



Larkmead Farm Practice

Newsletter August 2005

Newcastle Disease in Game Birds

Newcastle Disease (ND) was confirmed at a pheasant shoot in Surrey on July 15th. The birds were imported from a game farm in France in June, and were in pens ready for release when the disease was diagnosed. The infected birds have now been slaughtered and a 10km surveillance zone has been established to the east of Guildford/Woking. Investigations are continuing on other possible sites, but to date no other infected birds have been found.



ND is a highly contagious viral disease of birds. Chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, pheasants and other wild and captive birds can all be affected.



The clinical signs can be very variable. The disease can be present in a very acute form with sudden onset and high mortality, or as a much milder disease, or sometimes even without obvious signs. The clinical signs can include depression, lack of appetite and respiratory distress with beak gaping, coughing, sneezing, snicking, gurgling and rattling. Birds may also show yellowish-green diarrhoea and nervous signs. Young birds are particularly susceptible and mortality can be heavy, with survivors often exhibiting permanent nervous signs.

Vaccines are licensed for use in poultry in the UK, and these may also be used in game birds. However, in view of the limited nature of this outbreak, vaccination is not recommended at the current time.

More information on this outbreak can be found on the Defra website – www.defra.gov.uk



TOXOVAX IN SHEEP

Following the production problems of last year, we are advising our clients to order their Toxovax early this year. Remember that Toxovax can be given to ewes and ewe lambs at any time up to a month before tugging, and a single dose will give lifetime immunity.

Orders can be placed now for delivery on a specified date up to Xmas 2005, and we would advise you to order sooner rather than later, just in case supplies run low later in the season.

