

Report of the AAAP Leukosis Committee

July 1973

No specific projects were carried out by the Leukosis Committee during the past year. A majority of the members favor changing the name of the committee to "Avian Tumor Virus Committee".

The committee unanimously recommends holding a workshop or short course in 1973-74 dealing with the leukosis/sarcoma viruses, covering such subjects as basic virology, immunity, genetic resistance, eradication, etc, and including workers from all countries.

An attempt was made to assess the nationwide effect of the HVT vaccine on avian leukosis since its introduction in 1970 and it was discovered that the information necessary for an accurate estimate of the situation is not available. Condemnation data for the fiscal years 1968-72 from the USDA Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection Service are presented (Table 1). The condemnation rate for both leukosis and tumors was lower in fiscal year 1972 than in any of the preceeding four years and in the first three months of 1973 a further drop is indicated.

Table 1. Condemnation of Leukosis and Tumors by the Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection Service during Fiscal Years 1968-72*

	Leukosis %					Tumors %				
	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Young										
Chickens	1.48	1.57	1.44	1.64	1.04	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Mature										
Chickens	0.26	0.30	0.30	0.26	0.20	1.28	1.53	1.67	1.54	1.25

*Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection Statistical Summary, USDA Consumer and Marketing Service, Washington, D.C.

Data from poultry diagnostic laboratories in the four regions of the United States were summarized from reports in Avian Diseases (Table 2). While

submissions of birds with leukosis in 1971 were approximately half that of 1968, differences in nomenclature between regions and changes in terminology prevent definite determination of the effect on Marek's per se. These data indicate that either diseases producing lymphoid tumors are under better control or that they are no longer presented for diagnosis.

Table 2. Percentage of Leukosis Diagnoses Reported by Region in the U.S.A.*

	1968**	1969**	1970**	1971**
Northeastern	39.13%	19.76%	18.22%	21.39%
North Central	25.93%	24.59%	21.12%	11.31%
Southern	25.72%	23.02%	11.90%	15.17%
Western		17.85%	11.00%	11.52%

*Avian Diseases Vol. 13, 14, 15, and 16.

**Percentages calculated as a total of all types of leukosis except osteopetrosis.

Inquiries from poultry operations concerning apparent vaccine "failures" suggest that there are still problems in handling the HVT vaccine. Much has been published on this subject and the information is readily available to the scientific community. An information void seems to exist in those companies without in-house veterinary service. In some manner information on the primary causes of these "failures" and means of prevention should be provided.

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