



Erysipelas of Turkeys

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ERYSIPELAS OF TURKEYS

Erysipelas is an infectious disease of mammals and birds caused by a specific organism Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae. The disease may be either acute or chronic.

In the acute form the disease is septicemic and all or most of the internal organs show inflammation. In the chronic form the turkey often shows swelling of the snood or at times arthritis, characterized by enlargement of the joints of the legs or wings.

The diagnosis of erysipelas is best made by the laboratory isolation and identification of the causative organism.

Turkeys of all ages are susceptible to infection. However, the most frequent outbreaks occur in mature toms where the disease is spread by fighting. The infection is introduced into wounds, particularly of the snood.

Hen turkeys frequently are infected during the mating process when wounds are inflicted by the toms. This type of spread of the disease can be controlled to a large extent by the use of breeding saddles.

Control of Erysipelas

The control of this disease is often difficult. The germ causing the disease will live for long periods in alkaline soil. Thus if the same area is used for range, soil may carry the infection year after year.

Medication with antibiotics such as a combination of penicillin and streptomycin has been found very effective in preventing

losses. These drugs should be given in the drinking water because sick birds will often drink water when they will not eat.

Turkeys showing symptoms of disease should be treated by intramuscular injection of the antibiotic.

The most satisfactory method of preventing death losses from erysipelas in turkeys has been prophylactic immunization. Bacterins are available and when used before the birds are put on range are highly effective in preventing the disease.



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