



DANDER

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President's Report

Fortunately the middle part of 2005 has been without any veterinary crises in the Poultry Industry. I am disappointed though, that despite the major efforts that both the industry and government are putting into developing the necessary contingencies and reinforcement programs regarding Avian Influenza, there is a degree of negativity or at the least uncertainty by the media and community about our preparedness. For those that are actively involved in the processes involving Animal Health Australia, Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Biosecurity Australia and AQIS, there is an appreciation of the major efforts being put in by all.

Australia with its formal biosecurity programs implemented through the AECL (AEIA) and the Chicken Meat Federation in conjunction with established AusVet Plans and Consultative Committees on Emergency Animal diseases is placed very favourably compared to the rest of the world. If you add to this our research institutions such as the CSIRO, Australia would be considered a world leader in its state of preparedness and diagnostic capabilities for a possible AI outbreak.

I request members of the AVPA, if they are communicating to the media or public, that they emphasise these positive aspects.

While there is talk of the breaking of drought conditions across Australia, most farmers and particularly those in South East Queensland continue to be faced with a significant amount of uncertainty. So while crop forecasts

are improved on last years, there is still a high-risk assessment of crop failures, particularly in Eastern Australia. For this reason, relief in feed prices is still an uncertainty for the poultry industry with the other variables of currency rates and international futures impacting as well. It is important for all of us whether company employees, researchers or consultants that the poultry industry maintains strong rewarding growth.

Over the last few years the industry has, for a number of reasons, had to deal with erratic supplies of some vaccines. As reported by the AVPA Importation and Exotic Diseases Subcommittee in this edition of *Dander*, there are concerns about this situation deteriorating unless there are long-term contingencies for the supply of SPF eggs in Australia.

While it is expected that the numbers of AVPA members will be limited at the Australian Poultry Convention 2005 on the Gold Coast in October, there will be a number giving talks at the conference or in the CRC session. For the AVPA conference next year, the Executive in conjunction with the Organising Committee is confident that we will again achieve a world standard conference at a price that allows the majority of our members to attend.

It is at this meeting that the Melbourne Executive will be handing the reins across to our NSW resident members. While the Victorians are happy to pass this on, the handing of the AFL premiership to the Swans may be less acceptable, unless you are an old South Melbourne supporter like me.

Peter C. Scott

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The Australian Veterinary Poultry Alliance is a Special Interest Group of the Australian Veterinary Association. Membership of the AVPA is available to individuals and groups working in, or interested in, any veterinary aspect of poultry.

Dander will be published quarterly (March, June, September and December). Contributions are welcome. Electronic copy is requested. Deadline for copy is by the end of the second week of the month of publication. Please send information on abstracts of interesting papers, summaries of reports, case histories, social news etc. to Kevin Whithear, School of Veterinary Science, The University of Melbourne, 250 Princes Highway, Werribee 3030, Victoria <kevingwt@unimelb.edu.au> fax 03 9731 2366.

Summary of Upcoming Scientific Meetings

- October 2005** *Opportunities for village chickens to assist with poverty alleviation with special emphasis on the sustainable control of Newcastle disease*, Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania. Fax: +258-1-477586; Email: sandcp@tropical.co.mz; Website: <http://www.kyeemafoundation.org>. October 5-7, 2005.
- October 2005** *Australian Poultry Convention*, Jupiter Casino and Hotel Conrad, Gold Coast. Contact Dr Vivien Kite; Email: vivien.kite@chicken.org.au. October 9-12, 2005.
- February 2006** *Australian Poultry Science Symposium*. University of Sydney. Contact Prof. T. Scott; Email: toms@camden.usyd.edu.au. Website: <http://www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/apss>. February 20-22, 2006.
- April 2006** *PIX2006*. Gold Coast, Queensland 2-4 April 2006. Contact Geof Runge Geof.Runge@dpi.qld.gov.au
- April 2006** *AVPA Queensland Conference*. Gold Coast, Queensland 5-6 April 2006.
- August 2008** *23rd World's Poultry Conference and Sixth Asia Pacific Poultry Health Conference*. Brisbane Conference and Exhibition Centre. AVPA Contact Dr Kevin Whithear; Email: kevingw@unimelb.edu.au. August 10-15, 2008
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Sixth Asia Pacific Poultry Health Conference

The 6th Asia Pacific Poultry Health Conference (AP6) will be held in conjunction with the 23rd World's Poultry Conference (WPC2008) in Brisbane 2008.

Poultry Health topics at the conference will be incorporated into the AP6 stream and this part of the Program, including a Plenary Session, will be organised by an AVPA Scientific Program Committee. While details need to be discussed and decided, it is probable that all delegates will pay the same registration fee and will be able to switch between sessions of their choosing. A conference on Marek's Disease in Townsville will follow WPC2008 and AP6.

August 2008 looks like being a very exciting month for conferencing, so all AVPA members are encouraged to start planning for it now.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Membership List (as of 29 June 2005)

If you have paid your 2005 subscriptions and your name has been inadvertently omitted from this list, please accept our apologies and contact the Membership Secretary ajturner@bigpond.net.au. In particular, some AVA members may have paid their 2005 subscriptions when renewing their AVA membership and the membership secretary may be as yet unaware of their identity. AVPA requests that members pay their annual subscriptions directly to AVPA rather than through the AVA.

2005 Financial Members: Robin Anderson, Edla Arzey, George Arzey, Caroline Ash, Trevor Bagust, John Barnett, Susan Bibby, Doug Blackall, Pat Blackall, Wayne Bryden, David Buckley, Graham Burgess, Grant Campbell, Eleanor Chaine, Peter Claxton, Peter Coloe, Kim Critchley, Peter Cowling, Colm Culligan, Mike Cundy, Peter Curtin, Wieslaw Demkowicz, Laurie Dowling, Elizabeth Evans, Peter Gray, Tom Grimes, Peter Groves, David Hampson, David Homer, Bob Hughes, Fakhru Islam, Clive Jackson, Rod Jenner, Noel Johnston, Bob Johnston, Wayne Jorgensen, Roberta Karparthy, Vivien Kite, Sanjeev Kumar, Phil Lehrbach, Margaret MacKenzie, Michael McDermott, Paul McQueen, Gina Micke, Krystyna Minkiewicz, Linden Moffatt, Robert Morton, Adam Naylor, Amir Noormohammadi, Sarah Plant, Barry Philips, Rod Reece, Bruce Remington, Grant Richards, Julie Roberts, Simon Robinson, Ambrosio Rubite, Peter Scott, Margaret Sexton, Agim Shini, Shaniko Shini, Wafa Shinwari, Via Sfetsas, Jillian Templeton, Andrew Turner, Greg Underwood, Aileen Vanderfeen, Steve Walkden-Brown, John Walters, Ben Wells, Kevin Whithear, Pam Whitley.

Life Members: Balkar Bains, Leon Barlow, Roger Chubb, Dinah Fry-Smith, Paul Gilchrist, Harvey Langford.

Please see the AVPA website for information on sustaining members and links to websites

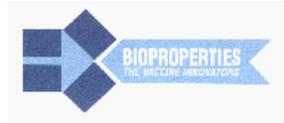
AVPA Sustaining Members 2005

Sustaining members contribute funds that help defray costs of services to members of the AVPA. We thank all sustaining members for their active interest and support.



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Obituary

Vale Les With

Respected poultry veterinarian Les With passed away recently and left a lasting impression the poultry industry will not forget.

A long time employee of Tegel and Bromley Park Hatcheries Limited, a PIANZ Veterinary/Technical Committee member for 20 years and member of the EPF Executive Committee, Les had a big impact on the industry.

Over the years Les has been involved in an enormous range of technical and other issues facing the Poultry Industry, ranging from Animal Welfare through to Import Health Standards and Quarantine & Biosecurity issues and Policies.

Managing director of Bromley Park Hatcheries Limited and friend Dennis O'Meara says Les was extremely competent, loyal, professional, ethical and honest. "He was respected by everyone who met him or dealt with him, including people from MAF, other Government Departments and people from the domestic and international poultry industries.

"Les had the unique ability to view and assess issues from a technical, commercial and financial point of view. He is an enormous loss for our company, the NZ Poultry Industry, the International Poultry Industry and the human race. Few people have had such an impact on the Industry in which they have worked, as Les had on the Poultry Industry," Dennis says.

"He was rather unique in many ways and will never be forgotten by those who were privileged enough to have worked with him and known him."

Brian Jones, Les's former colleague from Poultry Veterinary Services, first met Les when he was working for Tegel and he frequently called in to discuss poultry veterinary issues. His calls became more frequent as he became friendlier with technician Carol Bates, the couple later married and had two children.

"Les was a passionate person about the wellbeing of the NZ Poultry Industry and was a staunch Industry advocate. He was really the backbone behind the Industry IBD eradication program which is a unique international achievement. Les always believed this could be done and he was right.

"Les was very strong in defending national industry issues such as threats to our biosecurity from importation of poultry and poultry products from overseas."

Brian says that Les was an intelligent, astute and perceptive person and veterinarian. "He would outwardly pretend not to be but these were characteristics difficult to hide.

"Les had very good networks with overseas veterinary experts in many fields. Many were personal friends of his and Carol's. It is a tribute to Les that he had the respect of such eminent researchers."

Brian says Les had a disarming humility and an ever present twinkle in the eye which concealed the fact that there could be a sting in the tail. "He did not suffer fools willingly. I recall him clipping the wings of more than one ill – prepared bureaucrat who turned up at industry meetings with a message that Les did not agree with.

"Les was a dedicated family man and clearly admired and respected Carol and drew great pleasure from his children Mason and Alexandria. In summary he was a man whose veterinary opinion I valued highly. He will be sadly missed by our profession."

Tegel's John Foulds also fondly remember Les as a conscientious and effective worker and knew him since he joined Tegel in 1978.

"Les was a good friend and a good person to work with. We achieved a lot together in terms of the company, Les was someone I valued as a good contributor and enjoyed working with."

John says Les was always up front and said exactly what he thought and remembers a incident in Les's days as a consulting live stock manager at Manurewa. "We were having a particular problem out there and Les said he couldn't find a veterinary problem therefore it must be the feed. As the nutritionist at the time I didn't appreciate that comment and was more taken aback in years to come as it the N.Z. poultry veterinarians catch cry."

Les will be sadly missed by his family – wife Carol and children Mason and Alexandria - and all his colleagues and friends.

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Welfare Subcommittee Report

It was reported earlier in the year that members of the subcommittee (John Barnett, Rod Jenner and Peter Scott) and other industry personnel had been involved in a draft AVA policy on beak trimming. The beak trimming policy, while recognising the need to beak trim, also recommends further R&D to find ways of both reducing the need and improving the procedure. It strongly encourages the use of accredited trimmers via the 'beak trimming accreditation program' which defines national competency standards, the role of the work place trainer and the formal assessment of the skills of persons trained in the task of beak-trimming chickens. The draft policy is still progressing through the AVA Council.

Another issue that may be of interest is the range of projects in the Poultry-CRC's animal welfare program. A couple of small projects have been completed and a number of others are underway. These are:

1. To develop a beak trimming handbook for publication by the Poultry-CRC (project CRC03-22; *this project has been completed and it is anticipated that this handbook for producers will be available in the near future*).
2. Improving Implementation of the Chicken Meat Welfare Audit by the National Industry (project CRC03-20; *this project has been completed and it is anticipated that a "how to implementation guide" will be available in the near future*).

3. Human-animal relationships in the laying hen (project CRC03-19; *this project is ongoing and is examining the relationships between fear, productivity and welfare in laying hens*).

4. Benchmarking layer production in cage and alternative housing systems (project CRC04-37) (*this collaborative CRC/AECL project is ongoing to establish a range of production systems on a single site*).

5. Improving the scientific assessment of poultry welfare (project CRC04-18; this fundamental project is ongoing and is to determine the degree of alignment between the two major approaches to animal welfare assessment, the functional and preference (emotional) approaches. The former focuses on animals' coping responses while the latter focuses on animals' emotional responses).

If you would like any further information on these projects, contact the CRC or look at its website: www1.poultrycrc.com.au

John Barnett

Convenor, Welfare Subcommittee

Treasurer's Report

AVPA scientific meeting held at the University of Sydney on 9-10 February 2005 was relatively successful, generating a surplus of approximately \$2370.

The expenditures were related to the function venue package (\$4,065, including meals other than dinner), dinner (\$3,450), airfare for two invited speakers (\$388), proceedings (\$463), name tags (\$22) and cash for change (\$150). The income consisted of registration fees of \$8407 received from 50 attendees, and sponsor's contributions of \$2500.

Amir H. Noormohammadi Treasurer

Venue and catering	\$4,064.50
Dinner	\$3450.20
Guest speaker's airfare	\$388.00
Proceedings and name tags	\$484.77
Cash for exchange	\$150.00
Total Expenditure	\$8537.47
Registration	\$8407.00
Sponsorship	\$2500.00
Total income	\$10,907.00
Balance	\$2369.50

Alfracon® 500 Relaunched

Novartis Animal Health has recently relaunched Alfracon 500 Residual Insect Spray previously used widely as a broad spectrum pest control agent in the poultry industry. Containing 500g/kg Azamethiphos, Alfracon 500 can be used for the control of poultry and grain pests in and around poultry establishments.

Alfracon 500 is used for poultry lice and red mite and can be sprayed directly onto birds older than 1 week old for optimum control. Additionally, Alfracon 500 can be used for general pest control around poultry sheds and egg packing establishments for the control of adult mealworm, red mite and poultry lice.

Alfracon 500 can be mixed as a residual spray mix applied directly to walls, ceilings, cages and building/structures, also it can be applied as a paint for more sensitive areas. Alfracon 500 can also be used to control other pest insects such as cockroaches, spiders, fleas and flies.

The product comes in a 1kg screw top container and has minimum 3-year shelf life. Enquiries should be made to your supplier or Novartis Animal Health on 1800 633 768.

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Importation and Exotic Diseases Subcommittee Report

Chicken infectious anaemia virus (CIAV) in SPF eggs

On the 23rd of August 2005 SPAFAS, the sole Australian SPF egg supplier, had a disease incursion with CIAV in one of its flocks. The flock tested negative for CIAV on all previous samples (tested fortnightly) until the test on 22 August 2005. On this occasion 17/30 samples were found to be serologically positive.

CIAV was first isolated in Japan in 1979. The virus was present in chickens as early as 1970. The virus was associated possibly with inclusion body hepatitis and aplastic anaemia syndrome reported earlier than 1970. Since the isolation it has been found in all poultry producing areas in the world. The causal virus is a very small circovirus, resistant to acid pH, and many treatments. CIAV can have serious economic impact on the poultry industry through increased mortality, decreased production and secondary infection resulting from immunosuppression. Classical infection is from breeders by vertical transmission. Affected offspring are stunted, pale, show morbidity, severe skin infections, fungal infections and general immunosuppression. CIAV can also be transmitted horizontally, from infected to susceptible birds, and mechanically from farm to farm by people, equipment and vehicles. Very high concentrations of CIAV are often present in faeces of infected chickens.

Mortality can vary between 0-60%. The extent of loss that can occur in an infected flock depends on the route of infection, age at which the chickens are infected, the level of their maternal antibody against the CIAV and concurrent infection with other immunosuppressive viruses.

Experimentally egg transmission has been reported to be limited to 14 days post infection. In natural outbreaks vertical transmission can occur up to 9 weeks post infection. Sero-conversion could be influenced by the development of sexual maturity. In some situations spread within a flock could be delayed for many weeks.

Sero-conversion has been questioned as reliable method for detection of CIAV infection in chickens since it has been reported that CIAV DNA could be detected in sero-negative birds by PCR. It is documented that SPF chickens supplied as chicks did not sero-convert until 16 weeks of age (bled monthly). Significant differences in sero-conversion between genetic strains of chickens have also been reported. Readers are referred to the paper by Cardona et al (*Av. Dis.* **44**: 661-667) to gain a better understanding of the limitations of serology.

The current methods of detection of infection in SPF flocks rely on serology. This applies to both domestic and overseas SPF flocks.

Imported SPF chickens were introduced recently into the facility through the Spotswood Quarantine station. The birds were 9 weeks when introduced. They are currently 16 weeks of age. These chickens remain serologically negative. The mode of infection of the infected flock has not been elucidated at this stage. To prevent any possible spread of CIAV to the other flocks the suspect flock will be destroyed at the end of September 2005 and the building decontaminated. As a precautionary measure, SPAFAS advised all recipients of SPF eggs supplied from the

infected flock to consider the status of any product or research finding obtained from egg supplies between 11 July and 5 September 2005. SPAFAS advised that 6 weeks should be allowed preceding the positive test for infection and viral shedding, hence eggs supplied before 11 July are considered to be free from CIAV.

Australian vaccine manufacturers have been asked to advise the steps they have taken to assure themselves that products manufactured using SPF eggs from the infected flock during the period in question are safe, and free from CAV contamination. All bulk antigens and products produced with eggs received after 11 July have been placed in quarantine pending further tests.

If CAV spreads to the other SPAFAS flocks, importation and use of non-Australian SPF eggs may become crucial to maintain supply of avian vaccines. Importation may also be necessary to ensure ongoing production in Australia of certain human vaccines, research and diagnostic activities. A meeting was convened by AFFA in Canberra on the 22/9/05 with key stakeholders to review the current contingency policy developed in 1998, to ensure it is adequate and practicable.

There was a general agreement among participants in the meeting that subject to identification of critical national requirements for supply of SPF eggs and unavailability of such supply from the domestic market, SPF eggs should be allowed to be purchased from overseas suppliers in order to meet critical requirements in Australia.

The AVPA in responding to policy ABPM 2004/03 (March 2004) supported the importation of SPF eggs subject to a demonstration of a critical national need. Following the CIAV break in one of the SPAFAS flocks in Australia, there was a need to fast track a revised policy. A draft interim policy was circulated by BA to participants in the meeting. Following comments at the meeting the interim policy will be reviewed and revised and circulated for public comments.

There are some technical concerns regarding the adequacy of some tests. These concerns apply equally to domestic SPF eggs and overseas SPF eggs. As we can't impose higher standards on imported eggs than those imposed on the local suppliers, the concerns regarding, for example, the ability of serology to detect CIAV remains a concern that should be addressed in future assessment of the requirements for testing of SPF eggs in Australia.

The incident highlighted again the vulnerability of the Australian Poultry Industry to fluctuations in supply of SPF eggs. Our previous response to ABPM 2004/3 has not addressed the limitations of serology for detection of CIAV since it was not listed as a disease of quarantine concern. However the current outbreak of CIAV may indeed serve to highlight the need to consider a review of the requirements for testing of SPF eggs regardless of their origin.

George Arzey

**Convenor
Exotic disease and importation Subcommittee**

WVPA Bureau Member Report

XIV WVPA Congress, Istanbul

This Congress was ably hosted by the Turkish branch of the World Veterinary Poultry Association last month. The official Minutes from the ordinary meeting held there of the membership of WVPA are due to be provided to the various national branches including the AVPA during October, so I will circulate this to you all when it reaches us.

In the meantime and for this edition of Dander, here is a short account and probably rather personalized, of some of the main points and events.

I haven't heard the final figures for attendance yet, but some 900 avian veterinarians were registered by the organizers, although some last-minute cancellations were being experienced as the congress began. There were 7 Australian representatives, and I think we all had a very good Congress, both scientifically and at the social events.

Istanbul is a great city, both in terms of the hospitality and friendliness being shown by the Turkish people and by the amazing amount of history that has, and still flows through that place. Highly recommended as being an interesting place to visit! Also, the poultry industry there is going through an intense phase of rapid growth, the increased consumption of poultry products being fuelled by rising levels of disposable income as "Turkeyi" (apparently this is the correct name for the country, the other one we know as a species of avians) gets its economic development really rolling - perhaps even into membership of the EU.

The scientific Program went very well, apart from there being (aren't there always?) occasional occurrences of electronic glitches for some of the presentations. There were 15 Keynote Lectures on the major topics globally, each of 30 minutes, which were given by eminent international (and two Turkish) scientists. Three or four of these keynote lectures were given on each of the 4 days of the Congress (**list of keynote speakers and topics on following page**).

As part of these, the Houghton lecture for this Congress was given by Dr Ilaria Capua, Head of the NDV-AIV Group of the OIE Reference Centre, Padova, Italy. Entitled "*Avian influenza - Past, Present and Future implications*". This was an electrifying (if somewhat terrifying) presentation on "The snowflake avian infection which has now become an avalanche", to quote her closely. The whole text of this key lecture will be reprinted in the next [Avian Pathology](#) (Thanks to Dave Cavanagh and the Editorial Board crew, including our Glenn Browning!). Anyway it is recommended as reading for everyone, especially as all around the world we are now literally buckling on the seatbelts and taking long slow breaths, watching how an H5N1 pandemic scenario can build up as it appears to be doing right now.

Post the keynote papers, a (decent) coffee-tea break of 30 minutes was allowed and then the Individual Scientific papers were presented. Three parallel sessions of oral papers were kept running, in which some 174 presenters participated over the 4 days, while there were also 180 poster presentations. The value of having the poster hall close to or as part of the area for taking coffee breaks was well illustrated. As policy, the WVPA will now ensure that this occurs as part of future Congress planning, so that presenters of posters, often younger researchers can get the fullest possible exposure to the many participants in these major scientific forums.

The Congress social events such as the welcoming Cocktail party, and the Gala Dinner were all well-attended, and the Turkish participants readily showed us how to celebrate (and can those guys really move to their music).

There were 2 free nights, for which one had entertainments which were organized by either Intervet, or Merial (Interesting about that dichotomy!).

Anyway I happened to be on the Intervet one, which was a boat trip down the Harbour then dinner on an Island at the entrance to the Bosphorus. It was a great show all around! Also it was clear the Turkish poultry veterinarians were well supported by supply companies in this Congress.

Other news in brief (See the full report when it comes in your screen):

New President of the WVPA elected: Prof. Hafez Hafez (Germany). He is a pleasant and energetic bloke, Turkeys-Microbiology- Food Safety expert. The AVPA should welcome him, as well as thanking the outgoing President Prof. Erhardt Kaleta who has served the WVPA so well over the last 4 years.

New WVPA Countries: Ukraine, Poland, Mexico (200 members!), Tunisia.

NEXT WVPA CONGRESS VENUES: XV CONGRESS BEIJING 2007

WVPA CONGRESS VENUES: XV1 CONGRESS MOROCCO 2009

More details in official Report from WVPA due in October.

Congress Program-Keynotes available if you contact me trevorjb@unimelb.edu.au

Trevor Bagust
WVPA Bureau Member

KEYNOTE / INVITED SPEAKERS

1. **Y. Mo Saif**
Viral Enteric Diseases
2. **Dave Cavanagh**
Susceptibility of Domestic and Other Birds to Coronaviruses
3. **Aly M. Fadly**
Avian Tumor Diseases
4. **Ilaria Capua** (Houghton Lecture)
Avian Influenza - Past, Present and Future Challenges
5. **Paul A. Barrow**
Salmonella Infections and Vaccines
6. **Dusan Bencina**
Mycoplasma Infections
7. **Magne Bisgaard**
Avian Infections Caused by Species of Pasteurellaceae, an Update
8. **Baris Sareyyupoglu**
Recent Research and Developments in the Molecular Diagnosis and Characterization of Infectious Bursal Disease Virus Isolates/Strains
9. **Alexandre Pires Rosa**
Mycotoxins on Poultry Production
10. **Hafez Mohamed Hafez**
Current Knowledge and Prospective Risk Analysis Related to the Ongoing Turkey Diseases
11. **Xiufan Liu**
Newcastle Disease Virus Evolution: Multiple Genetic Lineages and Virulence Variation with Adaptation in Different Host Species
12. **Irit Davidson**
Veiled and Unveiled Aspects of Infection with Oncogenic Viruses
13. **J. Lloyd Spencer**
Management Related Diseases - Manure Management and Environmental Contamination
14. **Zheko Kounev**
Poultry Veterinarians and Pre-Harvest Food
Safety Risk Management - Past, Present and Future
15. **Irfan Erol**
Poultry Meat Safety in Turkey

7th European Symposium on Poultry Welfare, Lublin, Poland, June 2005

Conference Report

John Barnett, Animal Welfare Science Centre, Department of Primary Industries, Werribee

The following is based on a recent animal welfare conference in Poland. Photocopies of papers can be obtained from john.barnett@dpi.vic.gov.au. John Barnett was funded to attend the conference, in part by both the Australian Poultry CRC and AECL.

Topics Covered at the Symposium

A range of topics relevant to both layer and broiler production were covered at the symposium in one workshop, one roundtable discussion and several sessions:

- Welfare product information and marketing (workshop)
- EU poultry welfare policy, legislation and its implementation (roundtable)
- Recent developments in welfare indicators
- Welfare implications of changes in production systems for laying hens
- Welfare of meat producing poultry
- Catching, transport and killing of poultry

Some items considered of interest included:

1. *Welfare product information and marketing.* A paper (not included in the conference proceedings) by Gene Gregory (United Egg Producers, USA) outlined recent changes to the US egg industry QA program. From January 2006 only non-feed withdrawal moult induction will be accredited. An issue currently being discussed is cage height; the scientific committee has recommended 16 inches (40 cm), but this is being resisted by industry. While the QA program has a very high penetration within the industry, probably because most retailers require product from certified systems, there is no expectation of a premium; from a retail perspective, animal welfare is a quality value inherent in the product in a similar manner to food safety.

2. *Roundtable Discussion: EU poultry welfare policy, legislation and its implementation.* David Pritchard (DEFRA, UK) reported on an EU proposal (June 2005) for broiler production and processing. The proposal addresses some issues previously raised in the Farm Animal Welfare Council's 1992 and 1998 reports and more recently an EU scientific report and is in response to ongoing pressure from RSPCA and CIWF, in part as a consequence of the aforementioned reports. Recommendations include training for all personnel via certification, monitoring of welfare indicators both on-farm via surveillance at abattoirs if stocking density is higher than 30 kg/m² (maximum up to 38 kg/m²) and action plans to reduce stocking densities on-farm if there are welfare problems. (Note: in Australia the range of stocking densities for meat chickens is 28-40 kg/m², depending on the time of year and ventilation system). Dawkins' study, published in 2004, that showed no relationship between stocking density and mortality was referred to, nevertheless, a focus appears to be stocking density. Standards have been set for buildings and environmental controls, and light levels are to be a minimum of 20 lux at eye level (this contrasts with the Code of Practice recommendations in Australia of 20 lux for the first 3 days which can then be reduced to a minimum of 2 lux during

rearing) with an 8 h dark period; the latter can be intermittent (similar to the Australian Code of Practice). "Useable area" means a littered area. Mortality rates are set at 1 % for the first week and then not to exceed 0.06 % per day (these mortality rates are lower than the targets in the broiler welfare audit documentation viz. 6 % overall) and dead on arrivals are to be less than 0.5 % (the target in the broiler welfare audit documentation, based largely on industry opinions of current practice, is less than this viz. 0.1-0.3 %). Footpad lesions will be assessed based on the Swedish system. If standards are not met there will be a requirement to reduce stocking densities on-farm.

The Broiler Directive is currently with the EU Parliament and following their comments there will be a period of stakeholder consultations and if agreed for adoption by the Council of Ministers there will be implementation by member states and industry. This Broiler Directive represents a new concept in that it contains less prescriptive detail as its focus is outcome-based improvements in bird welfare. There was a suggestion that the review of the layer hen directive should take a similar approach.

The remainder of the roundtable was devoted to layers. Arnold Elson (ADAS, Gleadthorpe, UK) reported that since the Directive (1999/74/EC) has been in place in the UK for 6 years some grey areas and anomalies had arisen and presumably these would be addressed in the current review of the Directive. He acknowledged that some of the decisions appeared to involve more politics than science. He reported that from 2003, the minimum space requirement has been 550 cm²/hen and not 600 cm²/hen as originally expected (ie. the 550 cm²/hen requirement is the same as that in Australia, although in Australia there is no current expectation of providing additional space from 'furniture'). Beak trimming involving removal of no more than one third of the beak is permitted until 2010 (Sweden, Norway, Finland, The Netherlands and Austria do not permit beak trimming, but it is allowed in Denmark). An Italian representative was the only one of 6 speakers who suggested a postponement of all directive requirements, except that for space, until 2022; this would "allow time for further research". While this view did not appear to be generally well-accepted by attendees there is nevertheless a proposal from 16 countries in Southern Europe, with backing from industry, for a compromise position. This is for introduction of the Directive in 2017 and a monitoring system to remove old cages from the system (as occurs in Sweden until all conventional cages are replaced).

Welfare implications of changes in production systems for laying hens. This was the largest session and included papers on both furnished cages and non-cage systems. The session started with an overview of the nearly completed EU 'LayWel' project that is reviewing information for the current review of the EU Directive on laying hens. The project will provide reports on the following (author/country in parentheses) and will be completed by January 2006 (for details of program see http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/ssp/laywel_en.htm)

- welfare definition and indicators (Bessei/Germany)
- description of housing systems for laying hens (Fiks/The Netherlands)
- health (Tauson/Sweden) (the following website provides the latest information on a scoring systems for feather cover and condition:
 - <http://www.livsmedelssverige.org/hona/scoringsystem/scoringsystem.pdf>
- behaviour (Kjaer/Denmark)
- physiological stress indicators (Guémené/France)
- productivity and egg quality (Elson/UK van der Weerd/UK)
- integrated welfare assessment including welfare risks (Nicol/UK)

A study (Croxall *et al.*- UK) that focussed on beak-trimming also examined the effects of cage height (38 vs 45 cm at the rear of the cage). Cage height had no effects on health or production; there was a slight preference for higher cages and no effects on heterophil:lymphocyte ratio.

Wilkins *et al.*, UK, studied fracture rate in hens from non-cage systems at the end of the rearing period and at the end of lay. Eight rearing flocks were examined and there was only 1 bird out of 400 (50 sampled/flock) that had a fracture. Birds from the 8 flocks were then housed in 36 laying flocks in a barn production system but under different management and stocking density conditions. By the end of lay the incidence of bone breakage, particularly the keel bone, ranged from 56-62 % of hens. Fracture rate appeared unaffected by stocking density. The authors rightly considered this a major welfare issue for hens. Another study is being conducted in hens in furnished cages but there are no plans to re-examine the issue for conventional cages.

Savory *et al.*, UK examined spacing behaviour of 5-6 familiar hens in an adjustable test pen (floor pen with litter) providing a range of floor areas/hen of 600 to 12000 cm²/hen in tests that lasted for 2 h both during the day and at night. Outside of the test period the hens were housed in 'similar' floor pens with a space allowance of 2400 cm²/hen. It was concluded that a space allowance of less than about 5000 cm²/hen imposed at least some constraint on free expression of behaviour. While this study was simple, it has potential implications for space allowance across housing systems and further studies should be done with other strains of hens and with varying 'home pen' housing allocations.

One of several papers on feather pecking in non-cage systems (Zimmerman *et al.*, UK) showed feather pecking and aggression were higher when stocking density was lower (range of stocking densities was 7-12 hens/m²); this could be due to less social tolerance in small flocks. This raises the issue of group size and space allowance interactions and is applicable to all housing systems. However, cumulative mortalities in the study were greater than 20 % and this would have affected the meaningfulness of the stocking density treatments.

The paper presented by John Barnett (Barnett *et al.*) on the relative lack of effect of furniture, except for the effects of a perch, in furnished cages on welfare received a range of anticipated responses. While the author indicated some of the responses were minor eg. changes in feather condition/cover and foot condition, members of the audience nevertheless focussed on these as potentially having welfare implications (overall these were scored as good across the experimental treatments). The most disturbing, albeit anticipated, question was why would one want to conduct a factorial experiment to separate out the contributory effects of the items of furniture on hen welfare. This reflects a very entrenched position and a lack of willingness to question the scientific underpinning of recommendations included in the EU Directive; it must be said that this question was more from the policy representatives than the working scientists. Another question was on the greater reliance on physiological than behavioural criteria and that animal 'needs' may only be reflected in behaviour. This type of comment can certainly be vigorously argued, but is largely currently empirical. The current research on pigs, sheep (DPI and CSIRO funded) and laying hens (Australian Poultry-CRC) is vital to providing rigorous data to answer this question. General discussion with participants at the conference indicated the importance of presenting alternate view points.

Comment

The conference reinforced my views that there is not a scientifically rational basis to the emphasis on alternative production systems for the egg industry in Europe. Nevertheless, the European philosophy is that they have a strong belief in the correctness of their approach, and thus pressure from lobby groups on the Australian egg industry is unlikely to disappear. While there is some disquiet within the EU on proposed changes to cages, particularly in regards to timing of the changes, there is no serious questioning of the underlying philosophy. While the conference was well attended and there were a number of younger scientists in attendance, unfortunately some of the research being undertaken was confounded in experimental design. The longer-term consequences of this for the provision of scientific advice are disturbing. The general lack of questioning and occasional lack of scientific method reinforces my opinion that there is a need to provide our own scientific information in Australia to counter influences from Europe based on both non-rigorous philosophies and some acceptance of poor scientific methods. To counter the effects of pressures on the Australian poultry industries based on European philosophies, my recommendation is that, in addition to ongoing contacts and discussions with European scientists, further efforts be made for collaborations with US scientists.

Positions Vacant



Tegel Foods Ltd, New Zealand's leading poultry and feeds company, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the global food company H J Heinz Ltd. Tegel invites applications for the following position.

POULTRY VETERINARIAN

Tegel Foods Ltd in New Zealand is seeking the services of a Poultry Veterinarian to assume full responsibility for the company's veterinary function. Reporting to the Manager Technical Services, the role encompasses responsibility for the health of our national poultry flock for both chicken and turkey production encompassing primary breeding through to broiler progeny. A strong Biosecurity Program is a key feature of Tegel's livestock operations and good grounding in this aspect would be an advantage. In addition, the role involves maintaining and enhancing close working relationships with government regulatory and policy setting bodies involving both Tegel and generic industry interests. The national Tegel Serology laboratory reports to this position.

To be considered you will need:

- Minimum 3 years experience in a similar role
- A qualification enabling New Zealand Veterinary registration
- Ability to deliver with minimum supervision
- Easy assumption of a leadership role in livestock production
- Ability to influence decision making in strong team environment
- Ability to work constructively with Regulatory Authorities
- Ability to work constructively on an industry wide basis
- Willingness to travel extensively domestically
- Some international travel required

The salary package offered reflects the importance of this role and the abilities of the incumbent selected.

Please send your application to Kirstie Wardle, Tegel Foods Ltd, Private Bag 99 927, Newmarket, Auckland, New Zealand.
Email: kirstie.wardle@tegel.co.nz



Tegel Foods Ltd, New Zealand's leading poultry and feeds company, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the global food company H J Heinz Ltd. Tegel invites applications for the following position.

Veterinary Graduate

Tegel Foods Ltd is seeking to employ a Veterinary Graduate interested in building a career in the poultry industry. Tegel is the largest producer of poultry meat products in New Zealand with North and South Island operations covering the breeding, hatching and growing of both chicken and turkey. The veterinary role of the company covers the clinical aspects of poultry disease control as well as accountabilities under the various regulations relevant to the industry. Networking internationally and liaising closely with the various regulatory authorities is essential to success, as is the ability to work cooperatively where necessary on an industry wide basis.

You will need:

- A degree in Veterinary Science
- Veterinary registration
- An interest in poultry with the aim of developing a long term career
- Some computer skills
- Ability to work within a larger team as a key influencer to decision making
- Ability to establish firm business relationships over a long period
- Willingness to travel both domestically and internationally

The successful applicant will receive professional support during training which will be extensive and may require temporary relocation for short periods.

Please send applications to Kirstie Wardle, Tegel Foods Ltd, Private Bag 99 927, Newmarket, Auckland or Kirstie.wardle@tegel.co.nz



What's Your Diagnosis?

Unfortunately this edition's diagnosis is proving to be a bit tricky and hasn't made the deadline for publication!

DANDER introduced the *What's Your Diagnosis?* section its previous edition to test the diagnostic acumen of our poultry disease experts and Dr Amir Noormohammadi provided an interesting case of ILT.

Are you all trying to tell the Editor that there are absolutely no interesting disease problems out there that you could share with your colleagues?