

## Rations for chickens\*

For small scale commercial chickens, fed full-time, one of the most important aspects we need to know is the crude protein (CP) level of the ration. Generally, we start with a high level of protein and later on, as the bird gets older, we can reduce the protein level. Many small scale chicken producers in Malawi follow the following general guidelines for CP content of rations:

Broilers	Layers	CP
Starter ration	Starter ration, 4-6 weeks	20-22%
Grower ration	Grower ration, 6-20 weeks	18-20%
Finisher ration	Layer ration, 20 weeks +	16-18%

We can calculate the contribution of various feed components to the nutrient content of the ration. The approximate nutrient values of many feed components can be obtained from published data (such as is available through the joint project "Feedipedia"). Using this information, we can design home-mixed rations using locally available ingredients. This may enable a significant cost saving over commercially prepared complete rations. The first step in this procedure is to determine what ingredients are available locally.

The following table shows a few sample rations which may be suitable for supplementary feeding in Malawi and the approximate estimated crude protein content of the respective ration. The ingredients in these rations are available in Malawi at least in some localities. Other nutritional information about these rations such as energy content is not shown here. These calculations are based on the estimated CP and moisture content of the ingredients, which may vary from supplier to supplier. It is therefore necessary to take care in using these rations. A proper nutritional analysis of the prepared ration is essential if significant numbers or valuable poultry are involved.

### Examples of Rations

	Ration 1	Ration 2	Ration 3	Ration 4	Ration 5	Ration 6
Ingredient	Kg/100 kg	Kg/100 kg	Kg/100 kg	Kg/100 kg	Kg/100 kg	Kg/100 kg
Madeya	82.4	62.4	77.4	67.4	67.4	67.4
Soybean seed (roasted!)	15.0	15.0	10.0	10.0	20.0	15.0
Groundnut meal	-	-	10.0	-	10.0	10.0
Rice bran	-	20.0	-	-	-	-
Sunflower meal	-	-	-	20.0	-	-
Fish meal	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
MCP	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Salt	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Premix	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Est. CP	14.1%	14.2%	16.3%	15.8%	18.7%	20.0%

