

If You Want To Raise Fryers

Consider These Factors:

Location

near a reliable market

Marketing

have a buyer before you start birds

Types of Operation

all in, all out

Size of Operation

30,000 to 40,000 fryers per year per man

Investment

\$10,000 to \$25,000, excluding cost of your home

Production Costs

aim at \$.77 or less per bird

Feed

less than 3 pounds-of-feed should result in 1 pound-of-gain

Disease

prevent rather than cure

Mortality

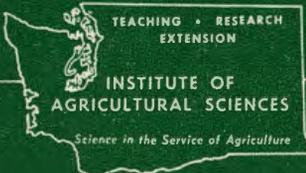
less than 0.5 per cent per week

Breeds

use only meat strains or crosses

Housing

1 square foot per bird



EXTENSION SERVICE

STATE COLLEGE OF WASHINGTON

Pullman, Washington

Raising Fryers Is a Speculative Business*

... to be successful you must manage it well

The profit margin per bird usually is small—a slight price drop, or few days delay in marketing may mean the difference between your making a profit or taking a loss.

However . . .

You need relatively little investment in land, buildings, and equipment. Your work is detailed and confining, but comparatively easy. The birds are ready for sale usually when they are about 10 weeks old. This means you have an income shortly after going into business.

Location

Fryers can be raised anywhere in Washington. But it is all important for you to locate near a reliable market. Do not locate in an area where you depend on occasional buyers. Check the market situation carefully before investing.

Marketing

It is crucial that you have a place to send your birds once they are raised. Do not start birds unless you have a buyer who will take them when they are ready for market.

Each fryer, when it is ready for market, will be eating about $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of feed per day. At 5¢ a pound for feed, 10,000 birds will be eating \$125 worth of feed a day. Sell as soon as birds reach marketable size. Work with your processor in arriving at the best size to market fryers. Feed efficiency decreases with age.

Types of Operation

Most successful fryer raising is done on an all in, all out, basis. Continuous operation fits some marketing programs better but is hazardous. ALL IN, ALL OUT, OPERATION means you raise and sell a batch of chicks, and clean out the houses before starting a new batch.

Management is easier than under a continuous operation and disease control is simplified. You can run about four broods a year. One such cycle usually takes 11 to 15 weeks.

CONTINUOUS OPERATION means you start chicks at regular intervals, such as every week or two. Your farm will always contain birds of several different ages, and there will be a more or less continuous supply of your fryers going to market.

There may appear to be advantages in a continuous type of operation, but disease problems may soon put you out of business.

* The material in this publication was prepared by the Poultry Council of the State College of Washington. This group is composed of staff members of the State College of Washington at Pullman and Puyallup engaged in teaching, research, and extension problems of poultry science and pathology.

Size of Operation

The labor income per bird (or per pound of bird produced) varies widely from batch to batch, and from year to year. An average of 10c per bird labor income (the amount you have to live on and for debt retirement and savings) is a good figure to shoot for over a long-time period. Some make more; few can get along on less.

To maintain a satisfactory standard of living you will have to sell 30,000 to 40,000 fryers a year. This figure is based on the experience of successful fryer producers.

Investment

The investment needed to start a fryer farm will vary with location, types of buildings, and other factors. You will need at least five acres of land, buildings to cover at least 10,000 square feet, and equipment such as brooders and feeders.

This initial cost will come to at least \$10,000 if you make good buys on material and do much of your own construction. Where land prices are high and you select expensive types of buildings, the initial cost may run to more than \$25,000.

In figuring your initial cost you must keep in mind that the first group of fryers will cost you about 77¢ per bird before you have any income. Also remember that these costs do not include living expenses and quarters for yourself and your family.

Production Costs

Holding down production costs spells the difference between success and failure of the fryer business. Some of the factors affecting costs are discussed elsewhere in this leaflet. Here are the most representative items you have to include when you figure costs:

	Cost per bird raised
Feed (10 lbs. at 5¢)	\$.50
Chicks17
Brooder fuel01
Miscellaneous (litter, vaccine, taxes)03
Depreciation04
Interest02
Total	<u>\$.77</u>

If hired labor is used you can figure 0.1 hour per bird times the going wage rate.

Feed

Feed constitutes about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the cost of raising fryers. To have a profitable operation, therefore, you must use feed as efficiently as you can.

A fryer 10 to 12 weeks old will have eaten 10 to 12 pounds of feed. You can measure the efficiency of your operation on the basis of pounds-of-feed per pound-of-gain. Generally, you will make a profit if you achieve one pound-of-gain for 3 pounds-of-feed or less. Good managers use as little as 2.5 pounds-of-feed per pound-of-gain. You can get these low rates of feed conversion by using fast-growing strains of birds, raised under healthful conditions on high energy, high quality rations. You cannot attain such good records if feed is wasted around the feeders. When crumbles or pellets are used the birds should be debeaked for cannibalism control. Obtain your feed from commercial feed companies.

Diseases

Bring only disease-free stock to your farm. Buy day-old chicks from a reliable hatchery. Use a vaccination program which has proven successful in your area.

If prevention is unsuccessful, take or send the sick birds to the state diagnostic laboratory nearest you to get positive identification of the infection and suggestions for treatment.

Mortality

Mortality losses vary considerably among fryer plants. Some growers are able to sell as many finished birds as they buy. This is possible where hatcheries give an overage on the number of birds purchased, which means you get extra birds beyond the number of chicks you pay for. In any case, losses should not exceed 0.5 per cent per week. You will inevitably lose some birds, but a high mortality rate will wipe out your profits.

Breeds

There are several meat-type strains of heavy breeds (and crosses of these breeds) that are satisfactory for fryer raising. Breeders are continually improving their stock for higher livability, more pounds-of-meat per pound-of-feed, faster gains in weight and higher quality fleshing. Use a strain of birds which has these characteristics. Inquire into the performance of stock you purchase by checking with operating growers who are using the stock.

Leghorn cockerels have been used to produce light broilers, but the demand for this type of bird is limited and very specialized. Do not consider leghorns unless you have such a market.

Housing

There are many types of houses for fryer production. The buildings must be suitable for the climate and ground location of your farm. Plan new buildings with the idea of alternate uses.

The housing you provide should offer:

Sufficient space (1 square foot) per bird.

Ample ventilation.

Ability to keep litter dry.

Ease of doing the necessary feeding, cleaning and other operations.

Wire floors can eliminate the wet-litter problem, but may necessitate several different setups for birds at different ages, and also complicate the cleaning. Use wire floors only if you do not keep the birds longer than until they are eight or nine weeks old. Otherwise they will develop breast blisters.

Mechanical feeders and automatic waterers reduce the time you need to care for the birds and also eliminate most of the heavy work.

Above all, arrange your fryer layout so that the feed can be delivered and the birds can be picked up at the house where they are raised.

Detailed information on Fryer Production and Disease Control can be obtained from your local county Extension agent.

Material printed in this publication was adapted for use in Washington from the California Agricultural Extension Leaflet 27, "If You Want a Fryer Ranch," which was authored by A. D. Reed, Associate Agriculturist, University of California Agricultural Extension Service, Berkeley.