

BREAKTHROUGH FOR CANARY BREEDERS

Attention, please, all canary breeders. I've just succeeded in saving and restoring to health a 7 ten week old chick which had reached the terminal phase of the x "going light" syndrome and I want to share it as quickly as possible. This is written for my fellow members of the Santa Clara Valley Canary & Exotic Bird Club but permission to copy is hereby given to any and all who might be interested. In ~~fact~~ fact, A.C.B.M., WATCHBIRD, BIRD WORLD PLEASE copy!

This chick is a yellow, variegated Border who hatched out on April 11, 1981. He is the strongest and most aggressive of his clutch of five and developed normally until he was a week into the "baby moult". By that ~~time~~ time, he was housed in a nursery flight (42" x 23" x 36") with 24 others of his age group. Then, one morning, I noted that he was puffy, listless, feathers a mess (the other kids had been picking at his tail and ~~gix~~ flights and he didn't care enough to fix the feathers) and eating constantly. When I pulled him from the flight, I found that he ~~might~~ weighed about one half of what you would expect of a bird that size. (No, I don't have a scale so I can't give you the exact measurement. Any breeder knows what amount of weight he expects to feel in his hand when he picks up a bird.) I switched him to another flight of similar size that was inhabited by only 8 other birds, hoping that more room would help. .. and knowing that it wouldn't. This seems to happen to at least one chick every year and in years past I have tried putting them in cages by themselves, putting ~~x~~ them in hospital cages on heat, putting them on antibiotics, hand feeding etc. They have always proceeded on the same downhill course. They spend 3-4 days eating constantly to the exclusion of all other activities and losing weight just ~~at~~ as constantly until, on termination day, they sit on the floor of the cage with dull eyes and wait to die. When I see that, I know the chick has about 3 hours, at the outside, to live. This one was no different and when he reached that terminal stage I left him alone and went outside to work out my frustrations on the weeds. Then, I got mad. Old time breeders have told me for years that I might as well kill a chick when this starts because there is absolutely nothing to be done about it. Nobody has been able to tell me what the problem is, however and the few I have had autopsies on just show dead chicks who have starved to death. I don't like "going light" as the name of a disease. It certainly

is not contagious.

I decided to hit this one with everything I could think of and started by mixing up a batch of baby food (my corn bread mixture + Gerbers Hi Protein baby cereal + ~~some~~ a sprinkle of dry gelatin + a sprinkle of Super Preen + a scraping of cuttle bone + a few drops of 8 in 1 iron and blood tonic, mixed with boiling ~~with~~ water until thick enough to load into a syringe from the back end.) First, I gave him warm water with a few drops of the iron and blood tonic AND A SPRINKLE of the powder from a capsule of "Digestive Enzymes" directly into the beak. The Digestive Enzymes are so labeled and are available in my area at Payless Drug Stores. According to the label they contain:

Fungal Amylase 5000 (starch digesting enzyme)	30 mg
Cellulase 4000 (cellulose digesting enzyme)	6 mg
Papain NF (Protein digesting Enzyme)	6 mg
plus excipients.	

I waited 30 minutes for this to get into the system and then force fed the baby food by syringe directly into the beak. I repeated this process 5 times the first two days, but the second time I picked him up for the treatment, I made an observation that had escaped me in previous years. This chick was cold! I don't have a thermometer probe appropriate for taking a canary's temperature but he felt cooler in my hand than a canary should. Therefore, I added Erythromycin to the pre-food feeding on the theory that the normal high body temperature of a small bird is what protects him from bacterial infection and, if that body temperature is decreased, then he must become susceptible to secondary infection from the first bug that comes down the pike.

After the first two days, he was flying to the perches, eating again and the eyes were no longer dull and listless. At that point I stopped the force feeding of food but kept up the water, tonic, Erythromycin and Digestive Enzyme mixture three times a day for another 4 days. Then stopped the antibiotic. In addition, I put a treat cup full of boiled canary and rape seeds with the water, tonic etc. poured over theseed and sprinkled some vitamin B12 powder over it twice daily in his cage. (for the ~~hatched~~ boiled seed, I bring a pot of water to a boil and then put in 1 cup of canary seed and about 1/3 cup of rape. let it return to a bubble - about 30 seconds- and then turn off the heat and let it sit for five minutes. That trick was taught me by Margaret Roche and the birds love it.) To obtain the vitamin B12

powder, I purchased 250 mcg. tablets and put them through the grinder. After the seventh day, I stopped the direct-into-the-beak feeding and just relied on the boiled seed mixture. By that time, this chick was gaining weight and beginning to care for his feathers again.

Now, two ~~z~~ weeks later, he is normal. His weight and body temperature are just what you'd expect when you pick him up. His behavior is normal. He fights with the other kids in the flight. He flies as well as anyone. The tips of his flight feathers are still a bit ragged but ~~z~~ he's working on it.

Since canaries are notorious for having hypothyroidism, I ~~xxxx~~ see no reason they might not also have an occasional episode of hyperthyroidism and had thought that this "going light" business was most likely just that. But nothing in my shotgun treatment program should have corrected a case of hyperthyroidism. And now I wonder if it isn't instead a malabsorption syndrome? When I was a bright shiny new R.N., we used to see babys (human, that is) who ate normally and lost weight. They were signed out on their death certificates as "failure to thrive" and nobody in medicine liked that diagnosis any more than I now like "going light". ~~z~~ In recent years, we have discovered that their problem is an inability to assimilate certain proteins... a malabsorption problem, and correction of their diets allows these children to survive and grow. I have not observed big gloppy droppings full of indigested food in the cages where chicks are "going light" and that should have been seen if this is the problem but I really think that the digestive enzymes turned the trick. If that can be proven by somebody in a research program then we will know the "what" of this problem in human babys and in canaries. AND THEN, if we can find the "why" in a relatively simple organism like a canary--perhaps we will have one more step in finding the "why" in human infants. Just a little cooperation between different scientific disciplines is required! Meanwhile, don't lose any more chicks during the baby moult from "going light". You don't have to!x

Incidentally, that boiled seed with the digestive enzymes sprinkled over it seems to go a long way toward clearing up the diarrhea in a setting hen - or one with new hatched chicks. Real diarrhea, that is. The kind in which the hen is losing a whole lot of fluid with each ~~xxx~~ dropping.

CANARY MIX

Normal Canary Feeding Routine

In cage at all times: L&D Seed Co. Canary Mix. →

1. Mineral Grit (L&D) with a little
2. Geisler's Bird Mineral Mix sprinkled over it. (They are attracted by the contrast in color.)
3. Treat cup of Petamine (or L&D nestling mix- same, essentially)
4. Cuttle bone (though I may stop this.. they ignore it except during moult)
5. Treat cup of Min Meal
6. Clean, ~~fresh~~ fresh water. (add 8in1 iron & blood tonic 2 x weekly during moult.)

INGREDIENTS

Canary Seed, Rape, Oat Groats
Thistle, Sesame, Flax, Millet, Oyster
Shell, Gravel and Minerals.

GUARANTEED ANALYSIS

Crude Protein, not less than 15.00%
Crude Fat, not less than 12.00%
Crude Fiber, not more than 4.75%
Ash, not more than 4.85%
Moisture, not more than 11.85%

Manufactured By

L & D SEED CO.

1952 Beech St.
Santa Clara, Calif. 95054

Serve once daily: ↗

1. L&D Soak seed (I start with hot tap water so only soak it 24 hours, rinse & serve. WITH Super Preen and Super hyglyceren mixed into it on alternate days.)
2. Greens: Spinach, broccoli, dandelion or rape sprouts. Chickweed in season (which coincides with early breeding season.)
slice apple or very ripe orange instead of greens.
Cucumber 2-3 x week during moult.
Zucchini as the green food when its cheap.
Carrot- Dropped into boiling water and removed from heat for 5 min., then ground up and served.

Occasionally:

For Conditioning: Start January 1 with

- A. Iodine (Bird Iodine is now available) in the drinking water. Shouldn't be necessary on the California Coast but I do it anyhow.
- B. Slice of Canary Corn Bread in flight 2 x week.

Canary Corn Bread:

Jiffy corn MUFFIN mix + 2 eggs + 1/3 cup of milk + 1/4 to 1/2 cup of Petamine + a handful of Blue Poppy seeds . ~~Bake at 350° for 20 min.~~ +1 envelope of unflavored gelatin. Bake at 350° for 20 min.

Nestling food: Crumbs made by putting the corn bread through a grinder + Gerbers Hi Protein baby cereal with apple & orange + a sprinkle of dry, unflavored gelatin and (this year) a sprinkle of vitamin B12 powder.

A.M. feeding= add a very small slice of hard boiled egg and grind it all up together.

P.M. feeding= leave out the hard boiled egg and add instead a little rape sprouts to each dish... in addition to the greens which are given at mid-day.

Note: When canary parents are being stubborn about feeding, they WILL feed spinach.

I put 'em up to breed on ~~3/5~~ 3/15. First chick hatches on 4/8 every year. I stop the iodine after the last egg of the first clutch is laid unless a pair seems to have a fertility problem.

48 HOUR
SOAK SEED
GOLDENTONE
INGREDIENTS
Canary, Rape, Buck Wheat, Whole
Oat, Millet, Thistle, Oat Groats,
Safflower.

GUARANTEED ANALYSIS

Protein, not less than 15.40%
Fat, not less than 16.90%
Fiber, not more than 4.40%
Ash, not more than 3.50%
Moisture, not more than 9.20%

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