



# INFECTIOUS LARYNGOTRACHEITIS

## WHAT IS INFECTIOUS LARYNGOTRACHEITIS?

Infectious Laryngotracheitis (ILT) is an acute, highly infectious, respiratory disease in poultry caused by a herpesvirus. ILT usually affects chickens, but in rare cases has been found in pheasant, peafowl and turkey. The virus has never been recovered from other avian species. ILT does not affect humans.

## CLINICAL SIGNS

Clinical signs of ILT in poultry may include:

- Coughing and gasping
- Watery eyes
- Swollen sinuses
- Nasal discharge
- Bloody secretions from the trachea

## TRANSMISSION

The virus usually enters a flock through exposure to carrier birds. Carrier birds are birds that carry the disease, but show no clinical signs. ILT can also be introduced to a flock by the movement of personnel, visitors, or equipment.

Once introduced to a susceptible flock, the ILT virus spreads rapidly by contact. Birds which recover from the disease may continue to shed the virus for prolonged periods of time.

The incubation period of ILT is usually 6 to 15 days, but evidence of the disease has been seen as soon as two days following natural exposure.

## DIAGNOSIS

The virus will enter a bird's respiratory system or eye area, replicating in the cells which line the larynx and trachea. This causes cells in this area to die. As the lining is sloughed, the underlying blood vessels are exposed, causing infected birds to have difficulty breathing.

Many present day outbreaks of ILT are of a mild nature, resembling a mild outbreak of infectious bronchitis or other poultry respiratory diseases. However, disease impacts in affected flocks may be severe due to lowered production (both egg and meat), as well as death loss (up to 50% in severe

outbreaks).

## REPORTING DISEASE

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) must be notified within 24 hours of all suspected and confirmed cases of ILT. Reports can be made to any TAHC region office.

## PREVENTION

The practice and enforcement of consistent biosecurity measures on poultry and fowl premises can help reduce the risk and prevent the spread of ILT.

## TREATMENT

There is no treatment for ILT, but there are several types of vaccines available to prevent the disease.

## TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Only clinically ill birds should be tested.

