VIRULENT NEWCASTLE DISEASE (vND) Q&A

What is Virulent Newcastle Disease?

Virulent Newcastle Disease (vND) is a disease of wild and domestic birds that causes extremely high mortality (death rate). **Virulent Newcastle Disease is a serious disease of birds, but it is not a food safety concern.**

In birds, the disease causes respiratory symptoms (sneezing, gasping, nasal discharge, coughing), diarrhea, depression, neurologic signs, swelling of the eyes and neck, and sudden death. Death is often the first indication of a vND outbreak.

How is vND spread?

Virulent Newcastle Disease is spread when healthy birds come in contact with secretions/excretions of infected birds. The virus can also be spread via objects such as equipment, boots, or coveralls.

Does vND exist in the United States?

Currently, only backyard birds (not for human consumption) have been infected with vND in the United States. According to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) website, “Since May 18, 2018, USDA has confirmed 445 premises in California as infected with vND, including 141 in San Bernardino County, 259 in Riverside County, 44 in Los Angeles County, one in Ventura County, and one in Alameda County. USDA also confirmed one infected premises in Utah County, Utah and one infected premises in Coconino County, Arizona.” The backyard birds at issue are distinguished from the U.S. commercial poultry flock, which is intended for human consumption.

Why is vND such a concern to the U.S. poultry industry?

Virulent Newcastle Disease is not a food safety concern. However, the disease is deadly to birds, causing death in almost all infected birds.

Does vND pose a risk to humans?

Virulent Newcastle Disease is a serious disease of birds, but it is not a food safety concern. In very rare cases, people working directly with sick birds have contracted the disease and showed mild symptoms like conjunctivitis (redness of the eyes).

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References:


