). Soybean meal and fish meal are the eggs (protein). Wheat bran adds fibre. And the concentrate is the yeast and salt: only a little, but leave it out and the whole loaf flops.

Here are the recipes, using Caremix concentrates. Each one makes **500 kg (10 bags)** at a time. Ingredient prices per 50 kg bag: maize $18.50, soybean meal $33, wheat bran $14, fish meal $62.50. Concentrates: Caremix Pig Weaner $42 (14 kg bag), Caremix Pig Grower $31 (16 kg bag), Caremix Pig Finisher $23 (13 kg bag).

Ingredient (kg per 500 kg batch)	Weaner	Grower	Finisher
Maize (ground)	324	316	309
Soybean meal	74	100	67
Wheat bran	63	68	111
Fish meal	25	—	—
Caremix concentrate	14 (Weaner)	16 (Grower)	13 (Finisher)
Batch size	**500 kg**	**500 kg**	**500 kg**
Crude protein	17.5%	16.5%	15.5%
Cost of the batch	**$259.61**	**$232.96**	**$212.63**
Cost per 50 kg bag	**$25.96**	**$23.30**	**$21.26**

Now look at that bottom row. **$21 to $26 a bag**, against $29 to $34 for complete feed. Each recipe uses exactly one full bag of concentrate, so there are no half-used bags lying around.

One warning before you get excited: follow the recipe exactly. Each concentrate is built for these ingredients in these amounts. Swap things around or guess the quantities, and your pigs can end up short of

protein or minerals. They'll grow slower, and your savings will disappear. If you want to change an ingredient, check the new recipe first in our formulation tool.

Get everything for your home mix in one order

Ask us for today's prices on soybean meal, wheat bran, fish meal, maize and Caremix pig concentrates, delivered together so you can mix a full batch.

Ask for ingredient prices

The moment of truth: what you actually save

So, which road wins? Let's put the two side by side, stage by stage.

Stage	Complete feed (per 50 kg bag)	Home mix (per 50 kg bag)	Saving per bag	Complete feed cost per pig	Home mix cost per pig
Weaner	$34.00	$25.96	$8.04	$23.80	$18.17
Grower	$29.00	$23.30	$5.70	$49.30	$39.60
Finisher	$29.00	$21.26	$7.74	$75.40	$55.28
Total				**$148.50**	**$113.06**

Mixing your own costs about $113 per pig instead of $148, a saving of roughly $35 on every pig, or 24%.

That might not sound like much for one animal. But watch what happens as your herd grows:

- **10 pigs:** about $355 saved per batch of pigs
- **50 pigs:** about $1,770 saved
- **100 pigs a year:** about $3,550 saved

The biggest win comes in the finisher stage, when pigs are eating the most. Creep feed for piglets is such a small amount (2–3 kg each) that most farmers just buy it ready-made.

Before you rush out to buy maize: the catch

That $35 saving is real. But it isn't free. Home mixing brings costs that never show up on a feed price list:

- **Milling:** maize has to be ground. If you pay a hammer mill, add that to every bag.
- **Labour and time:** mixing 500 kg by hand on a clean concrete floor takes a few people about an hour. Our guide to mixing on farm explains how to get an even mix.

- **A good scale:** guessing with buckets is the most common, and most expensive, mistake. A platform scale soon pays for itself.
- **Ingredient quality:** mouldy maize can carry toxins that make pigs sick or stop them growing. Buy clean, dry grain and store it off the floor, away from rats and damp.
- **Cash up front:** you're buying ingredients for 10 bags at once, not one bag at a time.
- **Transport and storage:** more bags to collect, and more bags to keep dry.

So which road is right for you?

Stick with complete feeds if you keep only a few pigs, are short on time, have no scale or mill nearby, or simply want steady results with no fuss.

Start mixing your own if you keep 10 or more pigs, can get good maize and soya at fair prices, and are willing to weigh and mix carefully, every single time.

Not sure which road suits your farm?

Price both roads in the pig farming profit calculator: enter the cost of a bag of complete feed, then the cost of a bag of your home mix, and compare the profit. To check the sums with us, including milling and transport, send us your herd size and the prices you pay.

Compare in the calculator | Run my numbers with FeedSport

Six habits that make every bag go further

1. **Plan your feed before you buy piglets.** Budget about 5 bags per pig to market weight, and have the cash ready before the pigs arrive.
2. **Weigh your pigs, or use a weigh band.** Switch feeds by weight, not by guesswork.
3. **Change feeds slowly.** Mix old and new feed over 5–7 days when moving to the next stage. Sudden changes upset stomachs.
4. **Stop the waste.** Feed on the floor is money on the floor. Use troughs pigs can't stand in, and don't overfill them.
5. **Always give clean water.** A pig that can't drink won't eat, and a pig that won't eat won't grow.
6. **Redo the sums when prices change.** Use the tables above with your own prices: multiply the kilograms used by the price per kg, then add up the batch. Or enter your prices in the pig farming profit calculator to cost the whole batch, including the pigs, animal health and running costs. To compare feeds on what they really cost you, track your feed cost per kg of gain.

Whichever road you choose, remember this: the farmer who knows their feed numbers is the farmer who

knows whether they're making money.

Prices in this article were correct in October 2026 and will change, so run the sums again with today's prices.

Need help with your feed numbers?

Whether you keep five pigs or five hundred, our nutrition team will help you budget your feed, choose between complete feeds and home mixing, and source the ingredients and concentrates you need.

WhatsApp the team | Other ways to contact us

Need a diet checked? Send your ingredients and targets to the FeedSport nutrition team on WhatsApp +263 77 468 4534 or sales@feedsport.co.zw.

Figures in this guide are typical values and general ranges. Confirm targets for your animals, genetics and ingredients, and check batch specifications before formulating.