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EBOOK

Start a Profitable Poultry or Catfish Farm

A practical beginner's guide to broilers, layers and catfish — from your first batch to steady profit

nglancer.com

For new and small-scale farmers in Nigeria

Start a Profitable Poultry or Catfish Farm

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Why farming — and why start small

Nigerians eat chicken, eggs and catfish every day — at home, at parties, in restaurants, at bukas and pepper-soup joints. The demand is steady and it rises in festive seasons. That is why poultry and fish farming remain some of the most popular small businesses in the country.

They are also businesses where **many beginners lose money**: birds die from disease, fish die from bad water, feed prices jump, or the farmer reaches market day without a buyer. Almost every one of these losses can be prevented with good planning, clean habits and simple records.

This guide shows you how to:

- choose the right enterprise for your money, space and time;
- set up housing or tanks properly the first time;
- buy healthy stock and feed it well;
- prevent disease and losses;
- work out your real cost per bird or per kilogram of fish;
- find buyers *before* harvest.

> 💡 **TIP**
>
> **Start with one small batch** — for example 100–300 broilers or 500–1,000 catfish juveniles. A small batch teaches you more than any book, and a mistake costs you thousands, not millions. Grow only after you have made a profit on your first batch.

> ⚠️ **WATCH OUT**
>
> All naira figures in this book are **examples to show you how to calculate**. Prices of chicks, fingerlings and feed change often and differ by state. Always get current prices from at least three local suppliers before you plan.

CHAPTER 1

Choose your enterprise

The three most popular options

	Broilers	Layers	Catfish
What you sell	Live or dressed birds for meat	Eggs (and old layers at the end)	Live or smoked fish
Time to first sale	About 6–8 weeks	Eggs start at about 18–20 weeks	About 4–6 months
Money needed to start	Low–medium	High (long wait before income)	Medium
Daily work	Feeding, water, cleaning, watching for illness	Same, plus egg collection	Feeding, watching water, changing water
Biggest risk	Disease, high feed cost, no buyer on time	Long investment period, disease	Bad water, overcrowding, theft
Best for	Beginners who want quick cycles	Farmers with capital and patience	People with water supply and some space

Questions to answer honestly

- **How much money can I invest — and lose — without hurting my family?** Never use school fees or rent money.
- **Where will the farm be?** Your backyard, a rented plot or a family compound? Will neighbours complain about smell or noise? Is there security?
- **Water:** Do you have a borehole or reliable water supply? Fish farming is impossible without it, and birds drink a lot.
- **Time:** Who will feed and check the stock every morning and evening, every single day, including Sundays and holidays?
- **Market:** Who will buy? Do you know restaurants, caterers, market women, hotels, pepper-soup sellers or households who buy regularly?

✍️ **YOUR TASK**

Write down your budget, your location, your water source, who will do the daily work and three possible buyers. If you can't fill in all five, solve the gaps first.

CHAPTER 2

Set up a broiler or layer house

Location and housing

- Choose a **dry, well-drained** spot, away from your living rooms and from other poultry farms if possible.
- Build the house so the long sides face east–west; this reduces direct afternoon sun inside.
- Use **open sides with wire mesh** and half walls (about 1 metre of block) for air flow. Add tarpaulin or curtains you can roll down when it is cold or raining.
- Use a roof that does not trap heat. Add an overhang so rain doesn't blow in.
- Make the floor **concrete** if possible — it is easier to clean and disinfect between batches.

Space

As a general guide, allow about **1 square foot per broiler** to market age in a well-ventilated house, and more space in hot weather. Crowded birds grow slowly, fight and fall sick. For layers in cages, follow the cage manufacturer's stocking rate; on deep litter, give them more space than broilers.

Equipment checklist

- ▢ Drinkers (enough that birds don't crowd)
- ▢ Feeders — chick feeders for the first weeks, then larger ones
- ▢ Brooding source: charcoal pots, kerosene stove or gas brooder, or electric brooder — and a backup if NEPA fails
- ▢ Wood shavings for litter (5–8 cm deep)
- ▢ Brooder guard (cardboard, zinc or plywood ring) to keep chicks near heat
- ▢ Thermometer

- [ ] Footbath with disinfectant at the entrance
- [ ] Bucket, scoop, weighing scale, record book
- [ ] For layers: laying nests or cages and egg crates

Brooding: the first two weeks decide the batch

Day-old chicks cannot control their body temperature. In the first one to two weeks you must keep them warm, dry and fed.

- **Pre-heat** the brooding area for a few hours before the chicks arrive.
- Watch the chicks, not just the thermometer: chicks spread evenly and moving about = comfortable; crowded under the heat = too cold; panting and far away from the heat = too hot; crowded on one side = draught.
- Give water first (some farmers add glucose or a vitamin supplement on arrival as advised by their vet), then feed.
- Keep a light on at night in the first days so chicks find feed and water.
- Gradually widen the brooder guard and reduce heat as they grow and feather.

> 📘 **EXAMPLE**
>
> **Mrs Ada in Enugu** lost 40 out of 200 chicks in her first batch because the charcoal pot went out at 2 a.m. and the chicks piled up. On her second batch she bought a small gas brooder as backup and asked her nephew to check at midnight. She lost only 4.

CHAPTER 3

Buy good chicks, feed and medicine

Buying day-old chicks

- Buy from a **known hatchery or its registered distributor**. Ask other farmers which hatchery's chicks did well this season.
- Book early, especially before festive seasons, when chicks run out and prices rise.
- Healthy chicks are active, bright-eyed and alert, with dry, clean vents and healed navels.
- Count them on arrival and note any weak or dead chicks; report them to the supplier the same day.

End of the free sample

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