



Avian Science Notes

University of California - Cooperative Extension

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Sitting Ducks Flew Up and Grabbed the Gold



The Senior Avian Bowl Team from El Dorado and Sacramento counties dubbed themselves the Sitting Ducks. However, team members Jimmy Gochnauer, Sarah Neff, Kristi Schnetz, and Tara Schnetz certainly did not sit around waiting to be picked off by their competitors at the 2013 Avian Bowl State Qualifier. The foursome coached by Mrs. Kerri Schnetz knew their material and defeated the competitive teams coming from across northern and southern California. Placing second were the members of Just Wing It from Orange and Riverside counties.

Photo Caption: "The Sitting Ducks: (L to R) Tara Schnetz, Sarah Neff, Krist Schnetz, and Jimmy Gochnauer, stand up to proudly display their

Championship belt buckles at the 2013 Avian Bowl State Qualifier.

Congratulations to the Junior Team members who traveled from all parts of the state to the competition in Fresno. The competitors represented the following counties: El Dorado, Calaveras, Kern, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, and Tulare. It was great to have teams from the geographic top and bottom of the state - Shasta and San Diego. Thank you coaches and parents for making those long road trips.

Top of Comb salute to El Dorado for fielding two junior teams (one a combined El Dorado/Sacramento team). They had so many good players, they had to form two teams. And it paid off, for the El Dorado/Sacramento Squeaky Sqwackers (sic) captured the Junior Avian Bowl title, with El Dorado's Furious Frizzles coming in second. Both teams were coached by Mrs. Schnetz.



Photo Caption: No vocalizations, just smiles, as the Junior Avian Bowl Champions - Kaitlyn Gochnauer, Hannah Neff, and Zachary Schnetz, display their awards.

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Your Editor wishes to express her thanks to the Greater California Society of Poultry Fanciers (GCSPF) for providing the facilities for the state qualifier. The GCSPF continue their tradition of hosting quality learning experiences for youth at their winter show in Fresno. A product of those youth activities from the GCSPF Club is Bobbie Grim. She was in charge of an array of activities at this year's show and was a stand-out co-worker for Poultry Showmanship and Avian Bowl.

It was a honor to again have the assistance of Avian Bowl veterans Dr. Linda Teagle, Elise Rodriguez, and Dr. Carol Beatty. Former 4-H poultry stand-outs who stopped by to offer their help were Jennifer Near Cadwell and Katherine Plumer.

Tighten Your Biosecurity

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus in central Mexico

Please read the following carefully. We are entering high travel season as families embark on trips to attend graduations, weddings, and visit relatives. As I have said so many times, in California we are just one plane ride or car trip away from Mexico. Do NOT allow visitors onto your property.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the University of California (UC) recently issued a disease alert relative to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreaks in Mexico. Updates are constantly being relayed through our west coast poultry trade association, Pacific Egg and Poultry Association (PePa). PePa Executive Director, Mrs. Debbie Murdock, forwarded the following summary written by Chris Wright, Senior Editor for The Poultry Site:

<http://www.thepoultrysite.com/poultrynews/28882/avian-influenza-spreads-across-mexico>.

Tue, 07 May 2013 ANALYSIS - The highly pathogenic H7N3 Avian Influenza virus is spreading quickly across central Mexico, much to the frustration of the Mexican poultry industry. Chris Wright, writing for the The Poultry Site, reports on the ANECA meeting held last week in Mexico.

The Mexican poultry industry is in a state of panic over the Avian Influenza virus which is rapidly spreading across the country. Poultry producers are using phrases like: "disastrous," "the end of industry," "event of historic proportions" and "the devil is among us."

Last week at the annual ANECA convention, the Mexican Association of Poultry Science Specialists, while many important issues were covered, the hot topic was the Avian Influenza problem.

One of the main issues is that officially, as reported by Mexican authorities and the OIE, Avian Influenza seems to be contained within one area of the country, while the industry believes it has spread far and wide.

During the conference a government official announced to the audience of hundreds of attendees, that the H7N3 virus had been isolated by PCR in the state of Puebla. This has not yet been officially published by Senasa in Mexico or the OIE. But the fact that it was stated by a government official in a public meeting assumes that the official publication will soon follow.

The reason this announcement is so important is that the main poultry production area of Puebla is the city of Tehuacan, which is the second most important egg production zone in Mexico. The distance from there to Tepatitlan, Jalisco – the original H7N3 outbreak zone in 2012 and top egg production area – is 770 km, an eight hour drive.

The fact that it has gone from point A to be point B with almost nothing in between, should raise a few eyebrows. To the Mexican poultry industry this confirms what they already believe: that everything between point A and point B is infected, which includes the major poultry production areas of the country.

To be fair to the government, other outbreaks besides the state of Jalisco have been identified as infected. The main new outbreak was reported in the state of Guanajuato this February, when its broiler and breeder farms were affected. But that area is contiguous to some of the poultry production areas in Jalisco state. And in late April the virus was discovered in the state of Tlaxcala, about halfway between points A and B, in backyard flocks.

It's Fair Time – How Comfortable is the Bird Carrier You are Using?

Many of you are busily preparing for your country or district fair. Please be sure that you have the appropriate carriers for your birds. Do NOT use wood and wire crates. It is impossible to clean and disinfect them and the birds can be injured in transport. Molded plastic pet carriers (sized appropriately to your birds), with litter on the floor of the carriers, will work well. If you use large cardboard boxes, be sure you make ample ventilation holes and put litter on the bottom of the box.

If you live in a part of the state where fair time means scorching temperatures, try to transport your birds in the cooler portions of the day (early morning or after sunset). Do NOT leave the birds in an un-air-conditioned vehicle.

Please be courteous and follow the instructions of the Poultry Health Inspector (PHI). Have a copy of your entry forms with you and be sure to have all your birds banded with the leg bands that correspond to your entries.

Some goals require pure hard work

Author, Warren Kozak, recently had a OpEd piece in the Wall Street Journal entitled “Call them tiger students. And get to work.” He discussed the ethnic mix of the 2012 incoming freshman class at Stuyvesant, a specialized high school in New York. Of the 830 freshmen who scored high enough on the admission test to be selected, 602 were Asian. Mr. Kozak pointed out that some, if not many, of the Asian students come from homes where English is not the first language. Yet these students had high scores on the verbal section of the admission test. He also cited a study by a University of Pennsylvania professor, Angela Duckworth, who studied the teen finalists of the National Spelling Bee. Professor Duckworth found the finalists shared an important trait. They were willing to give up texting, TV watching, and calls from friends. As Mr. Kozak put it, “They write out thousands of flash cards and definitions, and memorize them.” The finalists’ parents were not spelling champions, but they supported the choices their children made to invest hours in contest preparation.

This, of course, reminded me of our successful Avian Bowl champions over the last three plus decades. None of their parents had competed in Avian Bowl. However, many of those parents became very involved. They wrote questions and answers, they built home buzzer systems, and they drove the team members to competitions across California. Maybe Mr. Kozak and Professor have not heard of Avian Bowl, but I am sure they would agree that supportive team parents and dedicated team members who will do the difficult memorization work will produce winning teams.

Visit the OC for Avian Bowl

Once again the Orange County Fair will be hosting an Avian Bowl competition. Avian Bowl will be Wed. evening, July 17th at 6 PM. Cash awards for places 1st through 5th in both Junior and Senior Avian Bowl.

Only on-line entries will be accepted: www.ocfair.com. Entry form, confirmation receipt and fees are dues to the Livestock Office, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, California 92626 by June 7th.

The Importance of Dry Litter

The April issue of Connections (Newsletter of the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory system) contained a write-up of a recent submission of 26 day-old broiler chicks. The chicks had swollen eyes, damaged air ways, and excess mucus. Excess ammonia in the growing area was the suspected culprit. Ammonia vapors will attack the respiratory tract, damaging the lining of the trachea and the sinus and will even remove the microscopic cilia that normally are found in the air ways. Healthy cilia will "beat" in a wave like motion and remove foreign material from the air ways.

It is during this time of year that I too often see market poultry at the fairs with dark discolorations on the plantar surface (bottom) of their feet. These are ammonia burns caused by the birds standing on wet and soiled litter.

To prevent your birds being injured by ammonia vapors and burns, you **MUST** keep your litter (wood shavings, rice hulls, etc.) clean and dry. Be sure to muck out any wet areas and top dress with clean dry litter. Every few days, squat down in your chicken pens and get your face close to the litter. If your eyes start to smart and water, you have work to do. Do not neglect this important aspect of bird management.

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