

## WHAT IS *PULLORUM* DISEASE?

This disease could completely destroy our commercial industry as well as your beautiful flock of poultry in your own backyard. Once just one bird becomes infected we are all in trouble.

Protect us all by becoming a member of your state National Poultry Improvement Plan.

Get your membership card and be very proud to show it.

Pullorum disease is an acute or chronic infectious, bacterial disease affecting primarily chickens and turkeys, but most domestic and wild fowl can be infected.

The cause is a bacterium named *Salmonella pullorum*. This organism is primarily egg transmitted, but transmission may occur by other means such as:

- ✍ Infected hen to egg, egg to chick, or chick to chick in incubator, chick box, brooder, or house. Survivors become infected breeders (cycle begins again)
- ✍ Mechanical transmission (carried around on clothes, shoes or equipment),
- ✍ Carrier birds (apparently healthy birds shed the disease organisms),
- ✍ Contaminated premises (from previous outbreaks).
- ✍ Disease organisms may enter the bird through the respiratory (as in the incubator) or digestive systems.
- ✍ Most outbreaks of acute pullorum disease in chickens or turkeys result from infection while in the hatchery.
- ✍ Pullorum disease is highly fatal to young chicks or poults, but mature birds are more resistant. Young birds may die soon after hatching without exhibiting any observable signs. Most acute outbreaks occur in birds that are under three weeks of age. Mortality in such outbreaks may approach ninety percent if untreated. Survivors are usually stunted and unthrifty.



## Symptoms:

Infection in young birds may be indicated by droopiness, ruffled feathers, a chilled appearance with birds huddling near a source of heat, labored breathing, and presence of a white diarrhea with a "pasted-down" appearance around the vent.



(Don't wait – help me!)

## Diagnosis:

- ✍ In young birds it is made by isolating the causative organism in the laboratory.
- ✍ In older birds, blood testing may indicate an infection but a positive diagnosis depends upon isolation and identification of the organism by laboratory procedures.

*Complete eradication* is the only sound way to prevent pullorum disease.

- ✍ All hatchery supply flocks should be tested and only pullorum-free flocks used as a source of hatching eggs.
- ✍ Purchase chicks or poults from hatcheries or from breeders that are officially recognized as "Pullorum Clean" by National Poultry Improvement Plan representatives in your state.
- ✍ Ask to see the breeders' membership card or at least verify in advance that they are members of the pullorum free flock (NPIP) before you bring your new birds home.

Treatment primarily is a salvage operation and does not prevent birds from becoming carriers. Consequently, do not keep recovered flocks.