

Smallpox in Homing Pigeons

This disease is caused by a POXVIRUS. Each species has a different family of this virus, the pigeon virus only attacks pigeons and birds of prey.

Although this disease can appear at any time of the year, it occurs more frequently in summer-autumn and early winter because it is closely related to the appearance of mosquitoes that act as a vector.

For its entry into the body it is necessary that the skin is injured by pecks or mosquito bites.

Once infected, the incubation time is seven days (symptoms appear).

They can also be spread by the water (drinker) or the dust from the loft. The duration of this disease is 3 to 4 weeks but if we let it resolve naturally it can last up to 4 months.

Once the disease is over, it takes 2 months to fully recover and immunity lasts for 8 months.

The only way to prevent it is vaccination, in the presence of the disease it is recommended to vaccinate only healthy birds to stop the outbreak. The virus makes a passage through the liver, causing damage to it, with very few deaths, which is why the fancier does not give it the importance it deserves. It is suggested while the disease lasts not to fly the pigeons and less to compete. Although the pigeon resolves the disease, this virus causes us a lot of liver damage, which takes a long time to recover.

It usually comes in 4 ways:

Cutaneous: pustules are seen in places where there are no feathers such as legs and beak area.

Diphtheria: plaques appear in the mouth, larynx and esophagus, these are very bleeding if you want to remove them, they can lead to obstruction of the glottis and death of the animal.

Systemic: it invades the entire circulatory system, produces liver damage and does not show any external symptoms.

Tumor: it is the least frequent, tumors appear in the head and if it does not resolve itself, it goes to surgery.

Prevention

The entire campus must be vaccinated at least once a year. Youngsters should never be vaccinated before 4 weeks of age. The important thing is to always vaccinate with pigeon virus, chicken virus vaccines do not work.

It is vaccinated by scarification, the skin is broken with a spear or brush without bleeding, the virus enters through the break in the skin and through the feathery follicles and from 7 to 10 days a reddish pustule (casarita) appears, which indicates that the vaccination has been effective. The vaccine is taken out of the refrigerator 2 hours before, the bath is suppressed for 15 days, it is recommended to give stimulants of the defenses to produce a better immunity. An antibiotic may be given to prevent the incursion of any opportunistic bacteria.

Before the appearance of pustules and plaques in the mouth, you can put iodine with a swab 4 times a day, this helps speed up the process.

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