



19 April 2021

Virus outbreak in Pigeons and Birds in the EC and WC April 2021

To all Pigeon Fanciers

As you may be aware there has been numerous reports of massive acute deaths in Birds and Pigeons in the Eastern Cape. These deaths have now spread to the Western Cape.

It was confirmed by Dalrrd that both PMV1 (Paramyxovirus1) and a ND (Newcastle disease) viruses had been isolated from these cases.

Dr Ockert Botha via SANPO sent an urgent request to Dalrrd to perform full sequencing of the PMV1 virus to make sure whether it is the new Pakistani strain PPMV1 virus that is involved in these cases.

During the September 2017 similar outbreak in the Western Cape it was clear that pigeons that received the standard inactivated Paramyxovirus vaccines as well as the ND inactivated vaccine was not adequately protected and still contracted the disease.

It is thus hugely important for pigeon fanciers to know whether this new outbreak is due to a different antigenic variant to the one in the available vaccines.

Dr Sunelle Strydom, State Veterinarian from Dalrrd confirmed as follows:

"I have been in contact with the laboratory. One sample from the ECP and one sample from the WCP are already in the process of being sequenced. The OVR went ahead and did this on their account prior to us having sent through our enquiry. The costs for these two samples will be covered by the OVR and I will supply you with the relevant information (with the owner details blacked out) once available. Sequencing usually takes about two weeks – one week to obtain the sequencing data and then the data should still be analyzed before a report can be issued."



Posbus 287, Groot Brak, 6525

Pigeon fanciers are advised to follow take the following action the meantime:

NB All pigeons need to be as vaccinated as per the SANPO constitution

- It is advised that Pigeon fanciers vaccinate their pigeons with inactivated vaccines that contain both PMV1 as well as ND viruses immediately if they have not done so in 2021.
- Babies should be vaccinated between 21 and 24 days with an Inactivated PMV1 vaccine and given a booster with an Inactivated ND chicken vaccine two weeks later.
- Adult pigeons that have been previously vaccinated with both viruses must be vaccinated with a Inactivated ND chicken vaccine and if possible with a PMV1 vaccine two weeks later.
- Pigeons not vaccinated with the correct vaccine may contract and spread Newcastle disease, or may become immune compromised, thereby making them more susceptible to other viruses such as Circo virus (Young Bird Disease Virus) or other viral diseases.
- Vaccination of pigeons with inactivated ND virus is mandated by the State Veterinary Department.
- SANPO believes that not to vaccinate, as prescribed above, may put the pigeon sport in jeopardy and pose a serious threat to the wellbeing of pigeon fancier's pigeons. This was made very clear by the state veterinary department.
- We are working along with the authorities to try and minimize the new viral outbreak experienced in EC and WC.
- SANPO would like to thank the State Veterinary department for the transparent, friendly and effective work that they are doing in maintaining the health of our critically important poultry and related avian industries.
- Pigeon fanciers that would like to receive more information on the above is welcome to contact Dr Botha via E mail on drbotha@vetsfocus.co.za.

Regards

George le Roux
President

Johan Pretorius
Secretary