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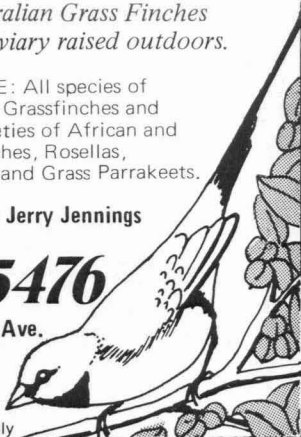
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# VVND Birds Destroyed in Miami, Exposed Shipments Traced to 33 States



Photo by Michael A. Valente—Fallbrook Enterprise, Fallbrook, Ca.

This tragic fate happened to over 8000 newly imported birds at Pet Farms, Inc., in Miami, Florida on September 10, 1980.

All birds at Pet Farms, Inc., a wholesale bird facility in Miami, Florida, were disposed of September 10, 1980, after exotic Newcastle disease (VVND) was diagnosed according to an official with the U.S.D.A.

Dr. Dean Philson, who directs a federal-state task force in Miami to deal with the problem, said, "A crew of animal health officials depopulated all the birds at Pet Farm, Inc. because the birds were either infected with or exposed to this deadly virus. The entire premise will be cleaned and disinfected."

Mr. Bern Levine, owner of Pet Farm, Inc., 7000 N.W. 69th Street, Miami, told U.S.D.A. officials he first suspected he might have an active virus about August 31st, because of excessive sick

and dying birds at his wholesale facility. Specimens from these birds were later sent to the National Animal Disease Laboratory at Ames, Iowa, where a virus isolated for a type of Newcastle was determined on September 5th. At that time, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services placed a quarantine on the movement of all birds from Pet Farm, Inc. Further tests confirmed the virus strain to be exotic Newcastle disease rather than the domestic strain.

Mr. Levine will receive an indemnity from U.S.D.A. in the amount of \$391,000 for the loss of 8,220 birds, that either died after the quarantine was imposed or were disposed of by animal health officials.

Dr. Philson said the biggest part of the

task force's work is yet to be done. "Every shipment of birds that left Pet Farm, Inc. from August 1st until September 5th, when the state quarantine went into effect has to be traced, and of course, we will also be trying to determine how the virus entered the wholesale facility."

Shipping records provided by Mr. Levine indicate that nearly 500 shipments of birds were shipped to 33 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Canada, and the Bahamas. Dr. Philson said animal health officials in each of these locations have been notified of potential disease threat.

The 33 states are: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia.

Sick and dying birds have been reported from several of these states. When possible, birds will be purchased for diagnostic purposes. If the owner does not wish to sell the birds, specimens

are taken from which laboratory tests can be made. If all test results are negative, the quarantine will be lifted from the affected premise. However, if the tests are positive, all the birds will be humanly destroyed and the premise will be disinfected. Where depopulation is necessary, the owners will receive indemnities from the U.S.D.A. for their losses.

U.S.D.A. has requested a loan of \$5 million from Commodity Credit Corp. to carry out this work. Cost may even exceed this amount as other large dealers may have been infected.

In addition to the current outbreak in Florida, exotic Newcastle disease has been found since March in pet birds and eight other aviaries and pet shops in four states - California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Some 3,000 exposed or infected birds were destroyed in these outbreaks.

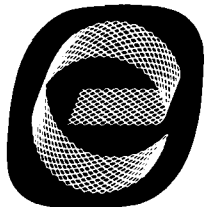
U.S.D.A. officials said they have no plans to discontinue issuing import permits to pet importers due to the recent outbreaks.

The disease is not considered a health hazard to humans, although some people handling the diseased birds may be affected with eye infections or flu-like symptoms which should be treated by a physician.

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