

Coccidium in Homing Pigeons

It is a parasitosis just like trichomonas, they are microscopic parasites. It is spread through fecal matter, that is, the pigeon has to defecate in the cereal that the others eat or drink, or peck fecal matter.

It is closely related to damp or cold lofts, these are predisposing agents for this disease as well as lack of hygiene.

The etiological agent is called EIMERIA, of these there are two families in the pigeon ; EIMERIA LABBEANA and EIMERIA COLUMBARUM.

They colonize the intestinal wall, they lay eggs inside the intestinal cells, these eggs are called OOCYSTS, the cells are filled with them, they break, the eggs fall into the intestinal lumen. These cell breaks produce microbleeds. In the case of pigeons, the EIMERIAS attack the first portions of the intestine, so the blood produced by these hemorrhages is reabsorbed and does not appear in the fecal matter. Only on some occasions can we feel an unpleasant odor caused by hemoglobin that has not been reabsorbed.

The lesions it produces in the intestine are colonized by pathogenic bacteria, greatly complicating the picture.

The most common symptoms are:

Fecal matter without consistency and watery

When we look at the mouth we find pale mucous membranes and in the muscles of the breast they are not pink, this pallor is the product of anemia caused by microbleeds.

Diagnosis

It is carried out in the laboratory, with a supersaturated salt solution, fecal matter is dissolved, filtered in a test tube, the eggs rise and stick to the slide, which is looked at under the microscope and the oocysts are seen.

Treatment

This parasite has a cycle of 21 days, that is to say that there are EIMERIAS of one day the youngest and 21 days the oldest.

There are two types of drugs to combat them, coccidiostats and coccidicides.

Coccidiostats kill the stages from day 1 to day 17 and the most used are SULFAS.

The sulfas are completely eliminated by the kidney, it has some carriers to be able to remove them from the kidney. There are different types of sulfa and each one has its carrier. Each of these can

carry 0.33 grams of sulfa, for this reason we have to be careful with the doses because an excess can cause kidney damage, for this reason coccidiostats are usually combined with 3 sulfa or more.

Some prefer coccidiostats to coccidicides to create some immunity and when they do get it, it is milder.

Sulfa drugs should never be combined with vitamin B12 or vitamin complexes containing B12, as sulfa confuses the structure of B12 with coccidia and attacks B12 instead of coccidia. In severe cases, sulfa drugs combined with vitamin K can be given to resolve microbleeds more quickly.

Coccidicides attack and destroy all stages from 1 to 21.

The most used drug is Diclazuril, there are different brands, all of which are very effective.

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