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Report Name: A Review of Nigeria's Poultry Sector

Country: Nigeria

Post: Lagos

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Report Highlights:

Poultry is considered Nigeria's most commercialized livestock value chain, and Nigeria is regarded as one of Africa's largest egg producers. Reliable national production and consumption figures do not exist, but poultry's lower price compared with other meat and fish products continues to support consumption across the country. From 2023 to 2025, high feed prices and economic shocks reportedly forced many producers to close or scale back operations. The sector is now recovering, but a shortage of chicks and weak consumer purchasing power are slowing its rebound. Nigeria prohibits poultry imports from all countries, but some overseas poultry products reportedly enter from neighboring countries through Nigeria's land borders.

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Sector Overview

A majority of rural households in Nigeria raise poultry, mostly on a small scale. In addition to these household producers, commercial enterprises are also very active in the poultry value chain. Compared to the cattle, swine, and small ruminant value chains, FAS Lagos considers poultry to be the most commercialized value chain in Nigeria's livestock sector (Table 1).

Table 1. Poultry Commercialization Factors Compared to Other Value Chains

Factor	Poultry Value Chain	Other Livestock Value Chains
Production Inputs	Reliance on commercial feed, day-old chicks, and vaccines.	Cattle and small ruminants mostly openly graze. An estimated 80 percent of Nigeria’s cattle are naturally bred.
Financing and Lending	Higher rates of commercial lending. Easier to verify production capabilities and facilities.	Commercial lenders generally view pastoralists and their open grazing livestock as higher risk. Difficult to verify production.
Structural	Higher rate of vertical integration of feed, breeding, production, and processing integration.	Lower rate of feed, breeding, and processing integration.
Production Cycle	Shorter production cycle attracts investment.	Longer production cycles discourage outside investment.
Market Demand	Nationwide year-long stable demand.	Pork consumption limited by culture and religion. Goat and sheep demand peaks around festivals.

Source: FAS Lagos

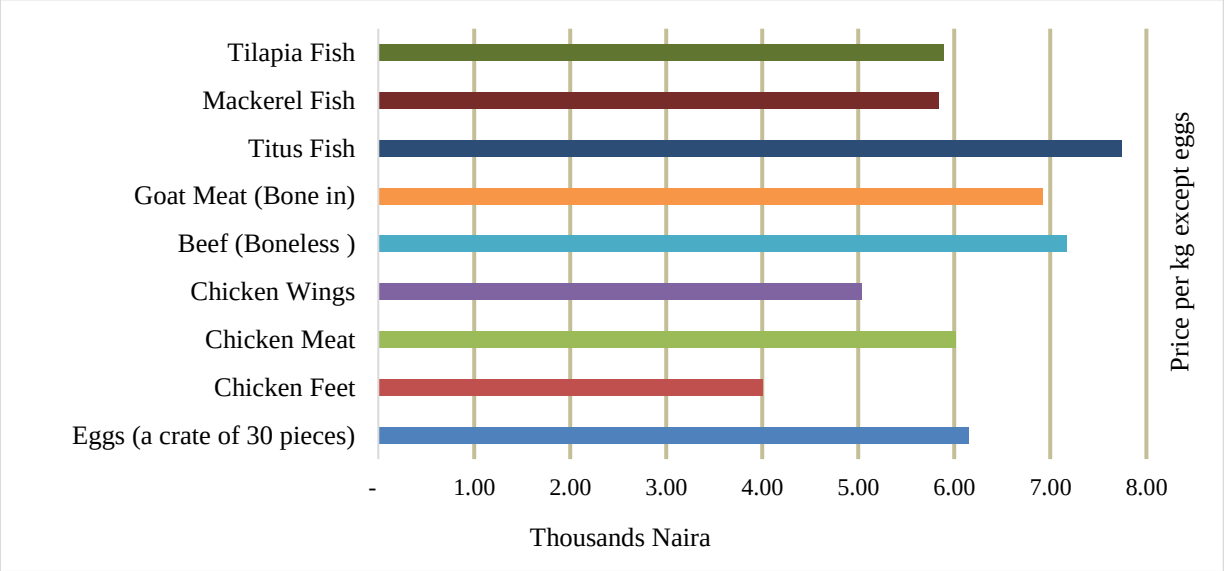
Production and Consumption

FAS Lagos estimates that chicken accounts for 60 percent of poultry production by number of birds, while turkeys, ducks, guinea fowl, and other birds account for the remaining 40 percent. Industry contacts report that chicken is Nigeria's second most consumed livestock product after beef. No reliable data exists on national poultry production and consumption, and industry contacts agree that the country has no accurate national figures. Available estimates vary widely depending on their source, year, and accounting method (e.g., dressed carcass weight vs. live weight). On larger farms, broilers are usually raised in batches of the same age on floors covered with bedding. Each batch is sold at once, and each processed bird weighs roughly 1.2 to 1.4 kilograms (kg).

Nigeria is widely considered one of Africa's largest egg producers. As with chicken meat, no reliable data exists on egg production or consumption. Industry contacts report a shortage of layer day-old chicks, with many hatcheries fully booked until mid-2027. Supermarkets sell eggs in packs of 6, 12, or 15, and a "crate" holds 30 eggs.

FAS Lagos expects poultry consumption to continue to increase as the population grows and more people move to cities. Poultry is also generally cheaper than comparable meat and fish products (Figure 1), which further supports consumption.

Figure 1. Selected Protein Prices by Product (May 2026)



Source: National Bureau of Statistics

Industry Dynamics

While poultry is the most commercialized livestock value chain, small-scale producers still account for the largest share of production (Table 2).

Table 2. Classification by Scale of Operation

Scale	Flock Size (Birds)	Characteristics
Backyard	Fewer than 50	Free-range indigenous birds that households keep for their own consumption.
Small-scale	50 to 1,000	Smaller commercial farms, often family-run; raise hybrid broilers or layers. Buy feed, chicks, and vaccines; sell locally.
Medium-scale	1,001 to 10,000	Commercial farms with improved housing, equipment, and biosecurity. Supply to local markets, traders, and institutional buyers.
Large-scale	More than 10,000	Integrated operations with feed mills, hatcheries, production, and processing. Supply regional markets and institutional buyers; provide smaller producers with inputs and day-old chicks.

Source: FAS Lagos

Traditional free-range systems, in which birds forage for food, are more common in the northern zones (Figure 2). The commercial production of layers and broilers is most developed in the South-West

geopolitical zone, while investment is growing in the North-West and North-Central zones. Larger-scale operations are concentrated in the southern zones.

Figure 2. Nigeria's Geopolitical Zones



Source: FAS Lagos

Breeds and Genetics

Commercial producers rely almost entirely on foreign hybrid varieties. The main broiler varieties are *Arbor Acres, Ross, Cobb,* and *Marshall*, while the main layer varieties are *ISA Brown, Lohmann Brown, Bovans,* and *Harco*. Farms of all sizes buy these varieties as day-old chicks from local hatcheries, which breed them from imported parent stock. Indigenous chickens, most of which do not enter commercial markets, make up a large share of the national flock by number. The main types are *normal-feathered, frizzle-feathered, and naked-neck*.

Industry contacts note that smallholders are increasingly adopting tropically adapted dual-purpose breeds such as *Noiler* and *Sasso*, along with improved local varieties such as *FUNAAB Alpha* (Nigeria's first improved indigenous chicken breed, which the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, developed through selective breeding) and *Shika Brown*. These breeds combine the hardiness of indigenous birds with higher productivity. Contacts also note that some higher-income consumers prefer the firmer texture and stronger flavor of indigenous chicken and are willing to pay a premium.

Recent Market Conditions

The poultry sector appears to be recovering from the high feed prices of 2023 to 2025. The Poultry Association of Nigeria had estimated that about 50 percent of producers closed during this period

because of elevated feed prices and other macroeconomic shocks. Since feed prices began to ease in mid-2025, producers have reportedly restarted or expanded their operations. The price of day-old chicks reflects this renewed activity. Prices tripled from $0.40 in April 2025 to $1.20 in April 2026, likely because farms are restocking.

Breeders, however, have not kept pace with rising demand for chicks. According to producer contacts, day-old chicks are now scarce, and breeders can fill only about 70 percent of each order. More farms are competing for supply from the same breeders, while the number of breeders in Nigeria has not grown. Many hatcheries are reportedly fully booked for layer chicks until mid-2027. To fill the gap, some farmers buy "point-of-lay" hens that other farmers have raised for about 16 weeks. Producers note that these hens lay fewer eggs than birds raised on the farm from day-old chicks. This may be because of poor management in the early weeks, such as inadequate brooding or too little starter feed, which can prevent hens from reaching their full laying potential. Farmers who rely on these birds may therefore face lower output and weaker margins.

Producers are also adjusting to changes in consumer demand. In the past, producers could predict egg gluts, which usually came during school holidays. Over the past year, however, gluts have appeared at unexpected times. Egg prices have fallen about 5 percent year-over-year, but producers say falling living standards have left many consumers unable to afford eggs even at lower prices. The demand for layer chicks alongside these gluts suggests that farmers are restocking for long-term growth even as consumers struggle to buy eggs today. Farmers now find it harder to plan their output and sales.

The marketing and sales channels show the same mix of recovering supply and price-sensitive consumption. Traders at a major frozen food wholesale market in Lagos noted that the market now carries more domestically produced chicken than imported chicken, which suggests domestic production may be improving. Even so, marketers noted that consumers are watching their costs closely. Whole birds move fastest, and the highest sales are for "runts," or birds that had leg problems or stunted growth before slaughter and sell at a discount. Traders linked this preference directly to difficult economic conditions.

Consumer preferences also favor spent layers, which are hens at the end of their egg-laying cycle. Traders note that layer meat sells at a premium over broiler meat because consumers prefer its texture and flavor. Producers also reported stronger consumption of spent layers than for broilers, citing their taste and value for money. This consumption gives layer farms useful extra income. Restaurants and catering businesses buy most of the frozen chicken in the market, while households tend to buy live or freshly slaughtered chicken.

Domestic producers still face price competition from imports. Nigeria prohibits poultry product imports, but some products from overseas enter the country through informal overland trade from neighboring countries. According to contacts, some marketers hold Nigerian government import waivers that allow

them to import frozen poultry legally through land borders. Contacts suggest that domestic supply may not fully meet consumption, although no reliable data exists to confirm this.

Attachments:

No Attachments.