

## Trichomonas in Homing Pigeons

Trichomonas is a parasite caused by a tetraflagellate protozoan. Normally we have the idea that parasites are worms, but this is not the case; there are parasites that are microscopic, such as trichomonas and coccidia.

Trichomonas is the number one disease in terms of the number of affected pigeons, if we take pigeons at random, 80% are affected. This parasite is found in the oral cavity, esophagus and crop of our pigeons and when it becomes chronic it usually migrates to the liver and produces lesions that are then usually colonized by pathogenic bacteria. The reason why it is so common in pigeons is that it transmits through the drinking fountain when it is located in the oral cavity, when it drinks water it infects the rest of the colony, this is aggravated because we have community drinking fountains. In Belgium, they run with the widower system and each one has their individual drinker, it is much easier to control.

The most common reservoir in the lofts are the buchones because, due to their crop anatomy, the trichomonas has a better chance of surviving, therefore the buchones should not drink water from the same drinker as the couriers.

How does trichomonas harm our pigeons?

In the first place, once it entered the organism, it attacks the walls of the esophagus and the crop, these two organs have peristalsis (movement), in the case of the esophagus to help the cereals reach the crop, when the pigeon manifests that chokes as if it were difficult for him to pass the cereal ..

The crop, which is the reservoir where digestion begins, its walls are affected and causes peristalsis to slow down and for this reason, it takes longer to pass the cereal to the stomach and in this way all digestion is affected, being slower, heavier causing mild colic.

The symptoms that the fancier sees with the naked eye are:

The pigeon chokes while eating

In the morning when we get up we find food in the maw (slower digestion). Normally, it would digest 3 grams per hour (36 grams in 12 hours)

Fecal matter lacks armed, consistency

In pigeons it can go through a respiratory cycle and we see wet snouts and we confuse them with coryza, we give antibiotics and they have no effect.

The pigeon scratches a lot especially when it comes down from flying

In severe and chronic cases, we perform a necropsy and see granulomas in the liver. In these cases, it is recommended to give the trichomonicide mixed with an antibiotic to attack the pathogenic bacteria that colonized the liver lesions caused by trichomonas.

In pigeons in the pot we can find a shell in the navel

In some cases plaques in the mouth in general

## Diagnosis

It is by swabbing the esophagus and crop, with a swab soaked in physiological solution, it is swabbed and looked at under the microscope and it is very easy to see.

## Treatment

There are many very efficient drugs to combat it if they are used properly in terms of dosage and days of administration.

Running, they usually do what are commonly called "tocaditas", a treatment of two or three days, this is not appropriate but it lowers the load and serves to be able to compete.

All trichomonocides are eliminated by the liver and they all affect the intestinal flora, so it is recommended after a liver and probiotic treatment.

The drug with the highest safety margin is metronidazole and the one with the lowest safety margin is dimetridazole.

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