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## Solar Incubator and Own-farm Feed Formulation



Pauline Tauro, aged 41, from Seke, Mashonaland East province, used to work for the Ministry of Agriculture and resigned in 2018 due to poor remuneration. After her resignation, she failed to secure a job and decided the venture into agriculture. Initially she wanted to practise horticulture, however the water requirement for horticulture was high and could she not afford it. She therefore ventured into poultry production.

Pauline joined the IPVC project and subsequently the Poultry Direct Business Association (Harare PBA) in 2019 during the project inception, while she was doing batches of 150 broilers.

Through training and sharing information with other poultry farmers in the association, she was encouraged to grow her poultry project to realise more profit. At inception, her fowl run capacity was 400 birds, therefore, to increase her poultry capacity she had to invest in more poultry units. Currently, her units can now carry up to 2,000 birds and her broiler capacity is 200 every month.

In March 2020 Pauline decided to expand to dual purpose breeds (Sasso c431). She had her first batch in April 2020 during the COVID-19 lock down. She started with 200-day old chicks of Sasso and after a month was pleased with the performance of the flock and purchased 500 more chicks of the same breed. At 12 weeks she sold her batch to finance the other flock. She further started selling table eggs and later realised that she could get more money through





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selling fertilised eggs. Table eggs were selling at US\$3.00 at that time whilst fertilized eggs ranged from US\$6-\$10 a crate, therefore increasing profit margins.

Through IPVC's pilot green technologies intervention, in November 2020, she received a 500-capacity egg incubator, allowing her to produce day old chicks as well as hatch and sell to other farmers.

"The incubator has greatly changed my story. On the same 500 eggs, if sold as table eggs I get US\$66.66 at US\$4.00 a crate and if sold as fertilized eggs I get \$99.99 at US\$6 a crate. If incubated at a hatch rate of 60% I get US\$195.00 at US\$0.65 per chick," said Pauline.

Pauline participated in the feed formulation training courses and now feeds her chickens through crops she grows. She is one of the project's lead farmers who received inputs for own feed formulation. The inputs included maize and soya bean seed, pesticides, and other chemicals. To date, from her harvest of five tonnes of maize and 1.5 tonnes of soya, she has formulated a total of five tonnes which include two tonnes of starter mash, two tonnes of grower mash and one tonne of finisher mash.

Pauline says she is saving a total of US\$140 per every tonne of feed formulated, as compared to buying straight feed from the retailers. Now, she has managed to reach out to 64 farmers in her area and has trained them on own-feed formulation.