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Immunity

Birds that have recovered from infectious bronchitis are resistant to challenge by a homologous (same strain) virus, but the extent of protection against heterologous challenge is variable.

The ability to protect against nephritis when infection is caused by a nephropathogenic strain is deemed as evidence of effective vaccinal immunity, as is the ability to reduce or prevent egg drop in a laying flock.

Local immune responses in the respiratory tract are important in giving birds protection. Blood tests measure humoral immunity and so it is possible to have birds with low levels of humoral immunity (titres on blood test) that are adequately protected by their local immunity in the respiratory tract.

Humoral antibody is needed to protect against egg drop.

In general terms, live vaccines give good local immunity and may give some humoral immunity, while killed vaccines give good levels of humoral immunity.

Maternal immunity can reduce the severity of vaccinal reaction if the vaccine is of the same type as that used to vaccinate the breeder flock. Even so, the vaccination of day old chicks is undertaken routinely because of the benefits bestowed via the cell mediated immunity induced by live vaccination. Accordingly, the value of blood testing to assess day old live vaccination is questionable for the reason noted above.

Diagnosis

This is made on the basis of history, clinical signs, post mortem findings, blood testing and antigen/virus detection.

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