

# Exotic Newcastle alert, quarantines lifted

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell has announced that special precautions for state poultrymen and pet bird owners, ordered in April, have been rescinded, and that a federal-state task force has been disbanded.

Hallowell also noted that quarantines on 14 pet shops for exotic Newcastle disease have also been lifted. The pet shops were originally quarantined because they had received birds which had been exposed to infected birds from an Alexandria, Virginia, bird dealer. Extensive testing followed all quarantines and revealed no additional exotic Newcastle infection.

No commercial poultry was involved in the outbreak of the disease, which was discovered April 6 in a pet bird from a Camp Hill pet shop.

Hallowell said, "The cooperation of the commercial and pet bird industries, as well as small flock owners, was a major contributing factor in our successful control of the outbreak."

Although the disease poses no health threat to consumers of eggs and poultry meat, exotic Newcastle is a highly contagious and usually lethal disease of birds. In commercial poultry, death losses can approach 100 percent.

Hallowell said the Com-

monwealth was "quite lucky in avoiding a serious problem with this outbreak."

For several years, exotic Newcastle has threatened the state's \$300 million poultry industry. Hallowell noted that while the state has been fortunate to avoid exotic disease problems, caution and care should still be the watchword for all poultry and small flock owners.

The Department has taken further steps to help avoid possible exposure to exotic Newcastle and other bird diseases of foreign origin.

"As of June 15, 1980," he said, "all birds shipped into Pennsylvania by dealers in California and Virginia must be accompanied by an official Pennsylvania permit. The permit must include a statement signed by a licensed accredited veterinarian that all birds in the shipment are in apparent good health, and originate either from official USDA quarantine stations or from breeder parents within the United States."

California and Virginia are two states where major outbreaks of exotic Newcastle was confirmed.

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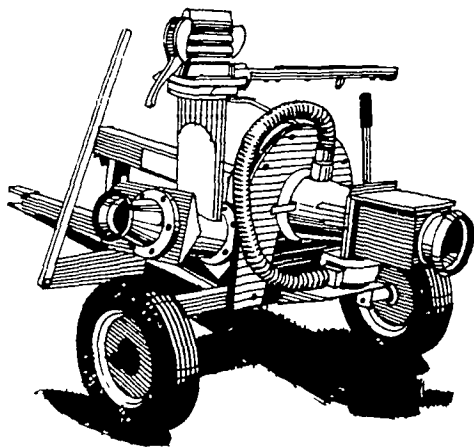
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