

THE DEBT TREADMILL

for chicken farmers

More chicken farmers live with debt than any other farmers in America, even in other livestock sectors.¹

Companies promise farmers steady pay and returns on investment after a few years, but in reality, **contracts kick off cycles of debt leading to financial insecurity and bankruptcy.**

On signing up, farmers are told they can manage their chicken farm in **2-3** hours per day.

Many farmers say it takes **5-8** hours everyday, and they have to be nearby **24/7** in case something goes wrong.



\$1 MILLION IN DEBT

1 chicken house = ~ \$250,000 to build.

An average chicken farm has 4 houses.³



False Promises & Big Debt

Companies advertise contracts as a long-term investment in your farm. Farmers typically put up their homes or land as collateral for the loan.



1

Unexpected Costs

Chicken companies frequently require farmers to make unpredictable and expensive investments in new equipment or technology to meet the industry's needs⁴.



4

Financial Insecurity

In at least 42% of contracts, the company only commits to **5 weeks (1 flock)**², while the farmer may be committed to **15 years or more** to pay off their loan.



2

Unreliable Income

Farmers are paid under a tournament system and have very little control over their pay, which can vary by thousands of \$ between flocks. They often make less than they expected.



3



“How many people dread going to the mailbox to get their check? You know what you need to make, but you never know what you're going to get.”

 **Paul Brown**
Chicken farmer, MS

“If I knew 14 years ago what I know today, there's no way I would have signed a chicken contract.”

 **Mike Weaver**
Chicken farmer WV

SOURCES:

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