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EC1466 Questions and Answers on Coccidiosis

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Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

Extension
Circular
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON COCCIDIOSIS
By H. E. Alder

1. What is coccidiosis?

Coccidiosis is a disease of poultry and many other animals caused by an internal parasite.

2. Is it at all likely that day old chicks may have coccidiosis at the time of purchase?

No.

3. May coccidiosis be transmitted through the egg?

No.

4. At what age does coccidiosis affect chicks?

Coccidiosis affects chicks of any age up to three or four months, and occasionally even adult fowls may have the disease.

5. Why is it not common to find chicks only one or two weeks old sick with coccidiosis?

In the first place it takes 4 or 5 days after the organism is engulfed before symptoms are noticeable. The house is usually clean when the chicks are put in it and the caretaker is usually careful about sanitation until the chicks are three or four weeks old; after which time he is likely to become careless.

6. Are all coccidiosis cases about alike?

No. There are, in general, two classes of cases.

7. What are these two classes?

Acute coccidiosis and chronic coccidiosis.

8. What are the more important symptoms of the acute form of coccidiosis?

Chicks that have been doing very well will suddenly lose their appetites and pass blood with their droppings.

9. If such chicks are examined will they appear thin breasted?

Chicks that were growing well before they were infected will appear plump and normal.

10. How long will it be after they eat the parasite before bloody droppings appear?
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Four or five days.

11. How long after they eat the parasite will it be before death losses start?

Four to six days, depending on the number of parasites eaten.

12. What measures should be used to control an outbreak of acute coccidiosis?

Thoroughly clean the houses and all the equipment in them. This means the removal of litter and sweeping out of small particles of matter that cannot be gathered up with a scoop. The drinking fountains and feeding troughs should be removed and washed. If there are wire covered platforms, they should be removed and washed. The house must be cleaned each day for seven days and every other day for one week; after which time, the house should be cleaned once or twice a week depending on the number of birds in the house. The equipment in the house should be washed twice a week for two weeks. All brooding conditions should be as nearly ideal as possible.

13. Have other methods been recommended?

Yes. One generally known as the starving method. The birds are kept off of feed two hours each day, preferably from about noon until two P.M. This method has not been endorsed by pathologists but a number of practical poultrymen have reported good success.

14. Should the birds have range while one is treating them for coccidiosis?

No. But if possible, let them out in sun parlors or porches. These must be cleaned just as the house is if they have any sort of floor other than wire.

15. Where does the parasite live during the winter?

In dirty houses, old damp litter piles, moist soil, and adult carriers.

16. How does it get into the houses?

It may be carried in on the shoes of the caretaker or visitors, or by the wind.

17. Do broods of chicks raised in a new house standing on clean range ever have coccidiosis?

Yes.

18. In such cases where do the parasites come from?

They may be carried in feed, on the sacks, on the feet of crows, sparrows, rabbits, visitors, or by the wind.

19. If the house is new and on clean ground and one cleans it thoroughly once or twice a week, will the chicks ever get coccidiosis?

No.

20. During an outbreak of coccidiosis should any medicine be given?

No.

21. Should the ration be modified?

Yes. Change a good chick mash so it will have 30 or 40 pounds of powdered milk in each 100 pounds of mash. Feed only this mash and clean water for six or seven days. Then give regular chick starter.

22. Could one use liquid milk instead of putting powdered milk in the mash?

Yes. Give the regular mash and no water but all of the skim milk they will drink.

23. If rigid programs of sanitation should be followed, as recommended in answer to question No. 12, would it be necessary to modify the chick ration?

No. The brood will make a good recovery without it but there will probably be a few more death losses and a little more time required.

24. Does the milk act as a medicine?

No. It merely furnishes a more easily absorbed food which tends to prevent the chick from starving to death before the life cycle of the parasite in the body is completed.

25. Are symptoms of chronic coccidiosis the same as those for acute coccidiosis?

No. The chicks gradually go out of condition as is shown by pale beaks and shanks. They become thin breasted and stand near the fire with heads drawn in and feathers ruffled up. Often a characteristic diarrhea appears.

26. Is the treatment the same as for the acute form?

Yes.

27. Is recovery as rapid and complete?

No.

28. Does the chronic form affect a pullet's usefulness?

Yes. Egg production is reduced and breakdowns during the laying year are common.

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