Report of the AAAP Avian Tumor Virus Committee

Several committee members were actively involved in organizing and participating in the International Symposium on Marek's Disease being held at Cornell University, New York, July 23-26, 1984 immediately following the annual AVMA Meeting in New Orleans. This Symposium, similar in design to a Marek's disease symposium held about six years back in Berlin, West Germany, will cover all important aspects of Marek's disease. This should provide an outstanding opportunity for the industry and academic personnel to gain first-hand knowledge on the latest developments in the area of MD. Participants include prominent domestic and foreign scientists and industry representatives.

The Avian Tumor Virus Committee has also tentatively decided to hold a one-half day symposium during the 1985 AVMA Meeting in Las Vegas. A request has been filed with the AVMA Organizing Committee to reserve the Monday morning slot for the symposium preceding the regularly scheduled Avian Medicine Session. The topic will be "Newer Techniques in Diagnosis and Control of Viral Diseases of Chickens." An effort will be made to include discussion on newer techniques for all avian diseases, neoplastic and non-neoplastic. One of the charges of the proposed symposium would be to discuss how modern technology, particularly molecular biology technology, is impacting the avian field.

One of the most significant events in the tumor virus area within the last year has been the licensing by USDA of a bivalent Marek's disease vaccine. The new vaccine consists of the turkey herpesvirus (HVT) given in combination with a serotype 2 Marek's type virus (SB-1). The two viruses work in a synergistic fashion and provide better protection than HVT alone against virulent field Marek's disease viruses. All unofficial reports indicate that the bivalent vaccine has helped reduce leukosis condemnation in many problem broiler flocks. The long-term efficacy of the bivalent vaccine will have to await its continued usage in the field.

The emphasis in lymphoid leukosis has been on reducing virus infection in breeder flocks. As flocks approach complete eradication, their antibody status and their response to field virus exposure should be carefully monitored.

Marek's disease and lymphoid leukosis continue to be the principal neoplastic diseases of chickens. Sporadic cases of the squamous cell carcinoma have also been reported. More effort is needed to better understand this disease.

Respectfully submitted.

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