



Should You Mix Your Own Chicken Feed?

By Robyn Stewart, M.S.

2 primary reasons to make your own chicken feed...

- A) Feed is 70% of your cost of chicken ownership... can you save money making your own?
- B) Homemade is "better" i.e. you can make it non-GMO, no soy, organic, etc.

Common ingredients and why they're used:

Cereal grains (corn, wheat, oats, distillers grains): Energy source, low in protein, vitamins, minerals

Middlings, hulls, etc: Protein and fiber source

Peas, Soybean Meal, Sunflower Meal, Lentils, Alfalfa: Plant-based protein, typically need to be 20-30% of the diet to provide adequate protein

Fish meal, feather meal, insect proteins: Animal sources of protein, can be fed but often hard to make palatable.

Flaxseed and other oils: These are fat sources, they provide calories and fatty acids as well as essential fat-soluble vitamins ADEK.

Vitamin and Mineral premix: These are commercially produced vitamin and mineral products that are specifically formulated and balanced to meet the needs of chickens.

Some things to think about...

- 1) By the time you source the required ingredients for a correctly balanced feed, you probably will not wind up with "cheaper" feed than a commercial mix. See examples below.
- 2) You have no way of knowing if your chickens are getting the correct nutrition if you mix feed at home. When commercial diets are made, they are created using extensive software and programming that calculates the exact nutrition of each ingredient and how it affects the nutrition of the overall mix.
- 3) Each of these "recipes" require different amount of ingredients... thus you'll go through different rates of corn vs oats vs premix. Keeping ingredients fresh and storing them long enough to use them may be a challenge.

A basic feed...

<https://www.theprairiehomestead.com/2016/06/homemade-chicken-feed-recipe.html>

Ingredients	Percent of mix	Ingredient price (per 50lbs)	Amount in 50 lbs mixed...	Price for 50lbs mixed...
Corn	30%	\$8.99	15lbs	\$2.69
Wheat	30%	\$10.80	15lbs	\$3.24
Peas	20%	\$11.25	10lbs	\$2.25
Oats	10%	\$10.20	5lbs	\$1.02
Fish Meal	8%	\$47.97	4lbs	\$3.84
Vitamin/Mineral Premix	2%	\$233.70	1lb	\$4.67

Total cost = \$ 17.71 for 50 lbs

Compare to a commercial Layer Feed @ **\$15.16 for 50 lbs** that contains corn meal, soybean meal, distillers grains, wheat middling's, alfalfa meal

Similar ingredients, less expensive, and guaranteed nutrition to buy commercial.

An organic, non-GMO, non-soy homemade feed (makes ~15lbs)

<https://theelliotthomestead.com/2013/06/organic-homemade-chicken-feed/>

***This recipe does not include a balanced vitamin/mineral profile!**

Ingredients	Percent in mix	Ingredient price per pound	Amount in 50 lbs mixed...	Price for 50lbs mixed...
Oats	13%	\$0.55	6.5lb	\$3.58
White Wheat	21%	\$1.51	10.5lb	\$15.86
Red Wheat	21%	\$1.04	10.5lb	\$10.92
Corn	15%	\$1.27	7.5lb	\$9.53
Lentils	15%	\$1.56	7.5lb	\$11.70
Split Peas	7%	\$1.51	3.5lb	\$5.29
Flax Seed	5%	\$1.55	2.5lb	\$3.88
Sesame Seeds	2%	\$8.68	1lb	\$8.68
Kelp Granules	0.5%	\$4.17	0.25lb	\$1.04

Total Cost: \$70.46 for 50 lbs

Compare to a commercial organic, non-gmo, no soy Premium Layer Feed @ **\$31.25 for 50 lbs** that contains wheat, barley, flax, peas, kelp, alfalfa, balancer

Similar ingredients, less expensive, and guaranteed nutrition to buy commercial.