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Control strategy

The seriousness of Newcastle disease is such that it constitutes a threat to world trade in poultry products in that countries that are free of this disease do not want to inadvertently introduce this disease into their country via live birds or poultry products. As has been previously stated, Newcastle disease occurs in various forms and various severities. Thus a starting point for controlling the disease is to define what constitutes Newcastle disease for the purposes of world trade. To this end the OIE has defined Newcastle disease as:

An infection of birds caused by a virus of avian paramyxovirus serotype 1 (APMV-1) that meets the following criteria for virulence:

- The virus has an intracerebral pathogenicity index (ICPI) in day old chicks of 0.7 or greater.

or

- Multiple basic amino acids have been demonstrated in the virus at the C-terminus of the F2 protein and phenylalanine at residue 117, which is the N-terminus of the F1 protein. The term 'simple basic amino acids' refers to at least three arginine or lysine residues between residues 113 and 116.

At the national level control strategies are aimed at preventing the introduction of Newcastle disease virus and its spread within a country and this involves restrictions on the trade and movement of poultry products, eggs and live birds. Many countries have a quarantine process that live poultry and birds of other species are subjected to.

The continuing presence of APMV-1 in racing pigeons in many countries has resulted in national policies on racing pigeons and their vaccination.

In many countries legislation exists to control Newcastle disease should an outbreak occur and in some countries this includes the slaughter of infected birds and their contacts and the destruction of associated products such as eggs, litter and feed. Other countries require the vaccination of flocks, even in the absence of disease or a policy of ring vaccination should a disease outbreak occur.

Control at farm level

Control at farm level centres around preventing Newcastle disease from entering the farm and this involves good standards of biosecurity. Good biosecurity minimises the introduction of Newcastle disease into poultry flocks and minimises spread between flocks.