



Avian Science Notes

University of California • Cooperative Extension

November 2002

Exotic Newcastle Disease (END)

As we go to press, California is still dealing with a serious problem in the form of Exotic Newcastle Disease (END). END was confirmed on October 1st in birds submitted in late September to the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory in San Bernardino. On October 3rd, California's State Veterinarian, Dr. Richard Breitmeyer cancelled all Poultry Exhibitions in California. The definition of poultry used by the state included any and all birds kept in captivity.

At Dr. Breitmeyer's request, I drafted protocols (Compliance Agreements) for how poultry and pigeon shows could resume with the least risk to the State's avian populations. The drafts have been through the legal division of California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and should be available to the public by the week of November 11th. If you are planning to host a show, you may obtain a copy of the Compliance Agreement by phoning (562) 795-1940 or go to www.cdffa.ca.gov.

During the last few weeks, the organizers of the following shows voluntarily decided to cancel their upcoming events. Those events are:

Exhibition Poultry

- Bakersfield Fancy Feathers - October 26-27
- Sonoma All Youth Invitational - November 2
- Golden Gate Bantam Show, Angels Camp - December 7-8
- Gold Coast Poultry Fanciers, Hollister - January 12-13, 2003

Exhibition Pigeons

- Cavalcade of Pigeons, Fresno - November 1-3
- Pageant of Pigeons, San Bernardino - November 21-23
- Greater California Fall Classic, Roseville - December 7
- Pacific Modena Club, Roseville - December 14 (traditional show cancelled; alternative event still under discussion).

In addition, California's commercial poultry producers have been adding extra guidelines to their already strict biosecurity plans.

The Question of the season: When will it all be over?

No one knows what the date will be. New cases are still being found and as long as we have new cases, we cannot say that the virus is gone. Many people have told your editor that they feel this year's open poultry show season in California is a wash-out. I cannot argue with that. I hope that this outbreak is history by the time most counties start the fair season in mid-May.

Everyone must also remember that when the "OK" is given to have shows reopen, that does NOT mean that an exhibitor is free of risk. Any time birds from different sources congregate, there is a risk. It is very important to understand the following points:

1. If you enter your birds in a show and during the course of the show your birds develop suspicious symptoms, the entire poultry show can be quarantined. It may be necessary for an END Task Force representative to appraise your birds, pay you for those birds, and then humanely euthanize them and submit them to the laboratory for diagnosis. Meanwhile, all other birds at the show will be quarantined. If the tests come back positive for END, ALL the birds at the show will be appraised and humanely euthanized. In addition, a trace back will be done to your home and all the birds (including non-poultry) at your home will be appraised and humanely euthanized.

2. If a show becomes quarantined, no birds can leave. That means, even if your birds are not showing any symptoms, they cannot leave the premises. If the lab results are not back at the time of coop-out, your birds still cannot leave. It might take as long as 15 days for the results to come back. If the results eventually come back negative, the birds are released and it will be your responsibility to get the birds back to your home. If the results come back positive for END, your birds along with all other birds at the show will be appraised and humanely euthanized.

Avian Science Day 2003

**Saturday, February 1, 2003
Room 2205 Haring Hall, U. C. Davis**

Topics will include updates on Exotic Newcastle Disease in California.

More details and a program will be included in our January 2003 issue of *Avian Science Notes*.

For Leaders:

Meeting ideas for the next few months:

We have been asking everyone to avoid moving birds and not to visit other people's flocks. A number of you have asked for suggestions as to alternative club programs that do not involve live birds. The following are some ideas you may want to try.

- Use the October 2002 issue of Avian Science Notes as a starting point for a discussion of Exotic Newcastle Disease. What causes the disease? A virus. Use Avian Bowl Study Manual (if you do not already have a manual the ordering information is listed on page 3) and have members find the names of other poultry diseases caused by a virus (see sections on Raising Game Birds; Raising Your Home Chicken Flock; and Growing Blue Ribbon Pullets).

Discussion Questions:

- Are there ways bird owners can protect their birds against these other viruses?
Yes - vaccines.
- Do the vaccines in terms of how and when you give them differ from virus to virus?
Yes. Marek's vaccination is a subcutaneous injection at day of hatch or is injected in ovo (that is, into the egg) while the embryo is still developing. Fowl Pox vaccine is administered by a wing web method.
- **Is there a vaccine that will completely protect your birds against Exotic Newcastle Disease? No. The Newcastle vaccines on the market were designed for commercial producers to use. They protect birds against production losses (drops in egg production or growth) when birds are exposed to the milder forms of the Newcastle Disease virus (NOT Exotic Newcastle Disease).**

- What can you do to protect your birds if you take them to a show? Quarantine. How long? The longest known incubation time for END is 21 days. Therefore, you would have to quarantine your birds for 3 weeks after the show
- Design a Biosecurity Plan for a Commercial Egg Ranch. Remind members that Biosecurity is the concept that everything on your property is “clean” and everything outside its boundaries is “dirty.” Have the members come up with as many ideas as they can of ways that the Biosecurity of an Egg Ranch might be breached. **Hints:** feed trucks that visit many ranches; salespeople that go from ranch to ranch; school field trip with children who may have backyard poultry.

Routine steps you can take to protect your flock:

We all should recognize that there is such a thing as “normal mortality.” No one’s birds will live forever. If one of your bird dies, that does not mean you have a disease outbreak. It is, however, a good opportunity to submit a bird to the CAHFS Laboratory (Call 530-752-8700 for the location of the lab nearest you).

There is NO charge for you to submit backyard chickens to the lab. When a bird dies, double bag it in plastic and place in the refrigerator (NOT the freezer - freezing destroys the tissues). Submit the bird as soon as possible. Even if the bird died of old age, by submitting it to the lab, the diagnosticians who look at your bird will learn information about any other conditions your bird may have had (internal parasites, low levels of other diseases, etc.).

If you are concerned that your birds are showing END symptoms or are worried about other potentially infected birds, call 1-800-491-1899

Ordering information for Avian Bowl Study Packet:

Ordering New Revised (February 2002) Avian Bowl Manuals:

Manuals are available now for \$12.00 from Clemson University. Call 864/656-3261 for ordering information. **Be sure they have 2002 Revised edition.**

**Dr. Francine A. Bradley, Editor
Extension Poultry Specialist
Animal Science Department
University of California
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616-8521
Tel. (530) 752-6316
Fax. (530) 752-8960**

**Susan Reichel
Production Editor
Tel. (530) 752-9040**



Distribution of *Avian Science Notes* is made to 4-H Poultry Leaders and Youth Advisors. Anyone wishing to be placed on the mailing list may send a request to Susan Reichel, Animal Science Department, University of California, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616-8521.

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U.C. Cooperative Extension
Animal Science Department
University of California
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616-8521

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