

# BROILER PRODUCTION

## Introduction



*The majority of broilers are reared indoors in barn units.*

Poultry farming in Ireland is quite a large industry; however, it is concentrated in two main areas – Cavan/Monaghan and Cork/Limerick – with other growers and producers across the island. In 2019, a record

106 million birds were produced in Ireland. There are approximately 450 broiler (chicken raised for meat) producers supplying to three main integrators. The majority of broilers are reared indoors in barn units.

## Registration and quality assurance

Any person keeping poultry must register with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

As consumers become increasingly concerned about animal welfare, the

majority of producers are certified by Bord Bia under the Poultry Products Quality Assurance Standard. This standard also considers product quality, food safety and traceability.

### Costs

The construction costs for a broiler house will vary depending on the standard you decide to go for. It is advisable to spend the extra money on day one, to ensure you will not be making changes in years to come. Many systems which may cost more on day one will reduce running costs (more efficient motors, lighting, etc.):

- costs are in the region of €12.50 per bird place for the first house; this will decrease to €10 per bird place for following houses;
- a typical 40,000-bird house costs in the region of €500,000;
- this will depend on groundwork and site development; and,
- this does not include the cost of the site.

### Income

For an initial house, the average payback period is 10 years. In these 10 years, you can still draw an income for yourself. The average producer will do 6.5 flocks per year. The payment structure will depend on the integrator you are supplying. Bonuses will be paid based on feed conversion ratio (FCR) targets, foot pad scores, and Campylobacter scores.

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## Site consideration

For a greenfield site, it is important to plan the location and position of your poultry house to work with the current farm enterprise:

- the aim is to isolate from other farming activities – this is critical to minimise disease outbreak and cross contamination, and maintain high biosecurity;
- the site must have good road access for articulated lorries;
- the topography of the site can have a major influence on the cost of groundwork, drainage and security; and,
- it is also advisable to avoid large bodies of water, as this can help with biosecurity measures.



*The site should be isolated from other farming activity to minimise disease outbreak.*

## Planning permission

Planning applications are specialised and it is advisable to employ the services of an architect who specialises in poultry housing applications:

- an environmental impact assessment (EIA) and an environmental impact statement (EIS) must accompany your planning application to the local authority;
- if the housing or site capacity exceeds 40,000 birds, it is necessary to apply for Integrated Pollution Prevention and

Control (IPPC) licensing from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and,

- the architect will be able to assist with the EIA, EIS and IPPC licence (if required).

## Construction

It is wise to employ an engineer to oversee the works during the construction phase.

They can ensure the money is well spent in relation to groundwork, drainage and

concrete work:

- this is a substantial investment on your farm, one which should last a minimum of 30 years; and,
- while there are many companies who supply internal equipment (feeders, drinkers, heating, ventilation, etc.), it is advisable to speak with other producers and the fields person of your processor, as they will have seen many systems in place and in use.

## Record keeping

It is critical that records are maintained. These are required for financial management but also physical management of the enterprise. Feed records, water, mortality and other records are required by Bord Bia. For them to be beneficial, records must be:

- complete;

- current; and,
- accurate.

The records can be analysed and used to make future business decisions.

## Further information

For further information please contact Rebecca Tierney, Poultry Advisor at:

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The following resources are also helpful:

[www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)

[www.ibec.ie](http://www.ibec.ie)

[www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie)

[www.teagasc.ie/ruraldev](http://www.teagasc.ie/ruraldev)



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