

Breed emphasis counters feed price inflation

With record high feed prices squeezing margins around the world, the Cobb emphasis on the lowest production costs across its product range is proving its value to chicken producers.

For more than 20 years geneticists at Cobb's research and development centre in the US have striven to achieve the lowest cost of meat production with the Cobb 500, with feed conversion one of the key factors.

Feed conversion ratios of 1.7 and 1.8 are regularly being achieved in many environments. In the US feed conversions in the mid 1.60s are routinely being recorded with flocks achieving 1.8kg (4.0lb) in 35-36 days. In Germany 1.55 is being achieved in broilers to 34 days and in Brazil 1.87 to 44 days.

million parents in 2008, rising to more than four million a year. The newest product is the Cobb 700 set to be launched this autumn for the rapidly expanding market for high meat yield broilers for value added, deboned products.

Geneticists have developed a chicken which will not only grow to heavier weights to produce higher meat yield but will do both more efficiently.

In assessing the efficiency Cobb is not only counting the overall feed conversion but the feed required to produce a kilogram of breast meat. Trials show

that using this measure the feed conversion of the Cobb 700 varies from 7.8 at 49 days to 8.4 at 62 days compared with other breeds at 8.2-8.5 at 49 days and 8.8-8.9 at 62 days.

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Not only is low feed conversion a feature of the Cobb 500, so is the ability to thrive on lower nutrient density rations, again lowering the cost of producing chicken meat.

These features are also reflected in the portfolio of breeds which Cobb is now offering.

The Cobb Avian 48, developed by crossing Cobb and Avian lines for enhanced hybrid vigour, provides a balance between a responsive breeder and a competitive broiler to give customers additional flexibility in meeting market demands.

The breeder will produce around 170 hatching eggs and 139 chicks at 65 weeks of age, with the broiler reaching 2.40kg at 42 days of age. Good liveability and high hatchability – another strong Cobb trait – is combined with a strong skeletal frame in the broiler.

One of the largest markets to take up the Cobb Avian 48 is Russia where a project is forging ahead to produce 2.5

