

Poultrymen

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500,000 birds or more. The potential could be there for even more serious outbreaks in the next six months.

Mallinson said that he is putting the weight of the responsibility on industry people and is persuading them to get around to backyard poultry flocks in order to vaccinate the birds at either little or no cost to the owners.

"This is for the protection of both large and small poultry flocks," Mallinson indicated.

Mallinson also emphasizes that anyone buying and selling poultry be extremely careful with shipping crates. "Be sure they're cleaned and disinfected," he warns. "Ask the hauler to do it, or do it yourself. Crates are a notorious source of infection, he added.

In a special alert sent out to key Lancaster County poultrymen, Mallinson says:

"Only you can set the priorities of money and time, or provide the incentives and push needed to assure laryngotracheitis (LT) vaccination of backyard flocks



Dr. E.T. Mallinson, chief of avian health at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Industry, urges everyone connected with Lancaster County's poultry industry to work towards vaccination of all flocks - large and small - in order to contain potential outbreaks of laryngotracheitis which affected more than a half million birds in the Garden Spot last Winter and Spring.

The idea is to protect everyone's pocketbook - companies and farmers. Much of last year's problems originated in backyard flocks. Let's avoid a repeat of last year's costly outbreak.

"Don't let the hot Summer and no confirmed LT outbreaks since May, lull you into thinking this disease has gone away. Summer does not lend itself to LT outbreaks. However, the cool weather of Fall and Winter does favor the return of trouble and unprotected backyard flocks would be one of the major sources."

Mallinson says further that "the expense of vaccine is nil compared to the economic consequence of LT outbreaks in neighboring commercial flocks." He explains that immunization against the disease will significantly blunt the spread of disease from backyard flocks to all layer, breeder, and broiler flocks.

"LT spreads in so many different ways, such as by rodents, wild birds, etc., that your flock cannot be considered completely isolated from backyard flocks. Immunization of backyard flocks, therefore, is essential," the veterinarian says.

Mallinson notes in his discussion of the disease that attempts to reach backyard flock owners through feed stores, news releases, and other efforts have been "discouraging." He is therefore asking for voluntary help from poultrymen to get the small flocks immunized at either low cost or free of charge.

The avian health chief urges poultrymen to take the following action, and "the sooner, the better," he adds.

Commercial flock owners - Supply and when necessary apply mild LT vaccine to backyard flocks in your neighborhoods. Be sure that chickens owned by your employees are immunized.

Hatcherymen - Arrange for LT vaccination when small lots of chicks are purchased for raising past 16 weeks of age. You could make arrangements for such vaccination when such lots of chicks are pickled up or delivered.

Pullet growers - Administer LT vaccine to all pullets moved into the Lancaster County area, including those shipped into backyard flocks.

Mallinson is persuading poultry servicemen to encourage implementation of the above plan by asking them to help poultrymen locate backyard flock owners, promote LT vaccination, and providing a mild LT vaccine.

The avian health chief also notes that anyone working with the backyard flocks in question must follow personal and clothing security procedures developed by the Lancaster County Poultry Association's LT Task Force before returning to commercial poultry operations.

LT is a respiratory ailment which has a five to 17 per cent mortality rate. Symptoms of the disease include watery eyes, coughing, sneezing, general breathing difficulty accompanied by a wheezing noise, and a shaking of the head. The affected birds may also be detected by their open mouths and gasping. A significant drop in production will also be noticeable.

Mallinson says if a poultryman notices any of these symptoms, he should notify the diagnostic laboratory, adding that detection and quarantining are highly important in controlling the disease.

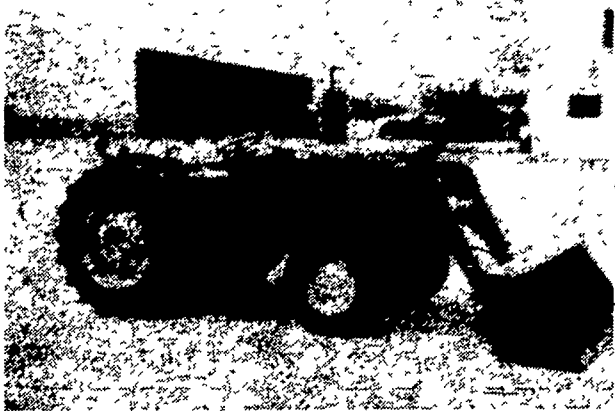
Because of the seriousness of outbreaks occurring from last October through May of this year, the possibility arises that even worse outbreaks could arise this year if poultrymen don't take words of advice seriously.

Special precautions are mandatory in the use of LT vaccine. They include:

The same bottle of vaccine can be used to immunize more than one backyard flock ONLY if it is continually kept on ice and used within two hours. Any unused vaccine must be destroyed in accord with the manufacturer's instructions. NEVER save unused vaccine.

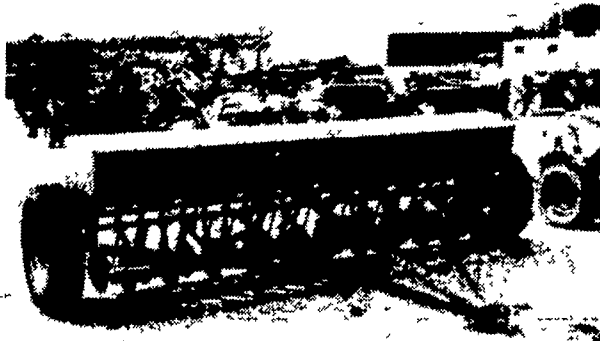
More information can be obtained from Dr. Mallinson at the Bureau of Animal Industry, Harrisburg; Lancaster County Agricultural Extension Agent Jay Irwin, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster; or Donald Parke, PennAg Industries Association, Ephrata.

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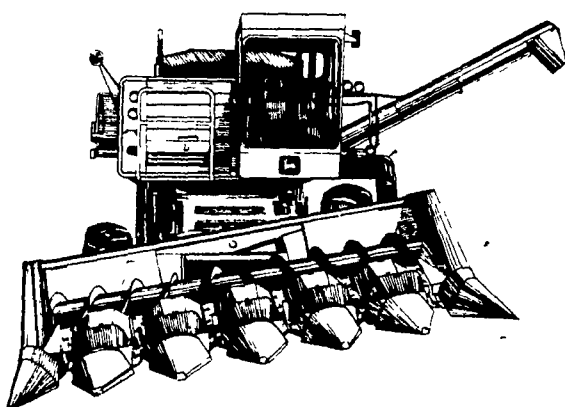
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