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Introduction

Turkey viral hepatitis is a highly contagious but generally subclinical disease of turkeys. Typically a multifocal necrotic hepatitis is seen. This disease was first seen in 1959 and in 1991 a picornavirus was found to be the causal agent. The disease has been seen in North America and Great Britain.

The disease

This disease is confined to turkeys. Transmission of the turkey viral hepatitis virus is by both direct and indirect (via fomites) – contact with faeces of infected turkeys being its main source. The possibility of vertical transmission has been suggested as the causal virus has been isolated from an ovarian follicle.

The incubation period varies from two to seven days.

Clinical signs

Typically, turkey viral hepatitis is a subclinical infection but disease can become apparent following stress or concurrent infection. In such cases depression may be seen but sudden deaths are more likely. In breeding turkeys this virus has been implicated in decreased fertility and hatchability.

Mortality is variable but can be very high. Deaths have not been seen in turkeys older than six weeks of age.

Post mortem findings

Visible lesions occur in the liver and sometimes in the pancreas. Liver lesions are focal, grey areas and depressed lesions can sometimes coalesce.

Diagnosis is made on the basis of lesions and is confirmed by histopathology and/or virus isolation.

Differential diagnosis of the liver lesions should include salmonella, Pasteurella multocida, adenoviruses, reoviruses and blackhead caused by Histomonas meleagridis.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment.

Olmix

Sasso

Winterwarm

Perstorp

Vencomatic

Ziggity