

Cheap chicken feed formulation part 1

Feed is a very important input in poultry farming and is a major determinant of the success of any poultry farm.

When formulating feed for your chicken, if you have little or no knowledge about it, you can make toxic feed in the name of making cheap feed or substandard feed. In the event of substandard feed, layers won't lay in time and they will lay fewer eggs while broilers won't reach market weight in 6 weeks.

Feed components

When making feed, the major components needed are maize for energy, bran (wheat or maize bran) for fibre which is important in digestion and plant protein which is mainly soybean. The only substitute for soybean as a plant protein is *sim sim* but it's advisable that it is only used by technical people because it contains a high oil content hence increases oil content in feed and if such fed to layers, it increases fat deposition hence the layers won't lay.

When using soybean as a plant protein, ensure that it's roasted or cooked because raw soybean has anti-nutritional factors (cytokinins) and can be poisonous to the birds.

You can use either sunflower cake or cotton cake and if cotton cake is used, ensure that it is uncoated because the testa of the cotton seed has anti-nutritional factors which bind with the nutrients making them unavailable to the bird or it becomes poisonous.

You can also add silver fish/ fish meal though not recommended for layers because it leaves a strong odour in the eggs if used in excess and also reduces the shelf life of the eggs because of too much protein.

Lastly you need lime. If the feed is for layers, you need 3%, for growers, you need 1.5% and for chicks you need 1.3%. Lime is very important for laying birds.