

# NEWCASTLE DISEASE FEBRUARY 1977

## The End of the Story (?)

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Legislative Liaison, Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The February, 1977 Newcastle Story is by now, very familiar history to us all. We've experienced the tragedy, we've seen the pictures, we've even taken the government to court. Those of us who were not terrified by it obviously were not paying close enough attention. But certain issues remain and will be discussed for months to come. Certain questions remain unanswered, some of them quite simple, on the surface, and seemingly quite easy to answer. For example, "What conclusions were reached after six months of investigation regarding the source of the infection last February? Who, in the end, was responsible?"

This is the question I pursued in Washington, D.C. in August. I talked to some of the highest level officials in U.S.D.A., Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. They could not answer that question. Not that they lack data or evidence, but the implications of answering that question are enormous. The question is really somewhat longer than "Who was responsible." It should read: "Who was responsible for the death of over 13,000 birds, the destruction of lifetimes of careful breeding, the end of the love a person had for their pet of 20 years, the emotional trauma of watching a part of someone's life killed, the horror of knowing the damage is irreversible, the snuffing out of endangered and irreplaceable birds, the end of a business venture always dreamed about and finally realized, and the cost of \$1,500,000 to the taxpayer," and on and on. It is a very "heavy" question. Would you answer it?

The APHIS officials declined to answer the question on the grounds that the origin of the infection may not have been any of the locations from which the positive virus isolates were taken. This is to say that the sick birds were most likely smuggled into the country and found their way to locations and people who could be innocent of any wrong doing. Since there is no proof of anyone connected with the sick birds being involved with the illegal entry of those sick birds, the responsibility for the infection cannot be placed on the head of anyone or any group of people. For a government official to make a public statement to the contrary would open the door to law suits for libel, defamation of character, and who knows what else by any named persons or businesses.

This forces the most sincere, honest, and well informed, officials into using our local Washington, D.C. dialect, "Government-ese." While the objective of this language is to say nothing, some government officials can use it in ways that communicate information without it being damaging to themselves, and others. In our case, for example, one high ranking official in APHIS pointed out that "the epidemiological studies are clear and are a matter of public record." Here is that record:

1—Exotic Newcastle Disease (VVND) was isolated and confirmed by laboratory tests in birds coming from the following premises:

- a) Yanik's Rainbow Aviaries, Charlotte Courthouse, Virginia.
- b) The Hinkle Farm, Alpine, Calif.
- c) Basically Birds, Alpine, Calif.
- d) The Russell Cranor property, Spring Valley, Calif.
- e) Bronze Wing Aviaries, Colton, Calif.
- f) A private aviary in Florida (unnamed due to the circumstance that the infected bird, a cockatoo, came directly from one of the above dealers.

2—The virus isolates from Rainbow Aviaries, Basically Birds, The Hinkle Farm, and the Cranor property, were a "hot" VVND virus. The Bronze Wing virus was less virulent, and therefore, could possibly be of different origin than the others.

3—The infected paroquets at Rainbow Aviaries were shipped from California to Mr. Yanik in Virginia.

4—There is nothing in the record to indicate the source of infected birds at Basically Birds.

5—Mr. Hinkle received birds from Basically Birds during this same period.

6—The Cranor property is adjacent to an unnamed property from which a chicken with VVND strayed. (See March 21 below.)

Below is a chronology of events as they unfolded beginning February 17, 1977. It has been compiled for the A.F.A. by persons who must remain nameless. The sources are mainly U.S.D.A. news releases and memos. Verbal reports at meetings that were not tape recorded have not been used. This represents the most complete record available at this time. There is some indication that APHIS, itself, will issue a "full report" at some later date, but until then, the following may be used for reference.



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CHRONOLOGY  
EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE  
VIRGINIA AND CALIFORNIA

February 17, 1977  
Exotic Newcastle disease was diagnosed at Veterinary Services Laboratories, Ames, Iowa, from birds owned by Harold Yanik, a pet bird wholesaler.

February 18, 1977  
Northern READEO partially activated in Key-ville, Virginia.

February 18, 1977  
Bronze Wing Aviaries, Colton, California, placed under quarantine.

February 19, 1977  
Depopulation of birds on the Yanik premises was completed.

February 19, 1977  
Western READEO activated in San Diego, California.

February 22, 1977  
Exotic Newcastle disease diagnosed at the San Gabriel Laboratory from birds submitted by Al Hinkle.

February 22, 1977  
Poultry industry met with task force members in San Bernardino, California.

February 24, 1977  
Federal quarantine placed on three premises of Harold Yanik. Epidemiological evidence indicated that infection entered the Yanik premises from a shipment of parrots from Dulzura, California, on February 2, 1977.

February 24-25, 1977  
Hinkle premises depopulated.

February 26, 1977  
Cleaning and disinfection of the Yanik premises completed.

February 26-27, 1977  
Depopulation of Basically Birds flock. Virus was isolated and characterized as VVND.

March 2, 1977  
State-Federal quarantine placed on a 30-square mile area surrounding the Hinkle and Basically Birds premises.

March 2, 1977  
Indemnities in California to date total \$194,599 of which \$190,513 was for birds. A total of 88 employees on task force. Sixty-four Federal and 24 State.

March 4, 1977  
Meeting held at the University of Maryland concerning Virginia and California outbreaks of VVND. Approximately 125 poultry, pet bird industries, and USDA personnel attended this meeting.

March 8, 1977  
VVND virus isolated from birds depopulated in Florida. This premises was depopulated on February 19, 1977, due to a shipment from the Yanik premises on February 16, 1977. This was the first indication of spread from the Virginia outbreak.

March 10, 1977  
Newcastle task force closed at Charlottesville, Virginia.

March 11, 1977  
VVND confirmed at Bronze Wing Aviaries.

March 15, 1977  
VVND virus was isolated from tissues submitted from a backyard chicken and exotic bird flock in Spring Valley, California. This flock was depopulated on March 14, 1977.

March 15, 1977

Bronze Wing Aviaries depopulated.

March 15, 1977  
Total amount expended for the eradication efforts throughout the United States is \$727,096.80 of which \$534,090.76 has been indemnity.

March 17, 1977  
Docket signed to quarantine a 5-square mile area around the premises of Russel Cranor, Spring Valley, California, and the premises of Bronze Wing Aviaries, at Colton, California, which were diagnosed positive for VVND.

March 21, 1977  
A chicken submitted by Russel Cranor was positive for VVND. This bird reportedly strayed from the adjoining premises which was at one time a holding area for caged pet birds.

March 24, 1977  
Federal quarantine released from the Yanik premises.

March 24, 1977  
Meeting held at the University of Maryland with State veterinarians and Veterinary Services key personnel to discuss policy for handling pet birds involved with Bronze Wing Aviaries. The policy encompassed those pet birds in trade channels as one entity and all other classes of pet birds as another entity.

April 18, 1977  
Federal quarantine released from premises of Basically Birds and Al Hinkle.

April 21, 1977  
Federal quarantine released from premises in Spring Valley, California.

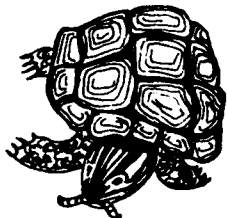
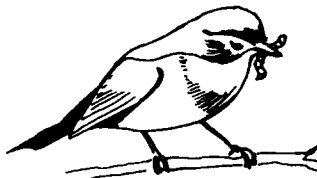
April 26, 1977  
Last remaining Federal quarantines in California released.

April 30, 1977  
Task force in California deactivated. Surveil-

continued on page 38

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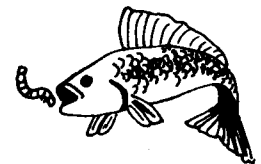
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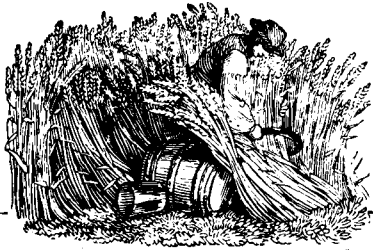


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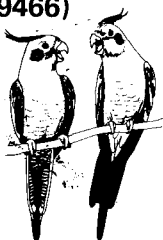
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## NEWCASTLE DISEASE/FEB. '77 continued from page 23

lance will continue.  
July 27, 1977

Total number of premises involved in Virginia and California outbreaks was 252, with about 13,400 birds in 23 States. Indemnities for both outbreaks amounted to about \$981,700. Total cost of the Virginia and California outbreaks was approximately \$1,500,000.

Some day the complete story may be written and it may become a part of the public record. Only then will we really have The End of the Story. It will be the end of the story for the February 1977 Outbreak. The Newcastle story will go on and we will be devastated again and again. That is, unless you and I stop the smuggling. Yes, You and I, not the government. We are the ones who are the customers for the smugglers. They sell us psittacosis and we buy it. They sell us Pacheco's Parrot Disease and we buy it. They sell us inclusion body viruses and we buy it. They sell us Exotic Newcastle and we buy it. We get a good deal though. Sometimes we even save up to \$50.00.

## BLACK HOODED RED SISKIN continued from page 33

wanted to work with pure Red Siskins or only Red Siskin-Canary f<sub>1</sub>'s. So in a fit of pique the old timer threw open the cage doors and released all the third generation Siskin-Canary crosses. Sadly they are now lost forever to the fancy and such a pity that these birds could not have been used as a foundation to continue the work and fix the strain for posterity.

I would very much appreciate hearing from anyone who is working on similar projects. After all we once upon a time did not have a white canary, nor Frills, nor Norwich, recessive and sex linked. All of them came from the Serinus Canarius from the passerine of the Fringillidae family, an inhabitant of an African island. So please folks if you have f<sub>2</sub> crosses (female) don't discard or discount them without test mating them for fertility (if she lays eggs then she's fertile so please work with her), lets give this fascinating possibility a chance of becoming an established reality.

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