

# **FEEDING BROILER BREEDER PULLETS FOR PRODUCTION**

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The genetics of Broiler Breeder is centred on meat production which is quite varying if you compare with Layer Breeders where the genetics is more specifically into egg production. This difference in genetics is a tall order for Broiler Breeder farmers because it becomes harder to get eggs from this breed. Therefore there is need for more attention in the rearing and feed management of this bird to lay and peak at 86% egg Production. These eggs are critical for producing broiler day old chicks mostly on demand by many upcoming and established chicken farmers.

There are 3 critical stages in the growth profile of a breeder pullet which must be observed if one needs to get maximum return in terms of egg production. The growth profile is achieved through strict controlled feeding, a contrast principle from layers where feed is ad-libitum. Let's look at the phases.

## **1. START PHASE**

This is the first phase from 0 to 6 weeks. This is where uniformity and frame size are determined for most of the flock's life. Brooding period falls under this phase where you need to give your chicks the best possible start to achieve required 7 day weight. Therefore the importance of brooding in this phase cannot be over emphasized since it sets the precedent for good performance and efforts done during this period will be rewarded later in Production. To support the much needed early start birds are given starter feeds rich in CP ie 19-21% for the first 21 days.

## **2. MAINTENANCE PHASE**

Sometimes also known as **controlled growth** phase. In simple terms the body weight should increase at a decreasing rate. This period is between 6 to 16 weeks. The birds should be maintained under a carefully controlled feeding program designed to prevent the birds from becoming overweight. The feed increments should be between 1 to 3 grams per week and not more than that. To help achieve this a lesser richer feed in CP like Growers is fed to the birds and normally this type of ration with 14% CP will not lead to overweight birds. Under this period birds are expected to finish their daily allocation in about 30 to 40 minutes.

### **3. PREPARATION FOR LAY**

This period starts from 16 weeks up to point of lay. This is the last phase in the rearing profile of the breeder bird. This is the point where there is acceleration of growth and body weights to prepare for sexual development. The main objective of this phase is,

- a. Giving correct feed increases 6 to 8g weekly
- b. Building adequate flesh and fat reserves
- c. Preventing drops in weight gain or stagnant weights

To achieve the growth required at this stage a richer feed in CP like Pre-breeders (16-18%) is fed to the birds.

Basic understanding of the above important phases forms part of good breeder pullet rearing management which can make a farmer smile all the way to the bank.