MG --

Mycoplasma gallisepticum

What is it? Mycoplasma gallisepticum (MG, also known as CRD – Chronic Respiratory Diseases in chickens -- and infectious sinusitis in turkeys) is an infectious respiratory disease of chickens and turkeys. MG has also been found in pheasants, chukar, peafowl and quail.

What’s the big deal? MG is a serious threat to all poultry industries: commercial, exhibition, backyard and gamebird flocks.

What are the signs of disease? Mild to severe respiratory signs including watery eyes, nasal discharge, face swelling, coughing, sneezing or rales. Egg production and feed consumption can decrease. These clinical signs are seen in quite a few viral and bacteria diseases, so a proper diagnosis is needed. Clinical signs are usually slow to develop and the disease has a long course. Backyard flocks may actually show no symptoms of disease (subclinical disease – carrier birds) if the infection is uncomplicated by other diseases or stress.

How is the disease diagnosed? Through flock history, clinical signs, gross lesions, blood tests and isolation of the organism from tracheal swabs performed at a diagnostic lab.

How is the disease transmitted? MG is spread through direct contact with infected or carrier birds and indirect contact through contaminated airborne dust, droplets, feathers, equipment and human traffic. Infected hens can shed the organism into their eggs and infect their chicks.

How is the disease prevented? Keeping MG-free flocks is the best prevention. Treating infected birds with antibiotic medication may alleviate signs and lesions, but does not always eliminate the infection and can produce carrier birds. Prevent introduction onto the farm by keeping a closed flock and practicing biosecurity – disease prevention management – whether you have a commercial poultry farm or backyard chickens:

- **Birds** – Keep a closed flock. Do not bring birds from poultry shows, auctions or untested sources back to the farm – this is a great way to introduce any disease. Separate new birds away from the flock for 2-4 weeks to see if they show any signs of disease. Take sick or fresh dead birds to a diagnostic lab to determine cause of illness or death.

- **People** – Avoid visiting other poultry farms or live-bird shows & auctions. If you do, shower and change clothing and footwear before working with your birds. Don’t allow people who have birds to visit your farm without showering and changing clothes beforehand or have them wear protective clothing and footwear and visa versa.

- **Equipment** – Do not loan or borrow equipment or vehicles from other farms. If you have to, wash and disinfect all equipment before and after use. Wash and disinfect your vehicle/trailers/crates (including tires and undercarriage) after leaving a poultry farm, show or auction. Keep your houses/pens, equipment and work areas clean and sanitary.