

American Federation of Aviculture® (AFA) Statement Regarding the Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) “Policy on Pet and Exotic Birds Housed in Cages within Enclosed Structures”

FEBRUARY 18, 2003

The American Federation of Aviculture® (AFA), the largest avicultural organization in the U.S., is pleased to announce an important new policy that is being implemented in California by the Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) Task Force and is of great importance to all bird owners within the END quarantine zone. The State of California established the END Task Force to develop a strategy to deal with this disease and includes the lead agencies in charge of the eradication process, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This new “Policy on Pet and Exotic Birds Housed in cages Within Enclosed Structures” will change the manner in which some birds are handled as it now provides some exemptions and options for affected bird owners to safeguard their birds through additional isolation measures. This policy, which benefits all birds, from domestic pets to rare and exotic species, is the result of direct discussions and negotiations of the American Federation of Aviculture (AFA) and the END Task Force.

The AFA has been extremely concerned about the outbreak of Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) in California, Nevada and Arizona. END is a highly contagious viral disease that can affect the respiratory, digestive and nervous system and that is almost always fatal. This disease poses a great danger to the US poultry and exotic bird industries if not quickly eradicated.

In order to respond in a timely fashion to this emergency situation and to provide bird owners with factual information on the crisis, Dr. Benny Gallaway, AFA's President created a working group coordinated by the Director of Education and Media Services Natasha Schischakin and comprised of 1st VP Wanda Elder, N. California State Coordinator Leslie Gillis, S. California Regional Director Marty Muschinske, N. California Regional Director Barry Wold, and Avian Welfare Committee Chair Genny Wall. In addition to providing information on the END situation to the membership (primarily through existing e-mail lines of communication) the group worked to develop a strategy on how to best protect our birds.

Historical information on previous END outbreaks was researched and legal options to deal with the situation were examined. Although it appeared that in the 1970s there had been a previous out of court settlement with the USDA, the documentation had been lost. The working group soon realized that even if the information was found, it was not likely that it could be used as a precedent in the current END outbreak and eradication policy.

The most productive option was to open a dialogue with the newly formed END Task Force and to maintain all lines of communication open, to ensure that the AFA had a voice in the developing process. It soon became clear that the END Task Force was willing to work closely with us and that the best strategy was to work jointly to institute a policy that addressed both the very serious epidemiological concerns of this deadly avian disease, while at the same time safeguarding healthy,

non-exposed birds from destruction.

Although initially confined to backyard poultry and particularly free ranging chickens, the outbreak continued to worsen with an ever increasing number of premises affected and depopulated by the END Task Force and the CDFA. The standard method for END eradication has been the destruction of all birds on premises that have confirmed positive or those that have had a direct contact or epidemiological link to an infected premise. This procedure was applied across the board to include all avian species although the outbreak focused primarily on backyard and commercial poultry facilities. The AFA was concerned that there was little differentiation in procedure for lower risk locations that had domestic poultry and other bird species, particularly pet and exotic birds housed in secure and contained situations.

It has been our position that a procedure should be in place to protect the many irreplaceable rare and endangered species that are kept by hobbyist and breeders, as well as the many pet birds that are loved by so many people.

The attached “Policy on Pet and Exotic Birds Housed in Cages within Enclosed Structures” is the official response of the Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) Task Force, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to our suggestions regarding pet, cage, and other birds. The current language of the policy allows for such protection for all birds.

Of course, if it is proven that these birds are confirmed positive for the disease, or have been exposed to this highly contagious disease, then these birds should be euthanized in order to contain the outbreak and safeguard other birds.

We are particularly pleased that the END Task Force agreed to a policy that allows for exemptions if a premise is found infected or deemed to have dangerous contact. This policy potentially allows for monitored isolation of all birds that are housed in cages within enclosed structures or in outdoor caging that meets specified conditions. This will also allow for onsite quarantine of birds if the risk of END infection is deemed to be low and the owner is willing to fulfill specific obligations.

Although initially the Task Force wanted to limit the quarantine options only to those birds that were housed in indoor facilities, the AFA was able to broaden the policy to include all birds that are housed in outdoor caging under certain conditions (that should be easily met by most aviculturists and bird owners).

The new policy provides for a risk evaluation and possible exemption from mandatory depopulation for both infected and dangerous contact premises for birds that are found to be:

- USFWS Endangered Species Act listed species;
- Species that are listed on Appendices I or II of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES);

- Genetic significant strains of domestic and exotic species as determined by the END Task Force;
- Caged birds with evidence of a biosecurity program that is protective from other birds on the premises.

The above exceptions provide for protection of not only endangered and threatened species, but also those important and often irreplaceable lineages of both domestic and exotic species. These guidelines provide protection for all birds, including pets and domestic species that are in cages or other form of secure containment.

It is understood that due to the gravity of the situation, the owner must agree to strict policies including testing and isolation of the birds at the owner's expense in a manner prescribed by the END Task Force and signing a formal legal compliance agreement. This will allow for an option that was previously unavailable to bird owners. This is an unprecedented second chance for birds that would have been destroyed.

However, if a bird that has been quarantined and tested comes up positive, *all* of the birds will be euthanized.

In order to safeguard our birds, the AFA strongly urges all bird owners within the affected area to immediately institute a biosecurity program in compliance with the new policy.

- To qualify for the exemptions provided for under the new policy on pet and exotic birds, it is important to show that appropriate biosecurity measures have been instituted by the bird owner, including:

1. Avoiding contact with infected birds;

(2) Isolation from loose birds in the neighborhood;

1. Prevention of the spread of the disease through contaminated clothing, shoes, and vehicles;

2. Cleaning and disinfection of any equipment/supplies in contact with affected birds.

- Owners who do not have outside birds are considered to be at a lower risk of exposure than those who have outside birds.
- If candidates for exemption are housed outside, additional risk factors will be considered in determining the exposure risk of those birds. The AFA recommends that all bird owners with outside birds immediately assess their facilities to comply with the below risk factors to lower their potential of exposure to END. These include:

1. Are the outside birds caged? Does the caging provide cover or roofing over the feeding and watering areas and does the caging provide isolation from contact with potential carriers like rodents and free-ranging birds.

2. Is there free ranging poultry in the neighborhood? (Note: this is certainly one of the highest risk factor for the spread of END, and therefore all bird owners should contain all free ranging birds.)

3. Is there a perimeter fence that provides the ability to segregate the property from freeranging poultry and other vectors?

The AFA would like to extend its appreciation of the END Task Force for their efforts and willingness to develop a policy that addresses our concerns and safeguards our birds under these very serious and trying conditions. It is also important to acknowledge the many bird lovers from the grass roots (both AFA members and non-members) who expressed their concerns about the possible unnecessary killing of birds. This helped us considerably in our efforts to convince the END Task Force of the need for a change in approach. This is a groundbreaking policy that provides for many previously unavailable options to all bird owners. We believe that it sets a major precedent that could be used by other state regulatory agencies as an example of a policy for pet and exotic bird owners if this disease is not contained to Southern California and spreads to other parts of the country.

We will continue to work closely with the END Task Force to ensure that this new policy is implemented and our beloved birds protected. But we need your help and collaboration to stop the spread of this virulent disease that threatens all of our birds.

For additional information, please contact
AFA President Dr. Gallaway at 979-775-2000

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF AVICULTURE,® (AFA) is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization established in 1974 dedicated to the preservation of aviculture. Our purpose is to represent aviculture and to educate the public about keeping and breeding birds in captivity. By ensuring that everyone has the right to own, maintain and breed birds, the youth of today can be the aviculturists of tomorrow.

Please join and support AFA online at:
www.afa.birds.org

or by calling or writing to:
**AFA, PO Box 7312,
N. Kansas City, MO 64116**

USA Phone:
816-421-BIRD (2473) • Fax: 816-421-3214

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FOR THE FUTURE OF AVICULTURE**

[Editor's note: The pertinent government issued documents are on the following two pages.]

Exotic Newcastle Disease 2002-2003

Policy on Pet and Exotic Birds Housed in Cages within Enclosed Structures

Exotic Newcastle disease (END) is a highly contagious, viral disease of birds that is often fatal. END may cause respiratory, digestive, and nervous signs. Some pet bird species show few clinical signs but shed the virus and can spread the disease to other susceptible birds. There is no treatment for the disease and vaccination is of limited value.

Southern California is currently experiencing an outbreak of END. Disease eradication efforts include surveillance for affected birds and destruction of all birds on premises either confirmed positive for END (infected premises – IP) or premises that have a direct epidemiological link to infected premises (dangerous contacts – DC). The following is the policy concerning the quarantine of pet and exotic birds enclosed (or housed) in cages within enclosed structures or housed in outdoor caging under specified conditions. The policy will be reviewed should the understanding of the role of enclosed birds in this outbreak change.

1. The safest option with respect to containing and eradicating END is to euthanize all birds on infected premises and those birds linked to infected premises.
2. Exceptions to this policy for both infected premises and dangerous contacts are:
 - a. Specimens of endangered species as protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act that will be assessed in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is authorized to quarantine, seize, or destroy endangered species.
 - b. Specimens of rare and/or threatened species as listed in the CITES Appendices, I & II.
 - c. Other genetically significant species or strains of exotic or domestic avian species as determined by the END task force.
 - d. Caged birds with evidence of a biosecurity program that is protective from other birds on the premises.
 - Appropriate biosecurity measures to reduce the risk of past and future exposure to END include: avoiding contact with affected birds; isolation from loose birds in the neighborhood, preventing people from spreading the disease through contaminated clothing, shoes, and vehicles; and cleaning and disinfecting any equipment/supplies in contact with affected birds;
 - Whether the owner has outside birds. Owners who do not have outside birds will be considered to be at lower risk than owners who have outside birds;
 - If candidates for this exemption are housed outside, other risk factors will be considered. These include:
 - Whether all outside birds are caged, and if so, does the caging provide cover or roofing over the feeding and watering areas and does the caging provide isolation from contact with potential carriers like rodents and free-ranging birds;
 - Are there free-ranging poultry in the neighborhood;
 - Is there a perimeter fence that provides the ability to segregate the property from free-ranging poultry and other vectors?
1. Birds included in the categories a.-d. above will be evaluated and either destroyed, quarantined at the premises in a manner prescribed by the END Task Force, or taken to a USDA quarantine station at the discretion of the END Task Force Incident Commander.
2. Any birds on infected premises considered for exemption to destruction shall be swabbed for further testing and isolated at the owner's expense in the manner proscribed by the END Task Force. Isolation facilities must provide secure bio-containment against END, yet allow for servicing of feeding and watering devices and cleaning wastes as necessary.
3. If the risk of END infection is determined to be low, enclosed exotic or pet birds located on an IP or DC premises may be quarantined onsite rather than be destroyed. However, there are obligations the owner must fulfill:
 - a. The owner will be required to provide a biosecurity management protocol that meets the standards provided by the END Task Force. Further, the operator or owner of the facility will be required to sign a compliance agreement (attached).
 - b. Cloacal swab samples, taken by a state or federal animal health official, will be submitted for virus isolation. Prior to release of quarantine, birds will be sampled a second time. Two consecutive negative samples at least 15 days apart are required for the release of the quarantine.
 - c. Additional guidelines for determining when the quarantine can be removed will be discussed at the time of signing the compliance agreement. The quarantine will remain in place for a minimum of 30 days. The quarantine will not be lifted until surveillance is completed in the neighborhood around the quarantined premises (in an approximately kilometer zone) and until there are no infected premises within a 3 kilometer zone around the quarantined premises.
1. If test results show that an exempted bird is infected with END, it will be destroyed.

PET OR EXOTIC BIRD IN-HOME QUARANTINE COMPLIANCE AGREEMENT

[Pursuant to Food and Agricultural Code Section 9562]

PARTIES

1. California Department of Food and Agriculture (hereinafter "the Department")

Contact: Dr. Richard Breitmeyer, State Veterinarian

PO Box 40

Los Alamitos, CA 90720

Telephone: (562) 795-1940

Facsimile: (562) 795-1976

2. Owner of Bird(s):

Name: _____ Address: _____ Telephone: _____

BACKGROUND

1. On October 1, 2002, an outbreak of Exotic Newcastle Disease (hereinafter "END") was confirmed in Southern California. END is a highly contagious and often fatal viral disease that affects most species of birds. END is especially virulent, with many birds dying without showing any clinical signs of the disease.

2. Food and Agricultural Code section 9562 provides the Department with the authority to order the movement, segregation, isolation, or destruction of animals or food products during quarantine.

3. Food and Agricultural Code section 9574 provides that any person who negligently or intentionally violates quarantine shall be civilly liable in an amount not to exceed twenty-five thousand (\$25,000) dollars. Food and Agricultural Code section 9701 provides that a first quarantine violation may be cited as an infraction, with second and subsequent violations constituting misdemeanor offenses.

4. Owner acknowledges that he/she has been personally served with an Animal Health and Food Safety Services quarantine due to the possible exposure of birds on the premises to END. Quarantine Number _____ Date _____

5. Owner further acknowledges that he/she will execute and comply with the terms and conditions of this compliance agreement with the Department.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

As Owner, I certify that I understand and will comply with the following conditions for home quarantine of my bird(s).

1. Birds and associated equipment will not be moved in or out of the quarantined home located at:

Address: _____

2. The following bird(s) will be home quarantined according to this compliance agreement: (list of birds here)

2. Owner will do the following to minimize the potential risk of spreading disease (Biosecurity):

a) Keep bird(s) confined and in an enclosure (e.g. within a cage which is inside a residence or secure aviary).

c) Prevent free-ranging poultry from entering the property.

b) Isolate the bird(s) from visitors.

c) Do not share birds, equipment or feed with other bird owners.

d) Avoid unnecessary contact with other people's birds. Infected birds may not look sick!

e) Prior to coming in contact with birds:

Hands: Wash your hands in soap and water for 10 to 20 seconds.

Feet: Remove or thoroughly clean your shoes, paying particular attention to the soles. Spray soles with a disinfectant or use a disinfectant foot dip at the entrance to your property.

Other: Shower and change into clean clothing.

f) Keep visitors to your property to a minimum. If you have visitors, they should wash their hands and clean their shoes and do not let them near your birds.

4. Owner will permit the bird(s) to be tested for END at a minimum of 2 times at least 15 days apart. The final test will occur after the area is considered free of END. Additional tests may occur.

5. The owner will call the Department at (800) 491-1899 immediately if bird(s) are showing signs of illness or have died.

6. If any bird on the quarantined premises is diagnosed with END, all birds on the premises will be humanely euthanized. If a regulatory veterinarian determines that the quarantined bird(s) have been exposed to END all birds on the premises will be humanely euthanized. Exposure may be due to non-compliance with the biosecurity practices listed above.

7. Owner acknowledges that he/she has been provided with a copy of Food and Agricultural Code section 9562, and accepts the State Veterinarian's authority to act thereunder without consultation with Owner. Such authority includes, but is not limited to, decisions related to the need to quarantine poultry, poultry products and any associated equipment and property for isolation, depopulation and destruction. Owner further acknowledges that the State Veterinarian may require amendments to this compliance agreement at any time.

DATE: _____

Owner

DATE: _____

California Department of Food and Agriculture

(Print name) _____ (Title) _____

Exotic Newcastle Disease Task Force Animal Health and Food Safety Services

A Note From The President 19 March 2003

The American Federation of Aviculture, Inc.® (AFA) is pleased to announce and welcome a new Bronze Level Corporate Sponsor for our organization, Mazuri®. Mazuri® is the exotic animal feeding resource of Purina Mills, LLC. Below, we will provide some information about these companies, which I think you will find of interest.

First, however, I wish to express my personal thanks to Mazuri® and Purina Mills for supporting AFA. These are tough economic times for all of us – from individuals to corporations. Mazuri® and Purine Mills, thank you.

Now about our new sponsors...

From its origins in St. Louis, Missouri in 1894, Purina Mills has evolved into the most diversified animal nutrition company in the world. Today, Purina Mills continues its commitment of producing the finest diets for America's growing number of animals. Purina Mills, LLC, combined with Land O Lakes/Farmland Feed, is the largest animal diet manufacturer in the world. With a 1,200-acre Research Center in Gray Summit, Missouri, and over 40 Ph.D. scientists on staff, Purina Mills can provide the best nutrition solutions for your animals. Mazuri®, the exotic animal feeding resource of Purina Mills, is the World's leader in exotic animal nutrition.

Mazuri® works closely with breeders, zoos, aquariums, and veterinarians to develop diets for captive animals to help them thrive in their environment. Mazuri actively supports research in academia, zoos, and breeding facilities throughout the world. This research, and a commitment to quality manufacturing, has made Mazuri® the diet of choice for

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optimum nutrition of animals from aardvarks to zebras. Visit us at www.mazuri.com. ❖

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Sun Seed's New Bird Wellness Program

For over twenty years Sun Seed has produced superior quality premium grade seed mixes. The Company has always been known as the innovator in the seed manufacturing industry. In November, 2001 Sun Seed formed a partnership with the number one manufacturer of bird food and vitamins in Germany; Quiko. Throughout the Avicultural community Quiko is recognized as a professional grade product line. The foundation of this line is baked product made with real eggs and honey known as eggfood. Essentially this is a supplemental food that is added to the basic daily diet.

According to Jeff Clark, Sun Seed's Vice President of Marketing and Sales, the real beauty of this eggfood is that birds universally accept the food and eat it before they eat anything else. "If you want to supplement the diet with vitamins, or need to medicate a bird, eggfood is the ideal medium for doing this. Because the birds completely ingest the eggfood, you are assured that they ingest anything that is added to the food."

European aviculturists have been using eggfoods for generations. With the exception of canary breeders, the concept is relatively new to the U.S. More and more aviculturists and avian hobbyists are embracing this method of improving the diets of their birds.

Sun Seed has developed a program for use in pet stores utilizing 5 Quiko products to improve the health and condition of birds kept in a retail environment. The Bird Wellness Program as it is called is a three-stage feeding program that increases protein levels, provides essential vitamins and eliminates parasites, certain bacteria and fungus that can infect birds.

The first stage uses a formula consisting of eggfood, vitamins, a protein supplement, and a probiotic that is fed to newly introduced birds for the first five days that they are in the store. The second stage utilizes eggfood and vitamins as a basic daily supplement. The third stage is feeding the original introductory formula once a week as a prophylactic treatment.

The Bird Wellness Program was tested by a number of avian specialty stores across the country before being introduced. "The feed back was phenomenal." Clark said. "We received nothing but positive feedback, including several claims that this approach actually saved the lives of some birds that had been in jeopardy. Some breeders have also begun using this approach. It is very beneficial in any situation where there is a regular turn-over or introduction of new birds into the setting."

Sun Seed has always been a strong supporter of the independent retail pet industry. The Bird Wellness Program is just one more way that Sun Seed is trying to promote proper avian care.

Contact Clark at 1-800-221-6175 for more detailed information on this program. ❖