

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF AVIAN PATHOLOGISTS

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF POULTRY DISEASES - 1977

Some disease outbreaks of potential concern to the AAAP membership have occurred during this reporting year. The specifics of these diseases are as follows:

- 1) Exotic Newcastle disease. In February 1977 the viscerotropic velogenic Newcastle disease (VVND) virus was isolated from exotic birds in aviaries located in Virginia and southern California. State-Federal Task Forces were mobilized, shipment of potentially exposed birds traced out, and infected or exposed aviaries were depopulated. Quarantines in California were lifted as of May 1, 1977, and there was no known involvement of commercial poultry operations. The origin of these outbreaks, while not officially confirmed, was likely smuggled exotic birds. One can only guess at the numbers of exotic birds smuggled into the U.S., but indications are that the traffic is substantial. The threat of VVND is ever present while the current situation prevails.
- 2) Duck plague (duck virus enteritis) was diagnosed in waterfowl in California this winter, but the outbreak has been contained, to the best of our knowledge.
- 3) Pullorum disease was diagnosed in commercial turkey flocks in one of the northeastern states during the past year. The circumstances of these outbreaks are under investigation.
- 4) Fowl typhoid was diagnosed in a broiler breeder flock in one of the southeastern states during the past year. The suspected source of the infection was contaminated well water.
- 5) Psittacosis. A rather remarkable increase in the number of recognized cases in psittacine birds has been noted in the western states of the U.S. and in the Province of Alberta. There has not been any known spillover to turkeys or waterfowl as yet, but the potential is there. Unquarantined smuggled birds and the stresses of shipment are often associated with clinical outbreaks in aviary birds.
- 6) Viral arthritis is being recognized with increasing frequency in broiler breeder and even Layer replacements. Culling losses have been substantial in affected flocks.
- 7) Air sac disease was the basis for increased condemnation rates this past winter in broilers grown in the southeastern states. This has been related to the abnormally cold weather, associated ventilation problems, variant bronchitis viruses, E. coli infections and, in some instances, Mycoplasma (synoviae and gallisepticum) infections.
- 8) Marek's disease. Problem flocks and some increase in total incidence were reported from several regions.
- 9) Viral respiratory disease in turkeys was reported, particularly in the southeastern states. The role of adenoviruses and a possibly predisposing role of infectious bursal agent are under investigation.
- 10) Liver granulomas in turkeys have been a problem during the past year with nearly 100% liver condemnations in some flocks. The causative factor(s) have not been determined.

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Comments. The dilemma posed by disease control in multiple-age layer flocks is a continuing challenge faced by producer and veterinarian alike. Apparently a new energy-saving phased brood-grow broiler house is being sold currently. This house combines 2 age groups of broilers and introduces the specter of another very difficult disease control situation. The appearance of pullorum disease and fowl typhoid in commercial flocks and M. gallisepticum infection in broiler flocks may signal the need for intensified testing programs.

With the availability of a AAAP newsletter, it may be time to establish a more formalized system for reporting disease trends so that the membership is alerted early to developing problem areas.

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