POULTRY NUTRITION

How to Raise Broilers in Zimbabwe: From Day-Old Chicks to Profit

Learn how to raise broilers in Zimbabwe, with feeding and growth charts, a 100-bird budget, weekly cash flow and practical break-even calculations.

By FeedSport Nutrition Team · Published 23 October 2026 · Updated 28 October 2026 · 26 min read

KEY POINTS

- In the illustrative 100-bird budget, 95 birds sold at 2.5 kg bring in US$593.75 against US$489.80 of operating costs: a US$103.95 surplus before depreciation and finance costs.
- The same batch needs US$524 in operating cash before any sale, because feed is bought in whole bags. Housing and equipment are extra.
- Confirm buyers, sale weight and payment dates before buying chicks, and fund the whole cycle plus a reserve.
- Good brooding, water, ventilation and a vet-agreed health plan set up growth; weigh a sample of birds every week and track feed per kg sold.
- Several modest setbacks together (fewer birds, lighter weights, a lower price and dearer feed) turn the example into a US$89.28 loss.

A practical guide to housing, brooding, feeding, health, growth, production costs and cash flow.

Is broiler farming profitable in Zimbabwe?

Imagine you have space for 100 broilers and someone willing to supply the chicks. You multiply the number of chickens by a possible selling price, subtract chicks and a few bags of feed, and the project looks attractive. Then the questions start: how many bags will you actually need? Who pays for heating? What happens if customers collect a week late?

Broiler farming can generate a surplus, but buying chicks is only the first payment in a production cycle. Success depends on healthy chicks, appropriate housing, feed quality and cost, survival, growth, buyers and the price you actually collect.

In this guide's **illustrative 100-bird example**, 95 birds sold at 2.5 kg liveweight generate US$593.75. Operating costs are US$489.80, leaving US$103.95 before depreciation and finance costs. However, the

batch needs **US$524 in operating cash before sales**, because feed must be bought in whole bags. Buildings and equipment cost extra.

These are teaching assumptions, **not current Zimbabwean quotations or a promised return**. Replace them with supplier quotations and your own flock records. The example shows both how a batch can make money and why a farmer can run short of cash before that happens.

1. Plan the sale before buying chicks

Start with the customer. Households buying live birds, traders collecting in bulk and shops buying dressed chickens can require different weights, delivery arrangements and payment terms. Ask what they buy, how often, in what quantities, and whether the price is per bird or per kilogram.

Write down the intended sale date and work backwards to placement. Allow time afterwards for cleaning, drying and the downtime advised for your farm. A six-week growing period does not mean that a house can start a new batch every six weeks.

Choose a batch size that fits your **housing, available cash and realistic sales capacity**. Having room for 500 birds is not enough if you can finance only 100 or sell only 30 each week. Unsold birds continue consuming feed while tying up the money needed for the next placement.

Before committing, complete this short business plan:

Decision	What to establish
Buyers	Names, quantities, required weights, collection dates and payment terms
Production	Chicks placed, expected birds sold, sale age and average liveweight
Suppliers	Chick availability, feed programme, bag sizes, delivery and payment dates
Resources	Suitable house, water, heat, equipment, daily caretaker and backup arrangements
Funding	Capital purchases, peak operating cash need and a separate reserve
Downside	What happens with fewer birds sold, dearer feed or delayed collection?

A buyer saying “I might take some” is different from a confirmed order. Avoid committing all expected income to the next batch before the first flock has been sold and paid for.

2. Choose and receive good day-old chicks

Ross 308 and Cobb 500 are commercial broiler strains; obtain the exact strain and current management information from your hatchery. Irvine's Zimbabwe identifies Cobb chicks among its products. No strain removes the need for good management, and a strain name alone does not establish chick quality. [1, 2, 3]

Ask the supplier for hatch date, vaccination history, collection arrangements and a contact for problems. On arrival, look for alert chicks with clear eyes, dry down, closed dry navels and sound legs. Record the delivered count, average placement weight, dead-on-arrival birds and visible defects. Report problems

promptly. [2]

Arrange a direct journey in suitable ventilated chick boxes, protected from extreme temperatures. Have the house ready before collection. Place chicks promptly with accessible starter feed and water; do not leave them waiting in boxes while you finish setting up. [2, 4]

The cheapest chick is not automatically the cheapest finished chicken. Compare suppliers using subsequent survival and growth records as well as the invoice price.

3. Prepare housing, water and equipment

The house must protect birds while allowing you to manage heat, moisture and fresh air. Good drainage, a sound roof, cleanable surfaces and a dependable water supply matter more than an impressive-looking building. FAO emphasises matching the environment and feed supply to the birds' needs throughout growth. [5]

For a small naturally ventilated house, Profeeds gives a local guide of **10 birds/m² in summer and 12 birds/m² in winter after brooding**. Treat this as a starting point, not permission to crowd a hot house. Final weight matters: ten birds averaging 2.5 kg represent 25 kg liveweight/m². [6]

At ten birds per square metre, 50, 100 and 500 birds require approximately 5, 10 and 50 m² of usable bird space respectively. Storage and working areas are additional. Ask your supplier or extension adviser to assess the layout, season and ventilation before placement.

Equipment checklist

Reusable infrastructure or equipment	Consumables and recurring inputs
Weatherproof house, mesh and adjustable curtains	Day-old chicks
Chick trays and appropriately sized growing feeders	Starter, grower and finisher feed
Chick drinkers and growing drinkers or nipple system	Fresh, suitable litter
Safe brooder and backup heat provision	Heating fuel or electricity
Thermometer, preferably humidity meter, and scales	Water, detergent and disinfectant
Covered water storage and suitable plumbing	Veterinary inputs specified for the flock
Dedicated footwear, cleaning tools and feed storage	Labour, transport and selling expenses

Choose feeder and drinker numbers using the equipment manufacturer's rated bird capacity, with extra access points where needed. Equipment that is sufficient at placement may become inadequate as birds grow.

Keep litter dry and address leaking drinkers. Ventilation is necessary even while heating: shutting a house tightly to save fuel can undermine air quality. Fuel-burning heaters require safe installation, exhaust arrangements and fire precautions. Never rely on an unvented brazier in a sealed brooding area. [2]

Test the backup plan before chicks arrive. Someone must know what to do if the heat source fails at night or the normal water supply stops.

4. Brooding: the first 14 days

Brooding means providing the conditions chicks need while they develop their ability to regulate body temperature. Warm air alone is insufficient if the floor and litter remain cold.

Aviagen's 2025 Ross handbook gives placement starting points of **30°C for whole-house brooding or 32°C at the edge of a spot brooder**, with 60–70% relative humidity. These are system-specific settings measured near the chicks, not temperatures to impose regardless of conditions. Establish stable conditions before delivery and adjust using chick behaviour and the hatchery's guidance. [4]

Time	Practical check
Before delivery	Check warmth at chick level, warm litter, fresh air, working water and readily accessible feed.
On placement	Distribute chicks gently; confirm they begin finding feed and water.
First 24 hours	Revisit frequently, including at night; check distribution and crop fill.
Days 2–7	Track intake and deaths; adjust equipment and brooding space as birds grow.
Days 8–14	Weigh again, review growth, expand space and adjust heat according to the flock's needs.

Crowding beneath heat can indicate cold conditions; avoiding the heated area and panting can indicate excessive heat. Uneven distribution may reveal draughts or poor access to resources. Comfortable chicks should show a mixture of feeding, drinking and resting rather than persistent distress. [4]

Crop-fill checks help establish whether chicks are eating and drinking. Gently feel a sample from different locations: a filled crop should contain softened feed. Cobb's brooding guidance uses at least 95% filled crops by the morning after placement as a check. Poor results call for immediate investigation of access, warmth and water. [7]

Follow the supplier's lighting programme, including appropriate periods of darkness as birds develop. Continuous bright light throughout the cycle should not be your default. [6]

5. Feed broilers for their stage of growth

Use a complete broiler feeding programme, with unrestricted access to suitable feed and clean water during normal rearing. The phase names are familiar, but the switching dates vary between programmes.

Phase	Purpose	Example of programme differences
Starter	Support early development with a nutrient-dense, easily eaten diet	Ross's 2022 three-phase specification starts with days 0–10; some local products specify the first 14 days.
Grower	Sustain muscle and frame growth	Ross's example uses days 11–24; follow your actual product programme.

Phase	Purpose	Example of programme differences
Finisher	Supply balanced nutrients through the final growing period	Ross's example starts at day 25; local programmes may switch later.

Sources: Ross nutrition specifications and Supreme Feed's published feeding guidance. These are examples, not interchangeable instructions. [8, 9]

Crude protein is only part of the picture. Digestible amino acids, including lysine and methionine, supply building blocks for growth. Metabolisable energy supports maintenance and production. Calcium and available phosphorus, vitamins and trace minerals also need appropriate provision. Requirements and nutrient concentrations change with age; reducing protein without checking amino acids and energy can produce an unbalanced diet. [8]

For home mixing, maize and soybean meal are ingredients, not a complete ration by themselves. Ingredient quality, nutrient availability and accurate formulation determine whether a mixture meets requirements. A vitamin-mineral premix and a balancing concentrate are not interchangeable; use the exact product's label and inclusion instructions. Weigh ingredients and achieve an even mix. [10] For a worked example with ingredients, ratios and costs, see how to mix your own broiler feed.

Keep feed dry and protected from pests. Investigate damaged, mouldy or suspicious stock rather than trying to make it usable by mixing it with good feed. Water quality and access deserve the same attention as the feed purchase. [10, 11]

Get the feed programme right for your batch

Tell us how many birds you are placing and the age you plan to sell. Our nutrition team will help you plan starter, grower and finisher feed, or the ingredients, concentrate and premix if you mix your own.

Ask about broiler feed

Weekly feed consumption and growth reference

The following is the **Ross 308/308 FF, mixed-sex (“as-hatched”), 2022 breeder reference**. It describes performance under favourable conditions, not an average Zimbabwean farm or a feeding restriction. Feed intake is per living bird; breeder FCR does not allow for mortality. [1]

Age	Reference liveweight (kg)	Feed during week (kg/bird)	Cumulative feed (kg/bird)
7 days	0.213	0.166	0.166
14 days	0.533	0.369	0.535

Age	Reference liveweight (kg)	Feed during week (kg/bird)	Cumulative feed (kg/bird)
21 days	1.012	0.620	1.155
28 days	1.616	0.896	2.051
35 days	2.296	1.160	3.211
42 days	2.998	1.375	4.586

Weekly feed is calculated by subtracting successive cumulative figures. Multiplying the day-42 intake by 50, 100 and 500 living birds gives **229.3, 458.6 and 2,293 kg** respectively. These totals exclude spillage and feed eaten by birds that subsequently die; they are reference quantities, not purchase orders.

Use your own growth and consumption history for budgeting. The financial example below deliberately uses separate farm assumptions: 2.5 kg average sale weight and 450 kg total feed used for 100 chicks placed. It does not combine breeder weight with a conveniently lower feed bill.

6. Protect health through prevention and early action

Profeeds identifies infectious bursal disease (Gumboro), infectious bronchitis, Newcastle disease and coccidiosis among broiler disease concerns. This is not a report of current outbreaks on your farm or in your district. [6]

Newcastle disease can cause respiratory, digestive or nervous signs and spread through infected birds and contaminated materials. Gumboro damages the developing immune system and can leave surviving birds more vulnerable to other infections. Neither can be diagnosed reliably from a brief description alone. [12, 13]

Arrange a flock health plan with the hatchery and a qualified veterinarian **before placement**. Give them the hatchery vaccination record. Vaccine timing depends on existing immunity, the product and local disease pressure; a single universal calendar is inappropriate. Follow storage, administration and any medicine withdrawal instructions. [2, 11]

Practise all-in/all-out management where possible. Control visitors, use dedicated footwear, maintain clean footbaths, exclude wild birds and rodents, and clean incoming equipment. Remove dead birds promptly and arrange safe disposal. After depletion, remove litter and organic dirt before cleaning and disinfection; agree suitable downtime before restocking. [11]

Seek veterinary assistance promptly for unusual deaths, severe weakness, breathing difficulty, nervous signs or a sudden collapse in feed or water intake. Do not take sick birds to market to recover costs. Record the age, number affected, recent inputs and symptoms to help the investigation. [11, 12]

7. Weigh birds and investigate deviations

Weigh a representative sample weekly, at a consistent time, using the same checked scales. Include birds from different areas, rather than choosing the easiest or largest to catch. For a 100-bird flock, a practical starting sample is 20–30 birds; increase it when weights vary widely. This is a farm monitoring suggestion,

not a statistical guarantee.

Checkpoint	Management question
Week 1	Did chicks start well? Review brooding, access and early losses.
Week 2	Are small birds falling behind? Check access, space and health.
Weeks 3–4	Are feed use and weight gain moving together? Investigate waste or poor growth.
Week 5	What weight will buyers actually receive, and are collections confirmed?
Week 6	Are sale weights and income sufficient to cover the full batch cost?

Calculate average weight as total sample weight divided by birds weighed. Record cumulative mortality as deaths divided by chicks placed × 100, and record culls separately so losses cannot disappear from the totals.

For the financial example, **economic feed conversion on a liveweight-sold basis** is:

`450 kg feed used ÷ (95 birds × 2.5 kg) = 1.895 kg feed/kg liveweight sold`.

This includes feed used by birds that die and any unmeasured wastage. It differs from a biological, mortality-adjusted FCR. If you instead deduct the initial 4.4 kg chick weight from sale liveweight, the net-output-gain calculation is `450 ÷ (237.5 − 4.4) = 1.931`. Label the method and compare like with like.

For practical troubleshooting, see why broilers are not reaching target weight and feed cost per kilogram of gain.

Birds behind the reference weights?

Send us your weekly sample weights, feed used and losses so far. We will compare them with the targets and help you find where growth is being lost.

Send your flock records

8. Decide when and how to sell

Sell to a weight and market specification, not simply because the calendar says six weeks. Live and dressed weights are different: do not multiply liveweight by a dressed-chicken price. Dressing also adds processing, packaging, chilling, transport and possible product losses.

Compare the **additional income from waiting** with extra feed, labour, utilities, losses and delayed cash collection. If buyers pay a fixed amount per bird, additional weight might earn nothing. If they pay per

kilogram, growth can add revenue, but it still has a cost.

The model assumes collection and immediate payment at the start of week seven, following 42 feeding days. Keeping birds into week seven is a different budget. Credit sales also change the cash-flow schedule even when the selling price stays the same.

9. A complete budget for 100 broilers

Calculate the cost of your own broiler project

The budget below is worked out for 100 birds at example prices. Enter your own batch size and the prices you have been quoted to see the cash you need, your profit and your break-even price per bird.

Open the broiler budget calculator

Assumptions: illustrative USD figures

Research did not establish a consistent set of dated, directly verifiable local quotations for every input and sale price. **All prices below are illustrative**, including equipment and labour. Obtain current quotes for your location, quantities and delivery terms.

Assumption	Base case
Chicks placed	100 at US$1 each
Losses	5 birds; 95 sold; a budgeting assumption, not an acceptable-loss target
Sale timing	Morning of day 43; all buyers pay immediately
Sale basis	Liveweight, 2.5 kg/bird at US$2.50/kg
Total sale liveweight	237.5 kg
Feed used, including flock losses	60 kg starter + 150 kg grower + 240 kg finisher = 450 kg
Assumed supplier programme	Starter days 1–14; grower days 15–28; finisher days 29–42
Feed prices	US$35, US$33 and US$31 per 50 kg bag respectively
Opening feed stock	None
Closing feed stock	Sound, usable stock valued at purchase cost
Labour	US$35 paid allowance for this batch; replace with actual labour cost
Other exclusions	Tax, finance charges, rent and additional processing; add where applicable

The phase allocation is a planning assumption to replace with the chosen supplier's programme and observed consumption. Never withhold feed to stay within a budget. Reforecast purchases as the flock develops.

Capital expenditure: paid once, used across batches

Illustrative capital item	US$
Basic house preparation/building allowance	500.00
Feeders	70.00
Drinkers	50.00
Heating and brooding equipment	80.00
Scales	25.00
Temperature/humidity monitoring allowance	15.00
Water storage and fittings	60.00
Dedicated boots and tools	20.00
Total	**820.00**

This is a worked allowance, not a construction estimate. A new house may cost substantially more; an existing suitable house may need less. Quote the actual design and verify its capacity.

Do not charge all US$820 against one batch's operating surplus. It is nevertheless a real startup cash payment. For an accounting illustration, spreading the US$500 housing allowance over 50 batches and US$320 equipment over 20 batches produces **US$26 depreciation per batch**, assuming no residual value. These are model assumptions, not tax depreciation rates.

Feed purchased versus feed consumed

Feed	Used (kg)	Used-feed cost	Bought (50 kg bags)	Purchase cash	Closing stock (kg)	Closing stock value
Starter	60	$42.00	2	$70.00	40	$28.00
Grower	150	$99.00	3	$99.00	0	$0.00
Finisher	240	$148.80	5	$155.00	10	$6.20
Total	**450**	**$289.80**	**10**	**$324.00**	**50**	**$34.20**

Feed used costs US$289.80, but the farmer pays US$324. Buying suitable smaller packs could reduce stock tied up, although the price per kilogram may differ. If leftovers spoil or cannot safely be used, write down their value; they cannot remain an imaginary asset.

Operating expenditure

Cost	Operating expense	Cash paid
Chicks	$100.00	$100.00
Feed	$289.80	$324.00
Bedding	$10.00	$10.00
Heating	$15.00	$15.00
Water and electricity	$5.00	$5.00
Veterinary/health provision	$10.00	$10.00
Labour	$35.00	$35.00
Transport	$15.00	$15.00
Marketing	$2.00	$2.00
Cleaning and disinfection	$8.00	$8.00
Total	**$489.80**	**$524.00**

Feed and chicks vary strongly with scale. Transport, heating, cleaning and labour may increase in steps rather than proportionally. The health provision is a financial allowance, not a treatment recommendation. Owner labour still has a cost even if no cash wage is paid; distinguish that unpaid cost in your own model.

Week-by-week cash flow

The opening operating fund is **US$576.40**: US$524 peak funding plus a suggested 10% contingency of US$52.40. The reserve is not an expense unless spent. Capital purchases are excluded from this table.

Period	Opening cash	Sales inflows	Cash outflows	Net cash flow	Closing cash
Pre-placement	$576.40	$0.00	$33.00	−$33.00	$543.40
Week 1	$543.40	$0.00	$186.00	−$186.00	$357.40
Week 2	$357.40	$0.00	$11.00	−$11.00	$346.40
Week 3	$346.40	$0.00	$105.00	−$105.00	$241.40
Week 4	$241.40	$0.00	$6.00	−$6.00	$235.40
Week 5	$235.40	$0.00	$161.00	−$161.00	$74.40
Week 6	$74.40	$0.00	$5.00	−$5.00	$69.40
Week 7: before collection/payment	$69.40	$0.00	$17.00	−$17.00	$52.40
Week 7: sale and payment	$52.40	$593.75	$0.00	+$593.75	$646.15
Total flows	—	**$593.75**	**$524.00**	**+$69.75**	—

Payment allocation: pre-placement covers bedding $10, cleaning $8, health provision $10 and transport $5. Week 1 covers chicks $100, starter $70, heat $10, utilities $1 and labour $5. Week 2 has heat $5, utilities $1 and labour $5. Week 3 includes grower $99, utilities $1 and labour $5. Week 4 has utilities $1 and labour $5. Week 5 includes finisher $155, utilities $1 and labour $5. Week 6 has labour $5. Before collection, the final $17 covers labour $5, transport $10 and marketing $2.

Illustrative weekly feed use is 17, 43, 65, 85, 110 and 130 kg: 450 kg altogether. Each feed phase is bought before its first use. These quantities explain the model; they are not daily feeding limits.

Without initial funding, cumulative cash flow reaches **–US$524 immediately before sale**. That is the peak operating funding requirement. With US$576.40 provided, the lowest actual cash balance is US$52.40. Splitting sale week into two rows avoids hiding the cost paid before customers pay.

For a new setup using the capital allowances, initial funding is:

`US$820 capital + US$524 operating cash + US$52.40 reserve = US$1,396.40`.

The US$646.15 closing balance is not all profit. It includes the original operating fund. The increase in cash is US$69.75; add US$34.20 usable feed stock and the operating surplus is US$103.95.

Profit, break-even and returns

Measure	Calculation	Result
Revenue	95 × 2.5 kg × $2.50/kg	$593.75
Operating surplus	$593.75 – $489.80	$103.95
Operating cost per bird sold	$489.80 ÷ 95	$5.16
Surplus per bird sold	$103.95 ÷ 95	$1.09
Return on operating expenditure	$103.95 ÷ $489.80 × 100	21.22%
Break-even liveweight price	$489.80 ÷ 237.5 kg	$2.0623/kg
Equivalent break-even price per bird	$489.80 ÷ 95	$5.1558
Break-even birds at assumed weight and price	Round up $489.80 ÷ $6.25	79 birds
Surplus after illustrative depreciation	$103.95 – $26.00	$77.95

If quoting prices to the nearest cent, round the break-even minimum **up**: US$2.07/kg or US$5.16 per bird. Break-even bird count holds the batch cost fixed; it is not a mortality allowance or a prediction that costs would stay identical under severe losses.

Cash recovery has a different threshold. Recovering the full US$524 cash outlay at US$6.25 per bird requires **84 birds**. The difference reflects money still held in feed stock. The 21.22% operating return is per batch, before depreciation and finance costs; it is neither an annual return nor a return on all startup capital.

Cost the feed in your own budget

Feed is the largest cost in this budget. Send us your batch size and feed programme, and we will help you work out the bags you need for each phase at today's prices.

Price my broiler feed

10. What changes the result?

One-change sensitivity tests

These tests change one assumption at a time, holding other base assumptions constant. They describe arithmetic effects, not independent biological predictions.

Change	Operating surplus	What is held constant or added
Base case	$103.95	95 birds, 2.5 kg, $2.50/kg, 450 kg feed
Feed prices +10%	$74.97	Used-feed cost rises $28.98
Feed prices +20%	$45.99	Used-feed cost rises $57.96
Only 90 birds sold	$72.70	Same feed and other costs; illustrates later losses
Selling price –10%	$44.58	Price falls to $2.25/kg; unrounded surplus $44.575
Feed needed +10%	$74.97	495 kg at unchanged weighted price; same sale weight
Average sale weight 2.3 kg	$56.45	Same price/kg and feed expenditure
Seven extra feeding days	$11.49	Extra feed and overhead; no extra revenue assumed

For the delay test, suppose all 95 birds require an additional **0.20 kg each daily for seven days**. This is a sensitivity assumption, not a breed feeding recommendation. Extra feed is `95 × 0.20 × 7 = 133 kg`, costing US$82.46 at $0.62/kg. Add $10 labour/utilities: the surplus falls by $92.46 to **US$11.49**, assuming no additional revenue. Measure actual intake and weight gain and include any extra sales value in your decision.

Cash needs rise further than the extra feed expense alone suggests. The base case has 10 kg finisher remaining; obtaining another 123 kg requires three more 50 kg bags at $31 each. With the extra $10 overhead, the peak operating cash requirement becomes **$627**, before a reserve. Unused feed remains an asset only while sound and usable.

Optimistic, base and pessimistic scenarios

For these combined scenarios, feed cost uses the base weighted average of **US$0.644/kg**, adjusted where stated. They are operating-profit scenarios; whole-bag purchasing must be recalculated separately for cash planning.

Assumption/result	Optimistic	Base	Pessimistic
Chicks placed	100	100	100
Birds sold	98	95	90
Average sale weight	2.6 kg	2.5 kg	2.3 kg
Sale price/kg live	$2.60	$2.50	$2.25
Total feed used	440 kg	450 kg	480 kg
Feed price multiplier	1.00	1.00	1.10
Feed cost	$283.36	$289.80	$340.03
Other costs, excluding chicks/feed	$100.00	$100.00	$115.00
Total operating cost, including $100 chicks	$483.36	$489.80	$555.03
Revenue	$662.48	$593.75	$465.75
Operating surplus/loss	**$179.12**	**$103.95**	**–$89.28**
Feed/kg liveweight sold	1.727	1.895	2.319

These are possible planning combinations, not measured Zimbabwean farm averages. The optimistic case requires better survival, conversion and price together. The pessimistic case shows how several modest setbacks can combine into a loss. A serious disease event could be worse.

11. Compare 50, 100 and 500 broilers

The following keeps feed used per chick placed at 4.5 kg, with the same phase proportions and prices. Sales remain at 2.5 kg and US$2.50/kg. The 50-bird example assumes two losses (4%); the others assume 5%, avoiding fractional chickens.

Measure	50 placed	100 placed	500 placed
Birds sold	48	95	475
Feed used	225 kg	450 kg	2,250 kg
Feed purchased	300 kg	500 kg	2,250 kg
Feed purchase cash	$194.00	$324.00	$1,449.00
Chick purchase cash	$50.00	$100.00	$500.00

Measure	50 placed	100 placed	500 placed
Other operating costs	$80.00	$100.00	$350.00
Operating capital / peak cash deficit	**$324.00**	**$524.00**	**$2,299.00**
Suggested reserve, 10%	$32.40	$52.40	$229.90
Total operating funding with reserve	$356.40	$576.40	$2,528.90
Revenue	$300.00	$593.75	$2,968.75
Operating expense	$274.90	$489.80	$2,299.00
Operating surplus	**$25.10**	**$103.95**	**$669.75**
Cost per bird sold	$5.73	$5.16	$4.84
Net operating cash movement	−$24.00	+$69.75	+$669.75
Closing feed stock value	$49.10	$34.20	$0.00

Feed purchases are rounded up by phase to 50 kg bags: starter/grower/finisher quantities are 50/100/150 kg, 100/150/250 kg and 300/750/1,200 kg respectively. All operating payments precede receipts, so peak deficit equals total purchase cash plus other paid costs.

The non-feed allowances are deliberately not linear:

Cost	50 birds	100 birds	500 birds
Bedding	$6	$10	$40
Heat	$12	$15	$40
Water/electricity	$3	$5	$20
Health	$8	$10	$35
Labour	$30	$35	$150
Transport	$12	$15	$40
Marketing	$2	$2	$5
Cleaning	$7	$8	$20
Total	**$80**	**$100**	**$350**

These figures assume some shared work and transport efficiencies, not a guaranteed scale advantage. Housing and equipment are excluded: quote each size separately. A 500-bird operation needs more drinker and feeder capacity, greater water security and enough labour and customers to handle peak demand.

Notice the 50-bird result: an operating surplus of US$25.10 accompanies a **US$24 cash reduction**, because US$49.10 remains in unused feed. Smaller packs or well-planned subsequent batches may improve cash use. Increasing bird numbers solely to consume leftovers is not a substitute for securing

buyers.

12. Common ways farmers lose money

Mistake	Financial consequence	Practical response
Buying chicks without buyers	Delayed sales and extra feed	Agree likely quantities, weights and dates before placement.
Budgeting only chicks and early feed	Cash runs out during rapid growth	Fund the entire cycle and a reserve.
Poor brooding, ventilation or water access	Growth shortfalls and additional losses	Inspect daily and investigate changes early.
Buying feed by bag price alone	Cheap feed may cost more per kg gained	Compare results using consistent feed-conversion records.
Ignoring mortality and wastage	Apparent margins exceed real margins	Charge all batch inputs against actual sale output.
Forgetting labour or delivery	Break-even price is understated	Record paid costs and unpaid owner time separately.
Selling on credit without funding it	Profit appears before cash arrives	Put actual collection dates in the cash plan.

A reserve helps absorb modest disruptions; it cannot make a structurally loss-making batch profitable. Rework the plan if the selling price does not cover costs under assumptions you can reasonably achieve.

13. Keep records that improve the next batch

Use one page or spreadsheet tab per flock. A simple record kept daily is more valuable than an elaborate system filled in from memory at sale time.

Record	Capture
Birds	Opening count, deaths, culls, sales and closing count
Feed	Type, deliveries, kilograms issued, measured waste and closing stock
Water and environment	Usage where measurable, supply failures and temperature observations
Growth	Sample count, total sample weight, average and range
Health	Symptoms, veterinary advice, vaccinations and treatment records
Money	Invoice cost, payment date, sales value, money collected and amounts outstanding

Reconcile birds as `placed − deaths − culls − sold = remaining`. Reconcile feed as `opening stock + purchases − closing stock = feed issued/used`, then separate measured waste where possible. Reconcile cash as `opening cash + cash received − cash paid = closing cash`.

After sale, identify the largest difference between plan and actual result. Was feed dearer, growth slower, selling price lower or collection later? Correct the cause before expanding. FeedSport's Knowledge Centre provides further guidance on feed ingredients, nutrition and formulation.

A checklist to copy into your farm notebook

- Buyers, sale basis and payment dates established.
- Supplier quotations and phase-feeding instructions obtained.
- House, heat, water, equipment and backup arrangements checked.
- Veterinary prevention plan and hatchery vaccination record available.
- Full operating cash requirement and reserve funded.
- Weekly weighing and daily records assigned to a responsible person.
- Collection confirmed before the intended sale date.
- Costs, cash, feed stock and flock numbers reconciled after sale.

The feeding chart and budget tables can be printed or copied into a worksheet. A separate downloadable checklist, spreadsheet or calculator is not implied to exist.

Planning your next batch? Talk to FeedSport

Whether you raise 50 birds or 500, we are happy to go through your feed programme, your records and your results with you.

WhatsApp the team | Other ways to contact us

Frequently asked questions

How much money do I need for 100 broilers in Zimbabwe?

In this illustrative example, operating purchases require US$524 before sale, or US$576.40 including a 10% reserve. Buildings and equipment are additional. Use current local quotations and your own production assumptions. The broiler budget calculator works this out for your own batch size and prices.

How much feed do 100 broilers need?

The Ross 308 reference gives 458.6 kg for 100 living birds through day 42, before wastage and mortality-related adjustments. The separate worked farm budget uses 450 kg and purchases 500 kg because of bag sizes. Actual requirements depend on strain, sale age, growth and management.

How much profit can I make from 100 broilers?

The base example produces US$103.95 operating surplus, or US$77.95 after illustrative depreciation. It is not a profit promise. The combined pessimistic scenario loses US$89.28 before depreciation.

Should I sell at five or six weeks?

Use actual weight, buyer requirements and the additional cost of keeping birds. A sale date is a business decision informed by flock performance, not a universal rule.

Can I mix my own broiler feed?

Yes, if the formulation, ingredient quality, exact premix or concentrate and mixing process meet the birds' needs. A maize-and-soya mixture alone is not proof of a balanced ration. Compare total cost and results with a suitable complete feed programme.

References and source notes

Research checked on **23 October 2026**. Dates below are document editions or displayed publication dates, not inferred from search-engine crawl dates. “Undated” means no reliable publication date was established. Some publisher PDF servers intermittently reject automated requests; the official links are retained alongside verified document titles and editions.

1. **Aviagen (2022).** Ross 308 / Ross 308 FF Broiler: Performance Objectives. Printed page 3, as-hatched metric table. Weekly intake differences and flock multiples calculated for this article; original page visually checked.
2. **Cobb-Vantress (2021).** Cobb Broiler Management Guide. Sections on placement, chick quality, housing, ventilation and vaccination.
3. **Innscor Africa (undated).** Irvine's. Primary company information identifying Cobb broiler chicks; not a price quotation.
4. **Aviagen (2025).** Ross Broiler Management Handbook. Placement and brooding guidance. Publisher-indexed information cross-checked against the 7 August 2025 reproduction of Section 2 on The Poultry Site. The reproduction is an access aid to the original manufacturer's guidance.
5. **FAO (undated).** Management and housing: Gateway to poultry production and products. General housing and management principles.
6. **Profeeds Zimbabwe (undated).** Frequently asked questions. Selected local guidance on stocking density, disease concerns and lighting. Other statements on the page are not adopted wholesale.
7. **Cobb-Vantress (undated).** Brooding Guide for Optimum Breeder Development. Early crop-fill check; breeder-focused document used only for this chick-start assessment, not broiler growth targets.
8. **Aviagen (2022).** Ross Broiler Nutrition Specifications. Example phase timings and nutrient categories; not a universal local feed programme.
9. **Supreme Feed Zimbabwe (6 August 2026).** Complete Broiler Feeding Guide: Starter, Grower and

Finisher. Local supplier example of phase timing, accessed through indexed publisher content. No financial inputs are attributed to it.

10. **FAO (2013).** Poultry Development Review. Nutrition, formulation and feed safety chapters, particularly printed pages 60–78. Used for principles, not current strain performance.
11. **WOAH (2021 code edition; chapter update noted as 2013).** Chapter 6.5: Biosecurity procedures in poultry production. General prevention principles; not a statement of current Zimbabwean legal requirements.
12. **WOAH (undated).** Newcastle disease. Transmission, signs and need for diagnosis.
13. **MSD Veterinary Manual (online edition; publication date not established).** Infectious Bursal Disease in Poultry. Disease and immune-system effects.

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.