

Notes for the Poultry Farmer

Coccidiosis of Fowls

COCCIDIOSIS is one of the most destructive diseases of poultry, and is probably the most prevalent infectious disease attacking poultry in New Zealand. This disease has been reported from many districts in both islands, and the annual loss among infected birds is heavy. It is, therefore, of considerable importance that poultry-keepers should be able to recognise an outbreak of coccidiosis and to know what steps to take to bring such an outbreak under control.

How to Recognise Coccidiosis

There are two main forms of coccidiosis among poultry. These forms may be distinguished by poultry-keepers according to the age of the

By F. C. BOBBY,

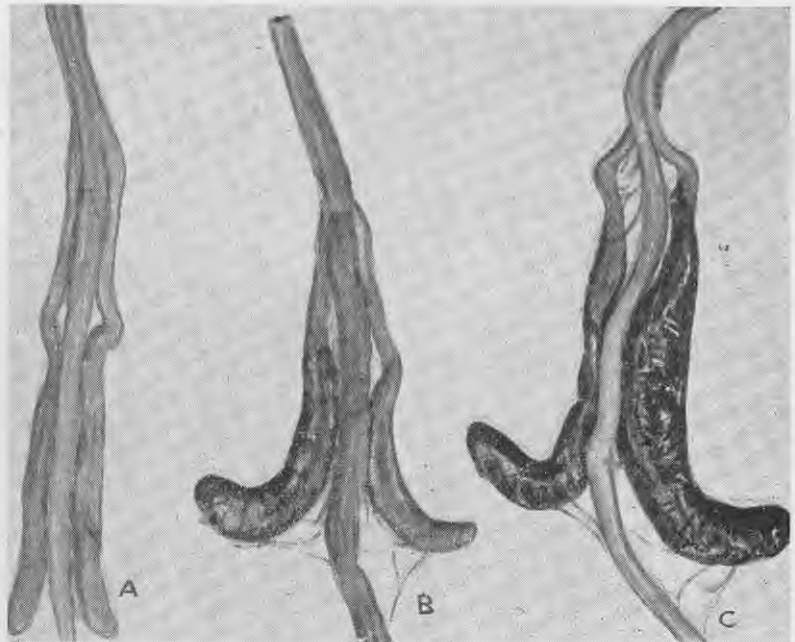
Superintendent of Poultry Husbandry, Wellington.

birds attacked. The first, or more acute, form attacks young chickens between the ages of approximately two to eight weeks. This is referred to as caecal coccidiosis, as the internal parasites causing this disease attack mainly the two caeca or blind guts. Often, the first sign of trouble is the presence of one or more dead chickens in a pen, and later the remainder become loose in feather, tend to huddle together, droop their wings, and close their eyes.

APPLICATIONS (to be submitted on P.S.C. Form 17A, obtainable at principal Post Offices) with COPIES ONLY of testimonials, will be received up to noon on 31ST OCTOBER, 1941, for the position of POULTRY INSTRUCTOR, General Division, 2nd Grade, salary £305, maximum £335 per annum, in the DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE at AUCKLAND. In addition to salary Public Service bonus at the rate of £13 per annum is payable.

It is desired that applicants should have a good practical knowledge and experience of commercial poultry farming, have ability to impart knowledge and give advice on all aspects of poultry keeping by way of demonstrations and lectures, and be able to write informative articles on any subject relative to the business of poultry farming. Applicants should give full information regarding their military obligations. The successful applicant will be required to bear any expenses incurred in travelling to take up appointment.

Secretary,
Public Service Commissioner,
Wellington.



Coccidiosis of chickens. Affected blindguts (caeca) showing three stages of the disease. (a) Small haemorrhages in slightly enlarged caeca; (b) haemorrhagic contents in enlarged caeca; (c) almost pure blood in greatly enlarged caeca.

A careful examination of the pen will reveal droppings containing blood. If a dead chicken is opened the caeca will be found inflamed and distended with blood.

In outbreaks where the disease is less acute, birds may not die so rapidly, and merely show ruffled feathers and general unthriftiness. On opening such birds it is often difficult to detect blood in the caeca, although they are usually enlarged. In these circumstances dead birds should be forwarded to the laboratory (see address at end of article) for examination, and a definite diagnosis of the trouble obtained.

The second form of coccidiosis is encountered in older birds, and is not so easy to recognise. This form usually attacks well-grown pullets before coming into lay or when they have been in lay for a few weeks. Birds so attacked show signs of looseness of feather, a false moult, or a drying-up of the comb. These symptoms may be accompanied by lameness in one leg and a loss of eye colour. If such birds are left in the pen they lose condition and gradually "go light." While mortality is not necessarily heavy, birds

affected in this way rarely recover, and are a big source of danger to healthy stock.

This form of the disease is referred to as duodenal coccidiosis, as the parasites attack the lining of the small intestine or duodenum. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to recognise this disease by an inspection of the small intestine with the naked eye. It is therefore essential to send typically un-healthy birds to the laboratory for a microscopic examination whenever this disease is suspected. Of the forms described, the second is the most dangerous and should be brought under control as soon as possible. Duodenal coccidiosis may mean the loss of many valuable pullets, resulting in a serious loss in egg production.

Cause of Disease

While it is not essential that a poultrykeeper should know the complete life history of the internal parasite causing coccidiosis, some knowledge is an aid to understanding why certain sanitation methods are so important in the control of an outbreak of this disease. Such knowledge also