

**June 25, 2020**

## **Newcastle Disease Update**

On May 13th, 2020 the Animal Health Laboratory, University of Guelph, reported a case of avian orthavulavirus 1, formerly avian paramyxovirus 1 (APMV-1) in a racing pigeon loft in Ontario. Further testing conducted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed the diagnosis of Newcastle Disease caused by pigeon paramyxovirus-1 on June 11, 2020. This virus may lead to Newcastle disease in poultry if they are exposed.

Newcastle Disease is not a food safety or significant public health concern for healthy people who are not in routine contact with infected birds.

Newcastle disease is a federally reportable disease under the Health of Animals Act. Attending veterinarians concerned about possible cases of Newcastle disease should contact their local district CFIA office for further guidance. Newcastle disease is also immediately notifiable by laboratories to OMAFRA under the Animal Health Act. Attending veterinarians with questions related to poultry health may contact an OMAFRA veterinarian through the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300.

Newcastle disease is a highly contagious disease in many species of domestic poultry, exotic and wild birds. Clinical signs may include respiratory distress, coughing and sneezing, diarrhea and neurological signs including tremors and paralysis. The mortality rate is variable but can be high dependent on the virulence of the strain.

In Ontario, the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative routinely detects this virus circulating in double-crested cormorants and feral European rock doves. Birds become infected when they have direct contact with diseased or carrier birds. Infected birds may shed the virus in their feces, contaminating the environment. The virus can survive for days in litter, feed, water, soil, dead birds, eggs and feathers. The disease spreads rapidly among birds in close confinement. Newcastle disease can be brought into a barn by breaches in biosecurity, and it is most often

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transmitted from one infected flock to another by movement of infected birds or contaminated equipment or people. Implementing and adhering to biosecurity best management practices is important to prevent the introduction and spread of the disease. Newcastle disease can resemble high pathogenicity avian influenza, another reportable disease.

Commercial breeder and layer chickens are routinely vaccinated for APMV-1 and therefore have lower risk of infection. Birds with outdoor access have higher risk of contracting the disease, and they should not share areas with wild birds such as feral pigeons. Ensure areas with outdoor access do not attract wild birds as ponds or open feeders may become contaminated with wild bird droppings.

Additional information is available at:

CFIA – Newcastle Disease

<https://www.inspection.gc.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/nd/fact-sheet/eng/1330202454619/1330202602677>

OIE – Newcastle Disease

<https://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/animal-diseases/Newcastle-disease/>

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