Virulent NEWCASTLE DISEASE (VND) – What Poultry Growers Need to Know

**Definitions:** VND is a virus disease of poultry and some other birds. It is common in parts of Mexico, Central and South America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

**What are the clinical signs (symptoms) of VND?** Chickens may have respiratory signs such as difficulty breathing, swollen heads, and secretions from the mouth and nostrils. They may also have greenish diarrhea. Neurological signs such as twisted necks, paralysis and incoordination and nervous tics may be seen. There are severe egg production losses, and the eggs have poor shell quality, may be misshapen, shell-less and may lose color. The birds may also have severe depression and high mortality.

**Where does VND virus come from?** Wild birds, especially waterfowl, cormorants and pigeons, may carry the virus, as well as pet birds such as parrots and parakeets. The most common and likely reservoir is infected birds. Clothes and footwear worn in contaminated premises outside of the USA can bring viable virus into the USA.

**Do we have VND in our state?** We do not have VND in commercial poultry in the United States. It is considered a foreign animal disease.

**Are vaccines used against VND?** Vaccines used in the US against the mild form of Newcastle disease are insufficient to protect against VND.

**What would happen if my flock was diagnosed?** Having VND in commercial poultry would have disastrous consequences to the growers and the industry. Appropriate steps would be taken for a rapid eradication of the virus from the farm by depopulation, followed by intensive surveillance of the surrounding area.

**WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT A FARM FROM BECOMING INFECTED WITH VND?**

- The virus is in high concentration in dead and sick birds and their secretions. Contaminated manure is a primary source of virus.
- The virus can contaminate equipment and vehicles from affected farms. Rodents get contaminated from the affected poultry environment.

**FARMS SHOULD HAVE RESTRICTED ACCESS**

**LINE OF SEPARATION:** At a minimum, ALWAYS use dedicated foot wear or use provided foot bath or boot wash, to go into the chicken house. Where facilities permit, take shower, change clothes, or wear coveralls to get into the chicken house.

**TRAIN** all employees about avoiding contact with backyard or other chicken flocks, and owning pet birds.

**REQUIREMENTS for visitors are the same,** and they should be asked to sign in, and to follow all farm biosecurity protocols.

**AVOID POTENTIAL SOURCES!** Do not enter your poultry house directly after hunting or contact with ANY other birds, including those of pet shops, zoos, live bird markets, schools or people’s backyards.

**Do not come into contact with poultry for at least 5 days after visiting poultry in another country.**

**Do not attract wild birds to the farm by using bird feeders, bird baths, or by leaving feed spills unattended.**

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