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EXTENSION DIVISION
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

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Guard Against Fowl Cholera

WHAT TO DO IF AN OUTBREAK OCCURS

In an outbreak of fowl cholera, the organism usually enters the turkey through the respiratory or digestive tract. Contaminated feed and water can serve as a means of spread. The eating of an infected carcass by healthy birds also may serve as a source of infection. Once introduced the disease may spread rapidly through a flock.

Since the disease is spread from bird to bird and water and feed may serve as a vehicle for the cholera organism, waterers and feeders should be scrubbed and sanitized each day. The use of a sanitizing agent in the water will help reduce the spread of infection.

Infected range flocks should be moved every two or three days to a clean range area. The cholera organism is eliminated in the droppings and if moving is not done frequently, the range will become heavily contaminated.

Provide ample shelter from the weather. Cold, damp, rainy weather adds a further stress on the flock. In confined flocks, it may be necessary to add litter if the litter becomes wet and caked.

A constant culling of the flock is important to remove the sick birds. The tissues of cholera infected birds are heavily loaded with organisms. Dead birds must be removed several times a day and disposed of in an incinerator or approved disposal pit.

In many outbreaks, sulfaquinoxaline or other sulfas will bring the disease under control until the flock can be marketed. If the response to water medication is poor, injectable antibiotics such as a combination of penicillin and streptomycin or terramycin should be used. Follow the directions of the manufacturer.

Every attempt should be made to get the disease under control immediately. The flocks should be marketed as soon as marketable. Treatment will not control the disease for more than 10 days to two weeks.

Prepared by D. D. Moyer of the Department of Poultry Science and reviewed by members of the Department of Veterinary Science.

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