



# Health care for small flocks

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# Healthy chickens can lead long, productive lives

- Prevent predation
- Good nutrition
- Good management
- Stop weather stress
- Manage parasites
- Prevent diseases

# What does a sick chicken look like?

- Watch for:
  - Coughing, sneezing, raling, watery eyes, ruffled feathers, loss of feathers, isolation, excessive picking, labored breathing and sudden drops in production and feed or water consumption



# Finding Help

- Local Vet
- Texas Animal Health Commission
  - 1-800-550-8242
  - <http://www.tahc.texas.gov>
- Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratories – Poultry Labs
  - Gonzales – (830) 672-2834 – Dr. Ficken
  - Center – (936) 598-4451 – Dr. Moore

# What does “vaccinated” mean?

- Your pullets were vaccinated against several of the common poultry diseases.
- There are some forms that are not covered
- There are some diseases that are not covered
- YOUR BIRDS ARE NOT BULLET PROOF!
- VACCINATION DOES NOT MEAN YOU CAN HAVE A DIRTY OPERATION

# Cleaning and Sanitation

- Five steps to cleaning and disinfection (C&D)
  1. Dry Clean (remove all organic matter)
  2. Soap
  3. Rinse
  4. Dry
  5. Disinfect
  6. You can't clean dirt!, don't waste your time liming your pens.
  7. Go all in – all out

# Preventing disease

- If you isolate your flock of chickens, most will remain disease free
  - Don't go to swaps
  - Don't buy more chicks or birds
  - Don't take them to the fair
  - Don't buy off ebay or craigslist!!!!
  - Just keep your birds **isolated**

# Biosecurity

“A set of management practices which when followed correctly reduce the potential for the introduction and spread of disease causing organisms onto, and between sites.”

- From the perspective of the bird rather than just the farm





# Sources of Disease spread

1. Vermin e.g. salmonella, pasteurilla
2. Feed e.g. salmonella, some ND strains
3. Wild birds e.g. mycoplasmas, ND, avian influenza, ?IB, ?TRT, bacteria, worms

# Methods of spread

4. Water e.g. E. coli, salmonella, campylobacter
5. Hatchery e.g. salmonella, aspergillus, enterococcus, pseudomonas, mycoplasmas
6. Windborne e.g. IBD, ND, AI?, mycoplasmas
7. Fecal e.g. Coccidia, Gumboro, ND, salmonella, mycoplasma, viruses

# Medicated feeds



- Medicated feeds don't bulletproof your birds!
- The medication is usually just a coccidiostat.
- Little chicks are most susceptible to cocci, older birds are resistant
- Can feed too long and cause resistant cocci

# Mites in Poultry

- If you have birds, your birds will get mites
- Seasonally connected to wild bird migrations
- “easy” to kill
- Can develop resistance
- See KSU tip sheet
- Rotate insecticides, Sevin, permectrin, powder, spray or dunk!



# Red Mites



- On birds during the night
- “roost” in your barn at daylight
- Like ticks – will be full of blood
- Need to treat house and birds

# Common backyard chicken worms


Internal Parasite	Symptoms
Roundworms	Long, yellow-white worms in intestine, droopiness, weight loss, diarrhea, death.
Capillary worm	Hair-like worms in crop and upper intestines, oral inflammatory masses, hemorrhagic inflammation of commissure of beak droopiness, weight loss, death.
Cecal worm	Short worms in the ceca, unthrifty, weakness, weight loss
Tapeworm	Long, white, flat segmented worms in intestine, unthrifty, slow growth, weakness
Gapeworms	Red, forked worms in trachea, gasping, coughing

# Internal Parasites

## worming your birds




- If you have non-caged birds, you should treat for worms 2x/year.
- I do it spring and fall, just a habit
- Can I worm the birds and eat the eggs?
  - Yes, use levamisole, approved for this purpose
  - For other worms and other meds, administer the medicine during a molt or toss out the eggs



# HELP! My birds are sick, what do I do?

- First, be prepared before it happens.
- There are no longer any over the counter antibiotics for poultry
- Many owners have decided to see what survives and move on.
- Cost of individual bird treatment is not worth the value of the flock





# HELP! My birds are sick, what do I do?

- Be sure you get a diagnosis of the FLOCK, not an individual, or you may be chasing ghosts for a long time.
- If dead, keep cold, and bring to a diagnostic lab that is familiar with bird diseases
- Prefer live, if able
- For a large number of birds, dying rapidly, call the Kansas Dept of Agriculture.
- There are no longer any over the counter antibiotics for poultry
- Many owners have decided to see what survives and move on.

# The End

