

Broiler Growing Can Be Profitable



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During the past few years interest in broiler production in Oklahoma has increased markedly. One of the prime reasons for this interest is that broilers are a "short-time cash crop." However, broiler raising is a highly competitive business. Many factors must be taken into consideration to be successful.

One of the most frequently asked questions is "Can I make money raising broilers?" Concrete and specific information to answer this question has been lacking in Oklahoma; therefore this bulletin was prepared to show cost and sales return on six lots of broilers grown and sold by Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station poultrymen.

The figures on these six lots show that you can make money raising broilers IF:

1. YOU START WITH GOOD CHICKS.
2. FEED THEM PROPERLY; AND
3. FOLLOW ACCEPTED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.

Six groups of broilers were hatched on November 24, 1950, and raised on the Experiment Station poultry farm. They were weighed at eight weeks and six days of age and marketed the following day. They were sold for 26 cents a pound, a price not too favorable for high profits. The retail cost of the ration was \$4.80 per 100 pounds. The results of this test, shown in Table 1, illustrate that money can be made raising broilers.

The ration fed in this test is shown in Table 2.

How You Can Use Table 1.

From Table 1, it is possible to make calculations to apply to your own situation. For example, consider the B.P.R. \times N.H. crosses with feed selling at \$4.80 a hundredweight. This lot had a mortality rate of 3.0 percent, the birds averaged 2.5 pounds at nine weeks of age, and the return per bird over feed cost was 30 cents. If your feed cost averages about 70 percent of total costs and chicks cost 15 cents each, the return over feed and chick cost would be 15 cents a bird.

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These Broilers Returned 30 Cents per Chick Above Feed Cost.

This lot made a pound of gain on 2.85 pounds of feed and had a mortality of 1.8 percent. Their average weight at nine weeks was 2.32 pounds. Such performance is not at all exceptional; many broiler growers get better results. The birds in this lot are a cross of Silver Oklabar males with New Hampshire females, a combination which shows signs of becoming popular in Oklahoma. Silver Oklabars were developed by Station poultry breeders as a general purpose farm bird for the State, and are now being field tested by a number of poultry raisers.

TABLE I.—RETURNS IN BROILER PRODUCTION TESTS.

	BREED OR CROSS*					
	New Hamp.	O.D.W. × N. H.	S.O. × N. H.	G.O. × N. H.	B.P.R.	B.P.R. × N. H.
No. marketed	487	460	491	474	139	96
Total lbs. marketed	1053.9	1142.7	1139.9	1116.3	274.5	239.9
Average wt., lbs.	2.16	2.48	2.32	2.36	1.97	2.50
Percent mortality	2.6	5.2	1.8	2.7	1.4	3.0
Pounds of feed per lb. of gain	3.03	2.81	2.85	2.83	3.12	3.03
Total sales @ 26¢ lb.	\$274.01	\$297.10	\$296.37	\$290.24	\$71.37	\$62.37
Feed Cost at \$4.80 cwt.						
Feed cost @ \$4.80 cwt.	147.50	148.01	150.19	146.50	39.41	33.77
Return over feed cost	126.51	149.09	146.18	143.74	31.96	28.60
Return per chick over feed cost	.26	.32	.30	.30	.23	.30
Similar returns can be calculated with feed costing \$4.50 and \$5.00 per hundred pounds, as shown below:						
Feed Cost at \$4.50 cwt.						
Feed cost @ \$4.50 cwt.	138.28	138.76	140.80	137.34	36.94	31.66
Return over feed cost	135.73	158.34	155.57	152.90	35.43	30.71
Return per chick over feed cost	.28	.34	.32	.32	.25	.32
Feed Cost at \$5.00 cwt.						
Feed cost @ \$5.00 cwt.	153.65	154.18	156.45	152.60	41.05	35.18
Return over feed cost	120.36	142.92	139.92	137.64	30.32	27.19
Return per chick over feed cost	.25	.31	.28	.29	.22	.28

* Breeding of the six lots was as follows:

New Hamp.—New Hampshires.

O.D.W. × N.H.—Oklahoma Dominant White males crossed on New Hampshire females.

S.O. × N.H.—Silver Oklabar males crossed on New Hampshire females.

G.O. × N.H.—Gold Oklabar males crossed on New Hampshire females.

B.P.R.—Barred Plymouth Rocks.

B.P.R. × N.H.—Barred Plymouth Rock males crossed on New Hampshire females.

TABLE 2.—THE RATION.

	Pounds (except as noted)
Ground yellow corn	55
Pulverized oats	5
Corn gluten meal	5
Fish meal	5
Soybean oil meal	25
Vitamin A feeding oil (6,000 A)	0.2
Dry D ₃ (2,000 D)	0.05
Riboflavin mix (1 gram per ounce)	4 grams
Choline chloride (25 percent)	0.25
Niacin (1 gram per ounce)	1 ounce
Calcium pantothenate	0.3 gram
Manganese sulfate	6 grams
Salt	1
Calcium carbonate	1
Steamed bonemeal	2
Merck's	0.2
Vitamin B ₁₂ and antibiotic supplement	

Figuring it another way, if feed averages 70 percent of total costs and other costs equal 30 percent,* total costs on the basis of the B.P.R. \times N.H. shown in Table 1 would be about 46 cents. Two and a half pound birds sold at 26 cents a pound give a total return of 65 cents per bird. Thus, the profit per bird would be 19 cents. If 5,000 birds were raised, a profit of \$950 would be realized.

Things to Watch.

Besides the cost of feed and market price for the broilers, strict attention must be paid to the growth rate, mortality rate, and the efficiency of converting feed into meat. The mortality rates of the six groups of broilers shown in Table 1 are very satisfactory. However, the growth figures and feed conversion efficiency are not at all exceptional. Many broiler raisers get better results than those shown.

* These figures may vary slightly. For example, the average cost of producing a broiler chick to market age will range between 65 to 85 cents when broiler mash is 5 cents per pound and chicks are 15 cents each. These costs include approximately 65 percent for feed, 20 percent for chicks, 8 percent for labor, 2 percent for fuel, 2 percent for building and equipment cost, 0.5 percent for litter, 0.5 percent for medicine or sanitation products, and 2 percent for miscellaneous cost.