



# NEWCASTLE SUPPLEMENT

## the a.f.a. WATCHBIRD

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SUPPLEMENT NO. 2  
JUNE 6th, 1977

DEDICATED TO CONSERVATION OF BIRD WILDLIFE THROUGH ENCOURAGEMENT OF  
CAPTIVE BREEDING PROGRAMS, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, AND EDUCATION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Photo by Delmar Watson, Hollywood, Ca.



**MAYDAY FOR THE BIRDS** — On May 2, a determined band of A.F.A. members entered the Federal Courthouse in Los Angeles. Left to Right, Roland Dubuc, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Page—Plaintiffs in the action filed by A.F.A. March 9 protesting the depopulation of birds on the endangered species list by the USDA, Dr. Allen Magie—Professor at Loma Linda University, whose affidavit was accepted without question by both Federal and State Attorneys, Volney F. Morin, Jr.—A.F.A. Attorney, Lee Horton—President of A.F.A., Joe Griffith—delegate to A.F.A. from the Nu-Color Bird Club, Jean Hessler—Art Director for the A.F.A. Watchbird and Dick Mattice—California Gamebird Breeders delegate.

## BATTLE OF THE BIRDS

by Volney F. Morin, Jr.  
Attorney, Los Angeles

On May 2, 1977, in the Federal Court of Honorable William Matthew Byrne, the United States government and the State of California announced jointly that the Task Force established to control Velogenic Viscerotropic Newcastle Disease (VVND) had been disbanded on April 30, 1977.

The news of the disbanding came as a surprise to the members of the AFA then present in the courthouse, and the impact of what it implied was not appreciated at that moment. In the days that followed it became clear as one organization after another telephoned to see what our next move would be, that the AFA had accomplished a significant feat.

At the meeting attended by Carl Nall of the Pacific Egg and Poultry Association (PEPA) on the east coast immediately following the hearing May 2nd, the USDA was reported to have suggested that the eradication and indemnification

program now used to control VVND may be abandoned and in its place private industry will be allowed to develop a vaccine to protect poultry. The initial reaction from PEPA was positive, they welcomed the chance to protect themselves.

Because the Task Force had been abandoned (except for a skeleton force to continue observation), Judge Byrne ruled that the AFA motion for a Preliminary Injunction was no longer appropriate. He further ruled (somewhat to the annoyance of the government attorneys) that before the Task Force could be reactivated, the government of the United States and the State of California had to contact the attorneys for the AFA to put us on Notice so we could move for another Preliminary Injunction if appropriate.

Coverage in the media after the hearing was available on television and radio and in the press. They correctly reported that the next hearing would be July 18, 1977, when the United States and the State of California would probably move

for a dismissal of the suit, most likely on the grounds that since the Task Force had been disbanded there would not be an issue for the court to adjudicate.

It has been my experience that litigation is the most uncertain thing I do. One thing for sure though is that the American Federation of Aviculture, through its efforts to stop the government from needlessly killing rare and endangered birds, has:

1. Earned the respect of the USDA, and
2. Become the leading spokesman for the aviculturist in the United States.

Telephone calls continue to come in from all over the United States; many are not related to VVND. The AFA is asserting its influence across the country and breeders and lovers of birds are looking to it for help in diverse areas.

At the July 18 hearing the AFA will pursue the case against the USDA and California Dept. of Agriculture. Win, lose, or draw, the efforts of the AFA have been productive in leading to a position of prominence.

"This article written by Margaret Kraker McKean appeared in the Los Angeles Times, March 21, 1977, on the Opinion-Editorial page. Mrs. McKean is the author of "The Stop Smoking Book" (published by Impact), and is a reporter and feature writer for the Ventura County Star-Free Press."

## YEARS OF LOVE ARE KILLED OFF IN FOUR HOURS

The Depopulators Come, and 250 Beauties Go

by Margaret McKean

My husband and I have been visiting the Gundersons in their ranchhouse in San Juan Capistrano for at least a decade, and each time they seemed to have more birds.

The Gundersons — my cousin Margie, her husband Jim, their five children, two horses and two dogs — live in a sprawling house on a fairly sizable hunk of land. The aviary is out back. Located on a hill overlooking the main dwelling and stables, it consists of giant outdoor cages fashioned of wire and shaped into long, free-flight corridors.

And, over the years, what splendid birds have roosted there! Ornatly feathered pheasants, Burmese bleeding-heart doves, peacocks, precious Tragopans worth \$1,500 a pair, Malayan fire-backs.

And what colors! Flashes of eye-popping purple and soft lavender here, bright yellow and startling chartreuse there. The bronze, copper and russets of the Ijima pheasants, the iridescent cobalt and sapphire of the Mikado — it looked as though a mad costumer had dressed the occupants of all those cages for a fancy ball. In their glitter, some small birds upstaged even the peacocks.

It was enthralling to hear Jim Gunderson tell what he'd learned about this prized feathered pair or about that exotic couple, about how he'd arranged to import these birds from Tibet and those from Malaysia or the Himalayas. As Jim's knowledge grew with his collection, schoolteachers brought their students to learn from Jim that exotic birds from far-off lands can thrive in California with a little protection from humankind.

Careful breeding enabled Jim to grow ever better, more resplendent birds. On one visit or another, I've seen incubators humming away in the Gundersons' stables, in their garage, in their bathrooms. Once even the sauna was off-limits, for birds were hatching there. Naturally, each surge in the chick population soon required enlarging the cage corridors.

Meanwhile, the Gundersons placed refrigerators in the stables to store mealworms, which are a favorite food of some species. To facilitate feeding other members of this brood, they stack bags of grain there as well.

Continued on page 2 — column 3



# WHY ?

by Jerry Bourdages

A journalist writes news stories every day. He covers the who-what-where-when of one story, then goes on to the next. If he is a columnist, he writes the why of the stories, which takes a little longer. Well, I happen to be a columnist for the San Clemente Daily Sun-Post.

Our paper ran a story on James D. Gunderson, a local citizen who lives in the next town of San Juan Capistrano. The story stated that his collection of 250 exotic birds had been killed by a government agency because of an outbreak of Newcastle disease.

While I was trying to get more information on the Gunderson story, our son-in-law's father, Frank Kozeluh, of San Diego came up for a visit. Since I knew Frank was a "birdman", as I called him, I asked him some questions on the subject. The verbal flood-gate opened. Thirty hours later, I still didn't know much about my original why, but I had a dozen more, and had acquired an entire new knowledge about birds.

First of all, I learned that Frank is not a "birdman", but is an aviculturist. Secondly, James D. Gunderson is not a "collector" of birds, but a breeder of rare and exotic birds. Thirdly, that many aviculturists are not just breeders for business purposes, but are also conservationists of the highest order.

Gunderson, for example, was conserving the lives of twenty-three birds on the endangered species list. I also learned that USDA is not just a government agency that rates meats for butchers. My vocabulary was further expanded by such words as decontamination, shuttering of facilities,

depopulation, and, of course, Newcastle disease.

As to the whys, those which stick in my mind the most are "why indiscriminate extermination", "why depopulation without testing" and "why reverse conservation by killing". I guess the reason these left such an impression in my mind is that I had the same "whys" after WW2, when we learned of the Jewish depopulation in Germany. Relatives of some of my friends were involved in that one.

I'm not a relative to such pheasants as the Brown Eared, the Mikado, the Edward, the Swinhoe, the Humes, nor the Elliotts. I am also not related to the Bartlett Bleeding Heart Doves, nor the Tragopan Pheasants. I'm glad because I'd be on the endangered species list, for one thing. For another, if I were, and had been in Gunderson's aviary, I'd be dead. All his are.

But even if I'm not a relative, I have to mourn the way they died, without due process of law, without being tested, all indiscriminately guilty by possible association. Their colorful plumage of cobalt and sapphire, bronze, copper, russet, purple, lavender, yellow, chartreuse was simply snuffed out in "paper gas chambers".

The Federal-State "kill" order appears to have been panicky. Birds could have been quarantined, tested, then cleared or destroyed. But then, this is not the first time the federal government appears to have panicked. We have a classic case here in California which occurred in early 1942. It was not about birds and Newcastle, but about people called Japanese. All were placed in concentration camps without trial, test, or check. Fortunately, none were "depopulated".

There are many more whys to this story, and will continue to be. If you know some of the reasons, please let me know. A columnist does write the whys, but this one would prefer to write the reasons.

The American Federation of Aviculture wishes to thank the five advertisers herein, who have generously sponsored the publishing of this special Newcastle Supplement. They believe, as we do, that there is room for better leadership and wisdom concerning the real Newcastle, VVND, problem.



Photo by Michael A. Valente/Fallbrook Enterprise, Fallbrook, CA.

**SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENT.** Will we let this happen again?

## YEARS OF LOVE

*Continued from page 1*

All five of the Gunderson children learned how to take care of the birds, but the most devoted and adept was the daughter with a bird's name — Robin. Nobody had to tell Robin when or how to feed the birds, for that task had become her dedication.

Nor was anybody going to make Robin — or the other children, for that matter — eat any of the birds. Occasionally Jim would decide he didn't need 100 quail, all of them alike, or 50 identical game hens. That was when a few birds would end up in a marvelous dish Margie prepared. She called it "autumn harvest," but even if the name had been "summer satisfaction" the children would have picked at it and said, "You really expect us to feed them one day and eat them the next?"

Because of the children's protests, three or four years have passed since any Gunderson birds have come to the table that way. Jim culled the ones he didn't want from among his nearly 750 specimens by trading or giving them away. As he recently told me, "I kept the 250 birds that were nearly perfect, that were pure-bred and rare."

Fourteen pairs of Jim's birds landed on the "endangered species" list. Then, suddenly, "endangered" was no longer the right word. Last Tuesday the Gundersons' birds were destroyed in one fell swoop — all 250.

They were "the healthiest birds I've ever seen," said one federal agricultural agent whose hateful job it was to help kill them, every last one.

The death sentence was imposed to spare Orange County an outbreak of Newcastle disease, a virus that afflicts only fowl. When an epidemic struck Southern California six years ago, 12 million birds had to be destroyed — mostly chickens raised for commercial sale — in order to stop its spread. No one wanted that to happen again, least of all Jim.

The Gundersons' entire flock had to die because among them was one small gray peacock pheasant that Jim had purchased recently from a supplier in Alpine, near San Diego. After a case of Newcastle disease was found there last month, 870 birds were destroyed on the premises, and recent customers were tracked down.

The disease is so contagious that this one new bird in Jim's possession could

have infected his whole aviary and, ultimately, perhaps millions of other birds in an area best known for its annual swallow reunion that occurred on schedule Saturday. The case for death was stark but commanding.

Jim is a lawyer. As such, he thought about trying to fend off the feds, but decided to cooperate for fear he might be harboring a "flying time bomb" — he loves all birds that much. And so last week his big backyard ceased to be a sanctuary, except for wild birds that had grown accustomed to roosting there.

On earlier visits, men in business suits had made lists of the Gundersons' birds by breeding and by quantity. This time came the "depopulators" — that's what the men in rubber boots and coveralls called themselves. They too had lists, but on this occasion for checking off all the doomed and thus making sure none were spared.

As soon as they determined that all 250 were accounted for, the depopulators began capturing the birds one by one. The victims were placed in plastic bags and summarily gassed. "I guess it's carbon monoxide," Margie told me later, but added she couldn't bear to watch.

The slaughter lasted four hours. Before the depopulators drove away in their small van — bird bodies, plastic bags and all — they left a check to compensate the Gundersons for what they went through — as though money could ease the pain.

The very next day, officials announced a change in policy: Henceforth, rare birds exposed to Newcastle disease would be quarantined rather than destroyed. The Gundersons were more heartbroken than before but, as Jim said, "Perhaps the killing of my birds acted as a catalyst to get some action."

It was on that same day at San Juan Capistrano that Robin, almost out of habit, took a walk to the hilltop cages. Still devastated by the first real heartbreak she'd known in her 19 years, this young woman with a bird's name stood beside the empty, silent aviary. As Robin sifted feed grain through her fingers, there was a sudden rush of wings and a bird landed on her outstretched right hand.

With wonder — and a sense of solace, too — Robin beheld a wild mourning dove.

Our main concern is that too many folks think that they are safe and far away from Government action.

We should think, act and support A.F.A. BEFORE it happens in our own back yards. Thanks A.F.A., for "picking up the ball".



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# to hatch an emu

by Don Wells

Early in 1975 I decided to add a pair of Australian Emus to my collection of birds. I had long been interested in Emus and found the literature on these large friendly birds to be full of facts about their engaging life habits.

The Australian Emu is the second largest bird in existence today. Many males exceed one hundred and twenty-five pounds and the hens regularly weigh about eighty-five pounds.

The sexes are very hard to tell apart unless one has a chance to hear the voices of the birds. The male voice sounds very much like a burp or a grunt whereas the female makes a resonant booming noise much like a tympani drum.

Emus lay their eggs in a large communal nest and a single male then proceeds to incubate the eggs for two months. The hens pay no attention to the nest at all.

Nearly three months after I began searching for a pair of Emus I was able to locate a single male in a California zoo. A trade was negotiated for this male as well as a hen that was to come later.

I brought the male home and put him in a sixty by seventy foot corral type pen. He immediately became very friendly and interested in everything that went on in and around his domain. He especially enjoyed being sprayed with a hose, and when a puddle of water developed he would roll in it until he was thoroughly saturated.

After several months I finally secured the hen — that is a bird I believed to be a hen. Her eyes were lighter than the rich dark brown of the males eyes. Also, she



Photo by Jerry Jennings

was smaller in size and had that unexplained feminine look about her. Only after several weeks when I finally heard her voice was I totally sure I had a true pair.

When I introduced the hen to the male for the first time I was quite surprised to see him attack her with murder in his eyes. There was no choice but to remove the female before she was kicked and run to death. A wire partition was built and the birds were separated.

Over a period of a month the birds were put together several times. Each time the male drove the female mercilessly and I began to fear they would never be compatible. After about a month of this procedure they called a truce and started getting along. In the ensuing months they became inseparable.

On December 23, 1975 the hen laid her first large avocado sized green egg, and I was as proud as a peacock. Every fourth day thereafter she laid an egg for a total of thirteen.

My incubator was set at 99% degrees and the eggs were all placed in their mechanical mother for the ensuing two months. Unfortunately, mechanical things have a way of breaking down, and true to form, the incubator became overheated and its precious contents were cooked.

After this misfortune I began to ponder the idea of natural incubation if there were any eggs in the years to come. I realized that this might be a mistake since Emus in captivity rarely brood their eggs. I was also faced with the hazard of cold weather which meant that the eggs would have to be gathered as they were laid, and replaced with dummy or blown eggs.

On the 27th of December, 1976, the hen laid the first egg of her new clutch. My plan was put into action and for the next month I pulled each egg as it was laid. I replaced the eggs with blown eggs saved from the previous year. As time passed, the male became more and more possessive of the nest site. As soon as he actually began to sit tightly to incubate the eggs I would replace the empty eggs with the good ones.

Disaster struck just when I was sure the male would begin brooding. The dummy eggs apparently were too thin shelled and were crushed when the Emu stepped on them. This problem just made me more determined to see my plans through in the future. Unfortunately, the weather was very cold and I could not risk putting the good eggs out in the hope that the male would sit on them and not allow them to freeze. In this situation

I had no choice but to incubate the eggs artificially once more.

It seemed at this time that the hen Emu was at the end of her egg cycle and I was sure no more eggs would be forthcoming during 1977.

At about this time the opportunity came for me to move from Bishop in the cold mountains to the much warmer climate of Southern California. The move was made and the Emus were settled into their pen in Colton, California, within a few hours after leaving snowy Bishop.

Two days after the move the hen started laying eggs once more. I felt they were not fertile since the normal early morning mating was no longer observed. After much coaxing by others I left each successive egg in with the Emus with the hope that the move had not upset the birds too much. Perhaps the male would become broody and sit on the eggs.

After the third egg was laid, the male started incubation. I was surprised, to say the least.

The hen kept on laying, until she had twelve eggs. I thought the male would incubate for just a short while but he stuck tightly for two months only leaving the eggs for a brief drink of water and to feed each day.

On the 14th of March the first baby hatched with two more hatching the next day. My goal of having the eggs hatched naturally was fulfilled. Now if the male would only raise his family to independence the experiment would be complete and the past two years of waiting and disappointment would be rewarded. Unfortunately this was not to be.

*[Editors Note: The Emus were nesting at Bronze Wing Aviaries. On March 15th, 1977, the Federal and State Departments of Agriculture depopulated all of the birds at Bronze Wing. The male Emu was shot on the nest. The hen and chicks were gassed and the eggs that were hatching were left out in a cold rain to die.]*

The American Federation of Aviculture was organized to disseminate information to aviculturists, bird clubs, and ornithologists, and to counter the alarming increase in Anti-Avicultural legislation and arbitrary rulings.

The public is kept informed of the importance of aviculture through our educational programs, conventions, lectures, slide shows, etc.

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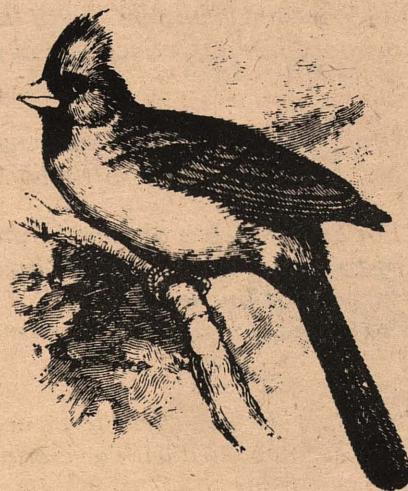
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FOR ANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING  
NEWCASTLE DISEASE OR THE A.F.A.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

First of all I wish to thank the many concerned citizens who wrote hundreds of lovely letters and gave so graciously to help us fight the USDA position on exotic Newcastle disease in Federal court.

We have nearly passed the halfway point in our original goal of \$30,000, and need money to continue the "battle of the birds" when we again go before the Judge on July 18.

I only wish we had the staff and money to reply to all of you, but, so that

everyone could keep informed — we decided another A.F.A. Supplement would spread the word to everyone. Perhaps those who think the problem will go away will wake up to the reality that nothing has changed.

The USDA has cancelled all meetings with us, often at the last minute. The eradication policy is still in their rule-book. If we allow it to remain without taking legal steps, we will by the very nature of things again face a mass depopulation — merely as things come to pass.

We have a chance to win — we have a chance to fight — it might be the last chance we have. Please contact everyone you know and convince them the problem has not dissipated, but merely gone underground, and A.F.A. is the only National Organization that is willing to fight for a "Bill of Rights for Birds" based on our own Constitutional Rights.

*Lee Horton*  
Lee Horton

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# HUMAN INVOLVEMENT IN RECENT CALIFORNIA EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE EPISODE

by Allen R. Magie, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Raymond O. West, M.D.  
Roland Phillips, M.D., Dr. P.H.

School of Health, Loma Linda Univ.  
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Dr. Magie is an Associate Professor of Environmental and Tropical Health. His training is in the area of physiology and environmental public health. Research interests include the epidemiology of environmentally-caused diseases.

Dr. Phillips — Professor and Cochairman of Biostatistics and Epidemiology.

Dr. West — Medical Director of Community Health Services.

Newcastle disease is an highly infective and contagious disease of poultry. It also affects other avian species, especially wild birds, as well as a number of mammals, including man.

That various diseases can be transferred from animals to man has been observed for centuries. In fact, the entire science of immunization resulted largely from the insistence of English milkmaids, nursing the sores produced by cowpox, that they would now be safe from the dread scourge of smallpox.

The purpose of this report is not merely to substantiate that humans become infected with a virus disease normally associated with an animal, but to emphasize that certain potential biologic and economic dangers exist of which those working with animals should be aware.

### Southern California Outbreak of Exotic Newcastle Disease

Exotic Newcastle disease was discovered in California on November 26, 1971, when a dead chicken from a Fontana poultry ranch was diagnosed to have died from the virus. Before the state and federal Task Force could stop its spread and eliminate the last vestiges of the virus almost 12 million, mostly egg-laying, birds were destroyed, over 1300 individuals were enlisted in the battle, and over \$56 million expended in the effort. This victory required two and one-half years. The disease spread so rapidly that at the height of the epidemic, in the summer of 1972, eight Southern California counties were placed in quarantine. These included Riverside, San Diego, and San Bernardino, the nation's first, second, and third leading egg-producing counties. This area encompassed 45,000 square miles. Several restrictions were placed on the movement of poultry out of the area to prevent the disease from spreading to other parts of the state and country.

The most commonly-used tool incorporated by the Task Force to detect the disease was the placing of sentinel birds (chickens highly susceptible to the disease) in commercial flocks. If these birds contacted the disease, the entire flock was killed. As many as one million hens in a single flock had to be destroyed after being diagnosed in this way. We feel that it would be appropriate at this point to add that on at least one occasion we were able to isolate live velogenic viscerotropic Newcastle disease (VVND) virus from the eye of a member of the Task Force assigned the responsibility of placing these sentinel birds on the premises of poultry farms. One wonders how many hens may have been destroyed unnecessarily since there is the possibility that the sentinel birds were already infected before arriving on the premises of an

otherwise VVND-free ranch. With an incubation period varying from 2 to 15 days or longer, the average being 5 to 6 days, this is not at all unlikely.

We would also emphasize that during the entire operation of the exotic Newcastle disease eradication program that all media, including radio, television, and newspaper, discussion of the disease invariably included the comment that "while Newcastle disease is usually fatal to poultry, humans are unaffected." Persons who are hired to participate in various phases of the program, including the actual depopulation and cleaning of affected poultry farms, were not informed of the possible health dangers that such an involvement might entail.

### Observation and Results

We first became interested in this disease outbreak when a number of local residents began showing up at clinics and physician's offices with reddened and watering eyes. This conjunctivitis did not respond to the usual topical treatment nor was it associated with another ailment, such as upper respiratory infection or influenza. It typically ran its course in one or two weeks.

Although involvement of the eye was the predominant symptom, other complaints were present in acute human cases of Newcastle disease. The eye symptoms are generally referred to as panophthalmitis. Typical of the patients examined at Loma Linda were a diffuse conjunctivitis and scleritis, with a clear watery discharge from the eye. Periobital edema was present and the surrounding tissue was painful on touch. Light sensitivity was common, particularly in the morning. Eye tissues itched and eye movement gave a sensation of sand being present. The ability of the eyes to track properly was sometimes lost. Parotid salivary glands were commonly swollen, a cough with clear sputum and chest pains sometimes occurred. One patient had severe stabbing head pains that were not relieved even after taking several aspirin.

One day the son of one of us (A. Magie) returned home from playing with a neighbor one afternoon. They had been, for the past several days, watching the men and equipment that were being used to destroy the chickens and clean up an infected poultry premise. It was noticed that he had a watery discharge from one of his eyes which was also reddened. In the course of a few days it had spread to his other eye as well as to his younger brother and father. Treatment did not appear to speed recovery which required slightly more than one week. Unfortunately, when the possible association between these ailments and the Newcastle disease epidemic among poultry flocks surfaced it was too late to verify any involvement.

In addition to the apparent emergence of a rather unique type of conjunctivitis our interest was further stimulated by the fact that Loma Linda University's poultry flock had to be "depopulated" for the second time, despite the precautions taken to prevent the re-introduction of the virus.

Arrangements were made with the Task Force to have all of their personnel complaining of any illness to be examined at our clinic to determine the possibility of the symptoms being due to VVND. Full cooperation was not apparent as we found Task Force personnel in the field with classical conjunctivitis by acci-





Dr. Allan R. Magie, Professor at Loma Linda University, is interviewed by a member of the press while AFA president, Lee Horton, and AFA attorney, Fred Morin, Jr., look on. CBS cameraman films for the evening news and a special mini-newscast shown on daytime TV Tuesday, May 3. Dr. Magie's research indicts USDA personnel as possible carriers and transmitters of VVND.

dental contact. However, when we suggested to them that they limit the movement of their workers between contaminated and clean premises because of the likelihood of humans being not only mechanical but biologic vectors of the virus, they complied. From that point on a corresponding decrease in new outbreaks occurred which may be more than accidental.

Arrangements were also made with the California Division of Animal Industry Veterinary Laboratory Services in San Gabriel to process the various specimens that we provided for the detection of possible virus or antibodies. They were extremely cooperative in this regard.

During the course of our investigation we made a number of observations that did not conform to previously published investigations of Newcastle disease in humans. This has led us to make a number of speculations regarding this particular outbreak in Southern California and the responsible virus.

Since, at the onset of our awareness of an epidemic of Newcastle disease among humans, we wanted to determine what groups were at risk in the population, we selected the San Gabriel Laboratory for study. Twenty-four individuals were selected from this group, all having worked at the laboratory in various capacities for varying periods of time. A control group was selected from the students and staff of Loma Linda University who were not directly involved in any poultry related occupation. The two groups were matched for age and sex. Medical histories, serum specimens, and eye, nose and throat swabs were taken from each person.

During the previous six months twelve of the San Gabriel subjects had experienced conjunctivitis, with several reporting respiratory symptoms as well. These included not only those who worked with blood samples, embryo inoculations, and autopsies, but clerical staff who were only involved with paper work.

All swabs were negative for the virus on passage through embryonated eggs. However, four persons had positive VVND virus isolations at the time they had eye symptoms. Only three had an antibody titre, but during the previous six months there were nine others who had titres ranging from a level considered just detectable to the highest that can be expected to be developed in humans.

There were no symptoms characteristic of Newcastle disease in the Loma Linda control group, and all laboratory tests were negative.

One of the laboratory workers with previously confirmed VVND virus isolation and hemagglutination-inhibition antibody titre was a secretary who had no contact with dead birds or other specimens brought into the lab for investigation. This may indicate aerial diffusion of the virus. She also reported that her boyfriend, who was not connected with the laboratory or poultry, developed conjunctivitis.

Soon after this comparison study was

completed we had what was undoubtedly the best opportunity to study a single individual's history of disease. One of the Task Force workers at the March AFB laboratory, who was studying VVND virus transmission by flies, developed conjunctivitis and came to our clinic for observation. Six days previous to the appearance of the conjunctivitis he had accidentally splashed some virus-containing fluid into one eye, which he immediately rinsed.

Virus, characterized as VVND virus, was isolated from the infected eye and from saliva. One week later, or two weeks after the initial contact with live virus, VVND virus was isolated from both eyes, but not from the mouth. Further attempts the following week failed to recover the virus.

Antibodies, determined by hemagglutination-inhibition tests, were first detected 32 days after virus was splashed in his eye. This was almost one month after he developed conjunctivitis. The antibody titre was minimal, as it usually is in humans, and persisted at the same level for the next two months, at which time it could no longer be detected. Both during and since the episode he has had periodic upper respiratory symptoms.

Previous reports have indicated that the incubation period before the appearance of symptoms was on the order of one to two days, with occasional rare cases up to four days. The six days required in this case may indicate that the virus acts differently in certain individuals.

About this time the University's poultry was being depopulated. Chickens were not dying from the disease because they had been heavily vaccinated, however, egg production in several of the houses had rapidly fallen off. Local high school students were hired for periods from two to eight hours to help with depopulation.

These students were not examined until eleven days later. Since the elapsed time indicated that there would be little possibility of obtaining live virus only blood serum specimens were obtained. Twenty-five of the students who had helped with the depopulation were selected for study, along with two of the regular workers at the poultry ranch. An additional twenty-five of their classmates of the same ages were selected as controls.

The control group were all negative for hemagglutination-inhibition antibody titres on the two dates that serum specimens were taken from the entire group. Among the exposed group six subjects had antibody titres. None of the individuals in either group developed conjunctivitis. The only complaints were sneezing and irritated eyes among the exposed group at the time of depopulation. The dust and dander level was high in the poultry houses during that time and could account for these difficulties.

The antibody titres for three of the six individuals persisted for three months at which time we discontinued taking their serum specimens.

Near the end of the active spread of the disease among poultry ranches a

check was made of the clean-up and disinfecting crew of the Task Force which was located in Ontario. They had been completely isolated from the other workers involved in the program who came in contact with "clean" birds. Members of this crew had their initial contact with a young flock of VVND diagnosed chickens on April 30. On May 2, two days later, they were examined, at which time a medical history and eye, mouth, sputum, urine, and fecal specimens were obtained. Of the 44 persons involved, VVND-diagnosed virus was recovered from four, with a fifth person developing conjunctivitis, from which the virus was recovered, five days later.

Virus was recovered from both the eye and sputum specimens of one individual, but not from his mouth. Eight days later the virus could still be recovered from the same eye. Attempts after one more week had passed failed in recovering any virus.

Of the five individuals from which the virus was recovered only one developed conjunctivitis. Interestingly, none of these persons developed detectable antibody titres. Hemagglutination-inhibition tests were negative for the next month and one-half. An additional two members of the crew had positive hemagglutination-inhibition titres at the initial screening of May 2.

There was apparently much variability in human response to the virus causing exotic Newcastle disease. A number of additional observations, virus isolations and antibody determinations were made from individuals who were in contact with infected poultry. Even family members of workers were reported having had various symptoms at some time during the outbreak.

There were a number of observations made by previous investigators that intrigued us. One was the general principle that the milder the poultry virus strain the more likely that it would infect man and cause more severe symptoms. However, we recovered only the (VVND) strain considered to be the most virulent among poultry in our investigation, never one of the milder forms of the virus.

There was no previous evidence to support human to human transmission of Newcastle disease virus, although the possibility had been discussed. Reports we received of family members or other contacts of workers, such as the boyfriend of the secretary at San Gabriel developing conjunctivitis, indicate that this is certainly a strong possibility. We felt that it would be unethical to experiment with other humans in placing live virus in their eyes. However, when one of the Task Force personnel came to our clinic with conjunctivitis we decided to conduct an experiment on ourselves. We rotated a swab from his eye in one milliliter of saline solution. A drop of this solution was placed in one eye of each of us. This gave a dilution of approxi-

*Continued on page 6 — column 1*

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## HUMAN INVOLVEMENT

Continued from page 5

mately 1/100th. One week later the VVND virus was recovered from the eye of only one of the three. In the meantime the laboratory diagnosed as VVND virus the specimen taken from the Task Force worker.

What about the human acting as a vector of Newcastle disease virus? Did a person who became infected with the virus of velogenic, viscerotropic Newcastle disease while working in the eradication program inadvertently spread the disease to some flocks? Previous reports said there was no evidence to support this claim or the possibility of such happening.

One isolated outbreak of the disease does provide at least circumstantial evidence for supporting the thesis for a human vector state. An environmentally contained, pullet ranch developed an outbreak of VVND. There were no other geographically adjacent poultry raisers. Furthermore, the disease started in the inside row of one of the houses, out of contact with humans or other possible sources of virus-carrying materials with one exception. A week before the outbreak occurred a malfunction in the water line developed and one of the workers, the only one who worked in this particular building, entered the enclosed area to repair the damage. He worked in the same area which was later determined to be the locus of the infection. A serum specimen taken at a later date from this individual revealed the presence of antibodies for Newcastle disease virus. This, as earlier indicated, does not give conclusive evidence — it would have been better to demonstrate the worker shedding the virus prior to the outbreak — yet it does provide additional support to the claim that humans may transmit the disease.

We feel that further studies concerning the role of humans as possible carriers of VVND are needed, especially in the areas of the world where the disease is still endemic.

## Conclusions

From our observations of the Southern California outbreak of VVND we have arrived at several conclusions:

1. Individuals will develop Newcastle disease virus antibodies with or without the development of clinical symptoms of Newcastle disease.
2. VVND virus can be recovered from individuals who do and those who do not develop clinical symptoms of Newcastle disease.
3. VVND virus appears to persist best in individuals who do not develop symptoms of Newcastle disease. Thus, these individuals would be the ones most likely to be carriers or vectors of the virus.
4. Human to human transmission of the Newcastle disease virus can occur, at least under controlled conditions.
5. It seems very likely that Newcastle disease can pass from chickens to man and back to chickens again, multiplying in both hosts.
6. The only virus that we recovered was VVND, never a weaker strain of the virus. We may have actually observed the results from a change in the hemagglutinin or neuraminidase of the virus.
7. Humans may be the primary method of virus transmission (from flock to flock) during an epidemic such as that experienced in Southern California.

We only regret that we were unable to secure early reports of humans who were involved in possible spread of the virus or who developed symptoms indicating possible infections. Workers in occupations which require close proximity to animals which may harbor potentially harmful disease agents should be aware that such a danger exists and what precautions they should take to escape involvement. Since there is the possibility that former human disease agents may change in their sojourn in an animal host, variations in virulence may present a greater danger to human health.

I declare, under penalty of perjury, that the above is true and correct.  
8 April 1977. Allen R. Magie



CBS interviewing Ed Marlatt of Bronze Wing Aviaries prior to the hearing. Ed is another victim of the USDA policies. CBS was particularly interested in the overall effect depopulation had on his business.

## Veterinary Services' Newcastle Disease ERADICATION PROGRAM

## Further Observations

by Richard E. Baer, D.V.M.  
Groveport, Ohio

Since the writing of my last article on my personal observations of Veterinary Services' Newcastle Disease Eradication Program, an additional dealer's premises in the Colton area of California has been depopulated by the government task force.

Apparently, in view of the tremendous public indignation at the previous wholesale slaughter of health birds without justifiable reason and faced with the enormity of the number of tracebacks which would be entailed by the large quantity of sales by this particular dealer, Veterinary Services has formulated a different procedure for the handling of premises and birds associated through sales with this depopulated aviary. A copy of the procedures is appended to this article for reference.

These procedures, while less drastic than the indiscriminate and arbitrary, massive "over-kill" of healthy birds which has been the government policy of the past few months, is still inadequate and unreasonable and once again reflects the want of experience and the complete lack of knowledge of aviculture on the part of those persons who drew them up.

It must be emphasized that even these inadequate procedures are designed for this one case only and that after the furor of public indignation has subsided, there is nothing to keep Veterinary Services from going back to the outmoded and discredited eradication procedures of the 1914's and once again begin to arbitrarily and indiscriminately slaughter our birds.

This can never be permitted to happen again. Our civil rights must be protected at any cost; and we must fight for the conservation of endangered species and the needless destruction of our valuable birds. Political pressure must be brought to bear against this outrage on our society.

After intensive sampling of almost four weeks of the birds in this latest aviary depopulated, one bird, and one bird only, out of 1,500 birds, a toucanet, was said by government officials to be infected.

In a press release in the California newspaper, The Enterprise, dated March 16, 1977, Dr. Earl Grass, a task force epidemiologist (one of the so-called "experts") stationed in California, was quoted as saying: The toucanet "was found to have a particularly active form of the virus. We want to stop it before it invades other birds and chickens, and the only way to do it is to exterminate all the birds it has had contact with." The article bore a smiling picture of Dr. Grass with the caption under it: "ONLY WAY TO DO IT".

Dr. Grass must have been trying to condition the public to another mass slaughter of birds.

Eight days later, apparently confronted by the enormity of all of the sales and tracebacks involved in this case, Veterinary Services called a meeting in Washington, D.C., of all of its Veterinarians in Charge from the different states, together with the various State Veterinarians. The new procedures for this particular case were given out.

"The particularly active form of the virus" described by their "expert" on the scene in California was now quote "a virus that was apparently not spreading rapidly." In fact, the assembled Federal and State Veterinarians were now informed that the virus was so weak that it took several egg passages to pick it up.

Where is the credibility of a government service wherein to suit one purpose one day the virus is a "monster", and to suit another purpose a few days later, it becomes a "lamb".

Also, with a virus supposedly isolated from only one bird out of 1,500 after almost four weeks of intensive sampling (see U.S.D.A. Memo), apparently not spreading, and so weak that it took repeated egg passages before it was purportedly picked up, there is every possibility of laboratory contamination with a resulting false positive finding. Yet, with no further confirmation, Veterinary Services is spending hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' money to trace down all of these birds all over the country. This goes beyond the concern of bird fanciers and involves all citizens whose tax money is being squandered. It demands a congressional or, at the very least, an administrative investigation into just what is going on here, and a public report on the matter.

False positive tests are not beyond the realm of probability. They were found during the Hog Cholera Disease Eradication Program and resulted in hogs without the disease being destroyed.

I would like to comment here for Dr. Grass that there is not an "only way" to do anything. Here you were shot down, and repudiated by your own service.

If these so-called "experts" were only open minded they could find alternate and better ways to solve this V.V.N.D. problem — better ways than blind massive extermination of healthy birds and better ways than the procedures set forth in the government memorandum of procedures pertaining to this specific case.

The accompanying memorandum of procedures for this particular case only classifies aviaries into four categories: A. Commercial premises; B. Birds in private homes or otherwise NOT IN TRADE CHANNELS, i.e. Zoos, Aviaries, and Private Collections, etc.; C. Premises through which birds from the dealer have

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passed, but do not presently contain these purchased birds and D. Infected and exposed premises.

Category A. would include anyone who sells or trades any birds (practically all dealers, pet shops and aviculturists). They would be subject to at least a 30 day quarantine with dead bird pickup plus perhaps some testing (swabbing of birds).

Category B would be under a 30 or 60 day quarantine dependent upon release or retention of the purchased birds and subject to no testing or testing (swabbing) of all or a part (3 times at 15 day intervals) dependent upon the same conditions.

Category C may or may not be quarantined with a 30 day dead bird pickup.

Category D is so vague as to defy definition. There is no objection to depopulation of infected premises, but how does one define an exposed premises?

The working of these procedures in Category D is so vague that it allows Veterinary Services to declare a premise as exposed whenever they like without any qualifications. This could even be used by them as a means of intimidation or retaliation.

What the American Federation of Aviculture should demand from Veterinary Services and receive is a sound guaranteed policy of V.V.N.D. Disease Eradication as pertains to exotic birds — a set of uniform rules and regulations just as have been promulgated in the past for brucellosis eradication, tuberculosis eradication and all of the other V.S. eradication programs.

Referring once again to the procedures memorandum, cloacal swabbing of birds for testing should be conducted only if the purchased birds from the Colton aviary are tested and found not to be negative, and/or of birds which are not nesting.

The swabbing of nesting birds without cause is arbitrary and unreasonable; and in the case of the canary breeder, as just one example, would result in the loss of his entire year's production of offspring.

The forceable removal of hens from the nest brings to my mind the depopulation of this Colton area aviary. I was informed that the hens in this depopulation were pulled off their nests and destroyed and that the young chicks were left to die of starvation and cold. How callous and inhumane can these Federal Agents be? Such action is criminal! Is there a humane society in this country worthy of its name which is not repelled by such action and which will not take action against such atrocities or is there an animal lover who is not revolted by such cruelties and who does not want to protest?

Cruelty and lack of morality on the part of Veterinary Services' personnel was not confined to the above baby chicks.

At the board meeting of the A.F.A.

for March 18, 1977, attended by two representatives of the U.S.D.A., questions were asked of them. I would like to quote one of them from the minutes of that meeting.

"Q. Is it true that some individually owned birds never exposed were depopulated and why?"

"A. It would have been inconvenient to quarantine individual birds and the only way to get ahead of the disease is to destroy the birds."

We say that such things can't happen in this country, but here is a Federal Veterinarian admitting that individually owned pet birds never exposed to V.V.N.D. were exterminated for the sake of convenience so as not to be bothered with a quarantine!

The two Veterinarians also commented and I could quote from the minutes, if necessary, that differing opinions among themselves have caused changes in policy that resulted in errors and confusion.

Errors and confusion were readily discernible from the very start in the different ways in which the Virginia and the California outbreaks were each handled in the past two months.

I maintain that Veterinary Services had no intentions of depopulating the aviaries of those people who purchased birds from the infected Virginia dealer until after they were called to task by A.F.A. members in California for the different manner in which the two outbreaks were being handled.

If this be not so, let me select the aviary with which I am most familiar, the one of the breeder-dealer in northern Ohio which purchased birds from the Virginia dealer, and ask a few pertinent questions: If Veterinary Services considered exposure in this aviary so dangerous, why wasn't the aviary quarantined at the time of the first visit by the Federal Veterinarian on February 19, 1977? Why did they wait over two weeks, allowing the owner to continue selling birds before imposing a quarantine? It was only after A.F.A. in California began complaining about discriminatory actions in the handling of the two outbreaks that Veterinary Services came back to place a quarantine and press for total destruction of all of the birds in the aviary.

Why were only four cordon bleus confiscated for testing out of all of the purchased Virginia birds? (To this date, the rest have never been confiscated or tested for evidence of infection.)

Why has one aviary in Ohio with a Patagonian Conure, which came from the infected Virginia dealer and was supposedly exposed to the infected parrots, never been quarantined or even visited as of this writing? V.S. has his name.

Why were the aviary owners told that only the purchased birds would be destroyed and tested and why then did the

*Continued on page 8 — column 1*

## COMPLEMENTS

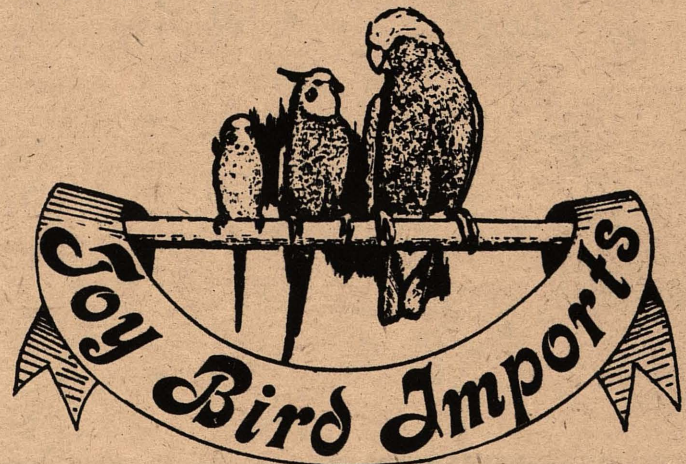
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## OBSERVATIONS

Continued from page 7

Federal Agents return two weeks later to destroy all of the birds?

I had several owners call me to complain that the government had lied to them in this matter.

At this time, March 3, 1977, Veterinary Services called a public meeting in Maryland on the V.V.N.D. problem. Our legislative liaison officer attended this meeting and reported that some impressive charts and diagrams were presented to justify the arbitrary extermination of the aviaries without test of all who purchased the Virginia birds. The impressive charts and diagrams, according to our liaison officer, illustrated how certain species of birds had direct exposure to the infected parrots by being on either side of the infected birds; however, a discrepancy exists in that different people who should know have different stories on just which species of birds were in direct exposure and which were not.

The one man who could have straightened the whole point of confusion out was not present at this meeting although he had every intention of being there. This was the Veterinarian who headed up the task force in Virginia and who did the appraisals (one of the very few aviculturists in Veterinary Services).

I have been informed that he was ordered not to attend the meeting.

Did Veterinary Services have something to hide? Did they fear that questioning of the task force leader might prove embarrassing? Was this a coverup? Was any epidemiological study ever made of the Virginia premises? (None was ever made, either to my or the owner's knowledge of the aviary in northern Ohio.)

Most of the aviaries involved have now been depopulated and some mighty fancy prices were paid out for some of the birds.

As every aviculturist well knows, the chick that peeps the loudest gets the most food.

In the appraisal of these birds, those



**NOTHING LEFT!** "Hell, there's 27 years of your life down the drain, and you're to the point where you don't have 27 more years', there's an impact, sure." With a sweep of his hand, Al Hinkle surveys an area that has been swept clean by a bulldozer, and a task force, that totally "depopulated" his collection of 1,100 rare gallinaceous birds after an outbreak of Newcastle's disease in Alpine.

owners that protested the most got the best prices.

A.F.A. has a rather complete listing of these prices which is available upon request. Any aviculturist faced with depopulation should insist upon at least these evaluations or more. Veterinary Services has set a precedent with these prices and for them to pay less on appraisal for the same type birds would be discriminatory.

One should not feel troubled in accepting such government largesse, especially when healthy birds are arbitrarily destroyed; for, after all, I am told that in the New Mexico outbreak of V.V.N.D., Veterinary Services paid out \$1.25 a piece for spent layer hens which was five times their value at the time. The poultryman, had he sent them to their normal destination, the soup factory, would have received only about twenty-five cents per bird — and these were sick birds. (No wonder the poultry industry likes this program.)

It seems there is no control over the purse-strings of these agencies. They just go on and on squandering taxpayers' money.

At the time of this writing, V.S. is still pressing for the destruction of the birds of the breeder in northern Ohio. True, after all this time when they know he is practically destitute and on the verge of bankruptcy; that he can't carry on and fight them any more; they offered him (on March 25, 1977) the alternative of a quarantine and test plan provided he keeps his birds under quarantine for an additional 60 days and submits them to cloacal swab testing at 15 day intervals. This amounts to nothing less than government coercion.

Once again I repeat: how can 58 delicate little caged canaries or some six hundred caged little budgies together with a few other birds, all caged, practically all bred in confinement by the owner, all housed indoors in an urban community, possibly pose a threat to the poultry industry! This is absolutely ridiculous, yet, Veterinary Services is prepared to spend thousands and thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money to destroy these harmless birds and dispose of this puny "threat".

As I read down the list of endangered species birds, over 140 birds, Brown Ear-

ed Pheasants, Mikado Pheasants, Swinhoe Pheasants, just to name a few, it is like a litany of sadness. Beautiful birds, rare birds, irreplaceable birds — I tell myself, how futile it is for a conservationist to spend years in the captive breeding of these endangered species to save them from extinction to have them all destroyed in one day through ignorance.

These abuses must be terminated. We must press for an investigation of these outrages through our elected representatives. If you have already written to your senator and representative, I suggest that you write again until you receive a favorable solution to our interests.

A.F.A. represents over twenty thousand aviculturists in the United States and together with allied interests and friends, can muster a political force which may well number over a hundred thousand or more.

This is a political force to be reckoned with.

The unreasonable mass destruction of valuable and irreplaceable birds without proof that they are even infected must be stopped. This is NOT the only way.



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**WHERE WE WERE** when the latest outbreak of Newcastle came upon us, was with our mouths open. Like everyone else we were unprepared, but it didn't take us long to take action. We informed as many people as we could; we held news conferences; and we filed in federal court against the agencies involved.

**WHERE WE ARE** today is continuing to inform everyone (even people without birds); updating our mailing services and our staff so that we won't be caught again by any agency at any time.

**WHERE WE ARE GOING** is to court (hopefully with a jury trial) to determine the limits of the actions of the USDA and state agencies, setting up an "ethics" committee that will help to prevent this kind of thing from happening again; negotiating with various governmental agencies and other interested parties for methods of control and prevention of Newcastle and other potentially epidemic diseases.

**CAN YOU HELP?** You sure can! Our funds are limited and we need as much support as we can get. All donations are tax deductible and we will welcome every penny that you can send. We have the ball and we can't afford to let the opposition take it away from us. LET'S RUN TOGETHER WITH THIS!!!