

Not Just Parrots . . . USDA Finds Many Birds Carry Exotic Newcastle Disease

WASHINGTON—Parrots aren't the only birds capable of bringing exotic Newcastle disease into the United States.

Many families of exotic birds have been refused entry because they were infected with viruses that kill domestic poultry and other cage and aviary birds. The infections showed up during U.S. Department of Agriculture or USDA-supervised quarantine.

"More than 70 percent of the 221,600 birds refused entry into the United States from 1973 to 1981 because of disease were Psittaciformes—parrots, cockatoos, parakeets, conures, macaws, cockatiels and parrotlets," said Dennis Senne, of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "We expected that. However, we didn't expect to find members of ten other bird families infected.

Senne is a diagnostitian at USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories, Ames, Iowa.

"We found infection in the Fringillidae family—the finches and canaries; Sturnidae—mynah and starling; Cotingidae—cock of the rock; Corvidae—Magpie; Turdidae—Pekin robin; Ploceidae—silver bill; Columbidae—pigeon; Musophagidae—touraco; Gruidae—crane; and Phasianidae—pheasant and francolin.

"USDA veterinarians isolated less virulent strains of Newcastle disease virus from 26 groups of birds," Senne said. "We allowed these birds to enter the country because those strains of the virus already exist here."

The 221,600 birds, which USDA refused entry, made up 147 lots of 2,274 offered for importation, Senne said. Lots varied from 10 to 36,800 birds.

"Of these, USDA refused 141 lots because they had velogenic viscerotropic—exotic—Newcastle disease," Senne said.

USDA veterinarian isolated many other viruses from the imported birds—paramyxovirus 2 and 3; influenza; psittacine herpes—Pacheco's; pox; reovirus and adenovirus, Senne said. USDA veterinarians allow birds carrying these viruses entry because federal regulations are designed to detect and exclude only viruses that kill domestic poultry.

"USDA refused entry to the highest number of birds during 1973—the first year of the import bird program—when almost 32 percent of the lots and more

than 40 percent of the birds were denied entry," Senne said. "Since then, we haven't refused nearly as many lots of birds."

The reduction may be due to these factors, Senne said:

—Importers may have become more cautious in the types of birds they import and the countries from which they import them;

—The USDA 90-day ban on imports from countries when exotic Newcastle disease is isolated in birds from that country;

—The large number of birds imported from some countries may have reduced populations to the point where there is little disease left;

—Some importers may quarantine birds in the country of origin to eliminate lots with clinical disease. ●

Directory Completed for Veterinarians/ Aviculturists

The Pennsylvania Association of Avian Veterinarians would like to announce that the first printing of its avian veterinarian/aviculturist directory has been completed. The directory will be revised as needed, so we are still welcoming those who would like to be included.

Breeders: please forward name, address, types of birds currently being bred, and \$10.00 to the address below. You will be in our next printing, which is anticipated to be needed shortly.

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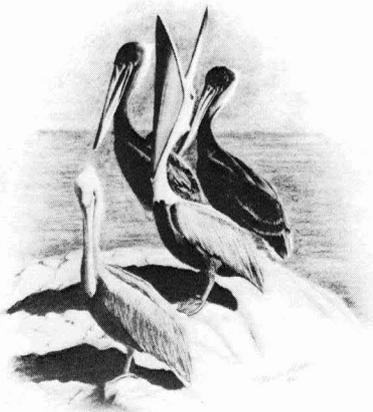
Almost two-hundred veterinarians attended PAAV's (Pennsylvania Association of Avian Veterinarians) annual Mid-Atlantic States Avian Medicine Seminar May 4-5, 1982, at the Holiday Inn-Inner Harbor, Baltimore.

Topics of avian post-mortem, hematology, infectious and nutritional diseases, feather abnormalities, radiology, laparoscopy, and hobby poultry were presented by the excellent: Dr. David Graham, Dr. Joshua Dein, Dr. Wilbur Amand, Dr. Sidney Evans, Dr. Michael Stoskopf, and Dr. Dwight Schwartz.

The Regional Poultry Laboratory Diagnosticians Group and the U.S. Animal Health Association Committee on Transmissible Diseases of Poultry and Other Avian Species (subcommittee on Model State Programs for Pet Birds) also met in conjunction with the PAAV meeting. ●

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