

Should you be home-mixing poultry feed?

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Poultry Science UNIVERSITY PARK
— Here is one method of answering the question, "Should I home-mix feed on my farm?" Answer each question one at a time.

1. Do you feed a minimum total of 600 tons of mixed feed per year on your farm? If the answer is no, stop here and buy mixed feed. If the answer is yes, go to number 2.

2. Do you have a commercial mill within 100 miles of your farm that can mix what feed you want in the quality, volume and time frame you need it? Also, can you purchase this feed at \$10 to \$20 over ingredient cost? If the answer is no, go to number 3.

3. Do you have someone on your farm who has the management ability and the knowledge to buy, store and mix, blend, or grind ingredients properly to generate the final mixed feed in the quality, volume, and time frame you need it on the farm? If the answer is no, stop. If the answer is yes, then go to number 4.

4. Does this farm feed manager have one hour or more each day to spend with the feed business? If the answer is no, stop. If yes, go to number 5.

5. Does this feed manager have the very superior ability to buy or grow all quality ingredients at the right price or cost to the milling operation? Many farm mixing operations have been closed due to the inability of the manager to obtain ingredients in the quality, volume price and time frame necessary to home-mix feed competitively. If the answer is no, stop. If yes, continue to number 6.

6. Are you prepared to spend \$50,000 or even triple this amount for a home-mix set up including a scale, a mill, a horizontal mixer, grain dryer, storage bins, transfer auger and a truck? If no, stop. If yes, proceed to number 7.

7. Are you prepared to persuade big grain companies that your small account is worth it to send you their finest quality grains and feedstuffs at the lowest price per ton in truck load lots? If no, stop here and buy mixed feed. If yes, go to number 8.

8. Are you prepared to grow large quantities of grain if necessary (say 500 to 3000 acres of corn) to attain the position of having an alternative to \$4.00 per bushel corn? In times like these a farmer can utilize manure to replace some fertilizer to grow corn to feed to poultry if he has the soil, machinery, labor and other necessary inputs. If the answer is no, stop. If the

answer is yes, go to number 9.

9. Are you prepared to have \$100,000 or more tied up in feed ingredients at one time to even out the highs and lows in the market? If the answer is no, stop. If the answer is yes, go on to number 10.

10. Are you prepared to buy secure and store all dangerous chemicals used in feeds (such as coccidiostats) so that large quantities are not mixed into the feed by mistake? Are you prepared to deal with the Pennsylvania State Department of Agriculture as well as the FDA, USDA and OSHA in meeting requirements of mixing feeds on the farm? If the answer is no, stop. If the answer is yes, go to number 11.

11. Do you have a source of knowledge of ration formulation, least cost formulation, problem solving when quality goes bad and how to handle a mistake in a batch? Do you have a consultant in nutrition who can keep your mixing operation guided in the right direction? If the answer is no, stop. If yes, continue to number 12.

12. Are you prepared to spend \$100 to \$200 per month for feed ingredients and finished feed quality control testing. This determines that you are buying good quality ingredients. Also it tells you if the ingredients are being mixed properly. If the answer is no, stop. If yes, continue to number 13.

13. Are you prepared

to purchase, design, install, adjust, maintain, operate, manage and repair feed storage, weighing, grinding, mixing, and transfer equipment so that:

-out of commission time or out of commission for maintenance time is less than two days?

-equipment is easy to operate, lubricate and maintain?

-equipment will last for at least ten years?

-equipment will not malfunction very much?

-equipment will measure, grind and blend ingredients properly?

-equipment will pass all local, state and federal ordinances?

What are the disadvantages to home mixing?

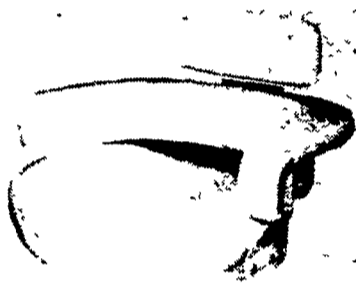
Feed quality control problems are common. Buying right on ingredients puts most out of business if errors

are made. Mistakes in amounts of concentrates and additives mixed are common. You must usually

evaluate and buy used equipment to make the investment low enough

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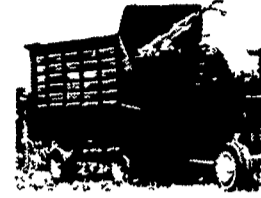
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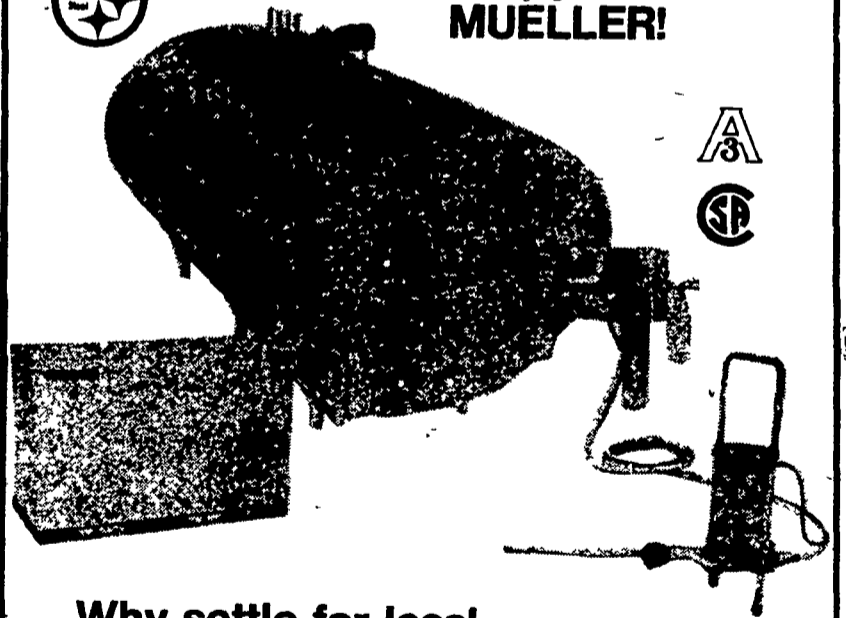
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