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WE RENT BIRDS AND CAGES FOR
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SO YOU HAVE TO TREAT FOR PSITTACOSIS

*by Clifton R. Witt
Washington, D.C.*

At the time of this writing there is an outbreak of psittacosis in the state of Maryland. It was first diagnosed in a Lutino Cockatiel last August and now, in the late Fall, the state department of Public Health is in the process of tracking down perhaps as many as 2000 birds which they will quarantine and treat. The majority of these birds were sold as pets and are now in private homes, so you can see the enormity of the task at hand.

This incident points up the need for several things that we as aviculturists should consider. This is not an unusual situation, unfortunately. Psittacosis is being brought to you by the same people who gave you Newcastle — the smugglers. (Remember the tipster's Hotline (301) 436-8061.) Also we know that psittacosis is coming out of the quarantine stations rather frequently. The responsible quarantine station, upon discovering psittacosis in the station, will hold those birds beyond the required 30 days and continue medicating another 15 days. In these days of Quarantine Station Population Explosion however (up to 48 now) there are stations that, out of necessity or neglect, will ship birds with psittacosis.

AFA members can now play an important role in advising state officials on how to treat the birds since these officials usually are not familiar with cage or exotic birds and would prefer to destroy them or prohibit them just to get them out of their bureaucratic hair. Until we as an industry, a community, a consumer group, or whatever we call ourselves work out ways to eliminate or control diseases like ornithosis (psittacosis), we are likely to be called upon to play the role of public relations experts to smooth the feathers of indignant public officials.

One of the things that we have and they want is information about birds. To that end I have provided, below, information on how to treat for ornithosis, where

to get the medicine, and how to administer it to the birds. Keep it handy because it is very likely you're going to need it.

First of all, if the birds will eat Keet Life, a Hartz Mountain product, use it. It's a clean, easy way of treatment that is effective. One AFA member and quarantine station owner reports that he has used Keet Life successfully on birds as large as Rosellas on down to the small psittacines. Even Half Moons have been fed exclusively on Keet Life for 45 days. Larger psittacines, soft bills, and perhaps finches and canaries (if they won't eat the Keet Life) have to be treated as described below.

The following information has been provided by Dr. A. Louis Shor, D.V.M., Manager, Poultry Program for American Cyanamid Company, the manufacturer of the medication commonly used by quarantine stations. Dr. Shor, in his cover letter, indicates that Mr. Spencer Carter of American Cyanamid can help in locating the product in your area. He can be reached at (609) 799-0400 in Princeton, N.J. Dr. Shor's instructions are here presented in their entirety:

S.F. MIX 66*

AUREOMYCIN Chlortetracycline
Mixture

AUREOMYCIN Chlortetracycline
100 Gm. per pound (0.22 gm. per gm.)

FOR ORAL VETERINARY USE ONLY

S.F. MIX 66, a specially prepared high-potency formula of AUREOMYCIN chlortetracycline, is designed for the preparation of medicated mashes to be used in the treatment of psittacine birds (parrots, macaws and cockatoos) suspected or known to be infected with psittacosis.

PREPARATION OF MASH

A suitable mash base consists of equal parts (by weight) of rice and chicken scratch. The mash is cooked with water in a double boiler or pressure cooker until soft (but not mushy) and cooled. Sufficient S.F. MIX 66 is added to the cooled mash to provide 10 mg. chlortetracycline per gram of mash. The following chart shows the amounts of S.F. MIX 66 needed for various quantities of mash.

Weight of Cooked, Cooled Mash	Amount of S.F. MIX 66 by Measure* or Weight
1/2 lb.	1-1/2 tablespoons (or 11 Gm.)
1 lb.	3 tablespoons (or 22 Gm.)
1-1/2 lb.	1/4 cup (or 32 Gm.)
5 lb.	1 cup (or 1/4 lb.)

*Standard measuring spoon or cup.

Sprinkle the required amount of S.F. MIX 66 into the freshly cooked and cooled mash, stirring continuously. Continue stirring until thoroughly mixed. A small amount of brown sugar may be added for greater palatability.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PREPARE FRESH MASH DAILY BECAUSE WET MIXTURES OF THIS TYPE LOSE ANTIBIOTIC POTENCY ON STANDING FOR 24 HOURS.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE

During treatment, parrots, macaws and cockatoos should be kept individually or in pairs in clean cages.

Provide a packed measuring cup (85 to 110 Gm.) of the medicated mash for each bird. The birds may not eat a great deal on the first day, but thereafter they will usually eat enough to assure adequate intake of antibiotic. Adequate feed consumption should be maintained. As a guide a bird should consume an amount of feed equal to one fifth of its body weight daily. Fruit may be included in the diet of psittacines (parrots, macaws and cockatoos) requiring this food, providing the antibiotic is maintained at 10 mg. per gram of complete ration.

Provide medicated mash as the only feed for 45 consecutive days.

Product No. 22123

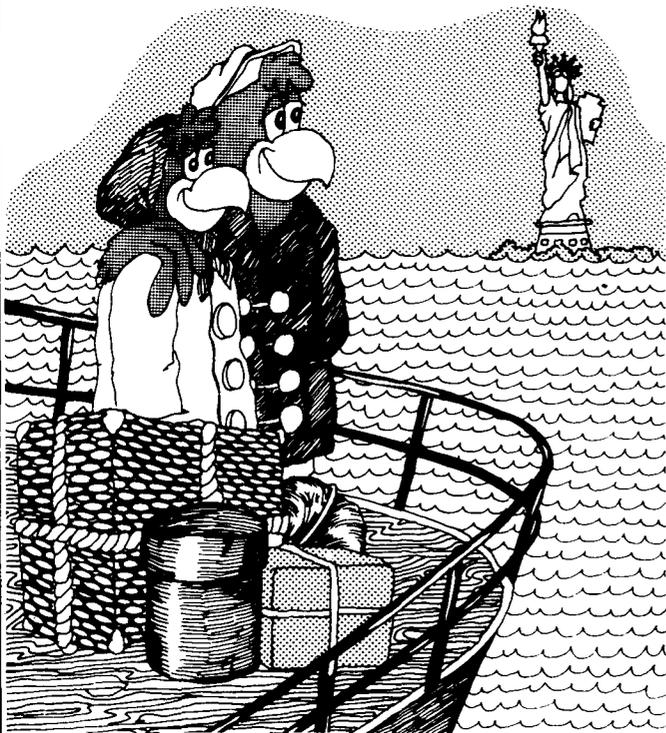
Available in 10 lb. drums

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*Trademark.

The major snag, as you can see, is in the quantities of S.F. 66 that must be purchased. It is also available in one pound jars but you must buy a case of 12. Here is where your local AFA organization (a member club, a few AFA members, or whatever) can really provide a service. The local (or National) AFA' organization might buy the medication and make it available (free of charge?) to the frustrated bird owners sent to them by the state. An instruction sheet on how to administer it and a little help could bring us many new AFA members and at the same time show the government we are not just trouble makers but people serious about making aviculture a responsible and important hobby/industry in this country. ■

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