

Some growers like to produce larger birds called roasters. These birds are usually fed to three to five months of age. These birds require considerable amounts of feed and the conversion rate drops as the birds grow older.

Housing & Equipment—Points to Consider

1. Most growers in Alaska buy chicks in the spring and grow the birds during warm weather. Some have even produced two flocks in a season. During the summer the housing requirements are minimal. A fenced area that has a shelter from rain and wind is all that is needed. The fence should be built to keep the birds in and the predators out. Some growers have portable pens that can be moved around the homestead, thus eliminating the need for litter. Broilers need one square foot of space per bird.
2. If birds are kept in a broiler house they will need 4 to 6 inches of litter. Additional litter is added as needed. Shavings, peat moss, and chopped straw all make satisfactory litter. Sawdust is not recommended. Clean out and replace litter after each group of birds.
3. Broilers need: 1 linear inch of feeder space up to 2 weeks of age; 2 linear inches from 2 to 6 weeks; and 3 linear inches after 6 weeks. A hanging tube feeder is adequate for 25 to 30 birds. To reduce feed waste, raise the feeder level with the birds' backs.
4. Broilers need: one-gallon capacity waterer up to 2 weeks of age for 50 birds; one-gallon capacity waterer at 2 to 10 weeks of age for 16 birds. Growing birds need fresh water at least twice each day.
5. The Cooperative Extension office has an excellent publication on *Poultry Equipment Plans*. Ask for FSG-00540. Plans are included for chickens, turkeys, pigeons, and rabbits.

Home Broiler Production—Does It Pay?

Item	Average Cost	Your Cost
50 chicks @ 50¢ each	25.00	_____
Interest—10% (8 weeks)	.38	_____
Feed 9 pounds feed x 50 birds = 450 pounds		
450 pounds x 26¢	117.00	_____
Medication	1.25	_____
Electricity for brooding—250 watts x 18 days	4.86	_____
Waterers, feeders & housing	7.00	_____
TOTAL	155.49	_____

No costs are included for labor, mortality (usually 2 percent), and processing costs. Broilers will dress out at 65 percent of live weight.

After listing your expected production costs and comparing that cost with broilers prices in the grocery store, the decision can be made as to whether to buy your poultry or produce your own.

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