

The above discussion has emphasized the biological relationships that place limitations on poultry production. Equally important to the farmer are the costs and returns associated with changed methods. In this connection, four questions are relevant:

- a) What types of feeds and antibiotics will be required for balanced rations?
- b) Are local feeds available to supply these requirements?
- c) What are the alternative uses (opportunity costs) of the inputs used in poultry production?
- d) What is the demand (current and future) for poultry products?

While the nutrient requirements for chickens are extensive, (13) there is sufficient variety of local food stuffs to meet most of the requirements. Wheat, barley, maize and sorghum are available as energy sources. Vegetable and animal protein supplements could be derived from cotton-seed meal and fish meal. Vitamins, antibiotics and other feed additives are also available locally.

Because of seasonal price movements in feedgrains, it is difficult to calculate precisely the cost of a "balanced ration". Using a rough estimate of Rs 350 per long ton, (14) feed costs (including antibiotics) would be about Rs 0.5 (3 pounds feed x Rs 0.16) for each pound of gain. Hence, under good feeding conditions, a 4-pound broiler would require about Rs 2 worth of feed. To this must be added housing costs, the cost of the chick, labor costs (which may be zero if there is under-employment of labor) and an additional charge to cover death losses. Therefore, unless the farmer can receive Rs 3.5 to Rs 4.0 per bird, he will be unable to cover the cost of his inputs. He would be in a better financial position if he used his labor and other resources in farm enterprises other than chickens. Similarly, a dozen eggs (from a flock laying 125 eggs per bird per year) would need to bring at least Rs 1.25 (8 lbs. feed x Rs .16) to cover feed costs, or an estimated Rs 1.75 per dozen to cover all direct costs.

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(13) See, Nutrient Requirements of Poultry, op. cit.

(14) Lever Bros. sell a mixed feed (which approaches a balanced poultry ration) for Rs 16 per cwt. at Lyallpur (Spring 1963).