



HEREFORDSHIRE POULTRY SOCIETY



***Third Meeting on Friday 2nd December 2005
At the Volunteer Pub in Marden***

Present:	Bill Wiggin MP Lorna Hart John Wood Jill McAree Malcolm & Jean Reeves	Andrew Froud Graham Ling Edwin Hughes Ian Shellard	Carolyn Southern Paul & Nicki Stannard Linda Jones Chris Dobson
Apologies:	Charlotte Gibb Andrew Brown Chrissie Patrick	Trudi Qualter Catherine Stockford	Gill & Ian Smith Cilla Leigh
New Member:	Welcome to ...	Kate, Sorcha & Rosie Ryan	
Thanks to	Our Guest Speaker ...	Peter Laing	

1. Introduction

Bill Wiggin opened the meeting and introduced our guest speaker, Mr Peter Laing. Mr Laing is a veterinary surgeon and was a member of the British Central Veterinary Authority for 30 years.

2. Asian Bird Flu – a talk by Mr Peter Laing

Mr Laing talked about the myths and the truths about a possible pandemic. He talked about the pandemic flu shortly after the war, which killed 15-20 million people to show that the threat is a serious one. He stated that although the current incidence of bird flu is potentially a serious one, it has not become that as yet. He said that there had only been 60 deaths in the world so far and those were confined to people with close contact with poultry in poor conditions of hygiene and there had been no lateral spread.

Mr Laing said that all bird species carry different viruses, some can be carriers without being ill themselves. Over 25% of waterfowl carry the flu virus but not the Asian bird flu virus. This cannot be eliminated as it is part of nature. The worry is that the Asian flu virus (H5N1 HPAIV) could mutate and become infectious to humans. It could conceivably pass from wild fowl in migration to domestic fowl to pigs and thence to humans.

Signs of the disease in poultry can differ, with sudden onset and high mortality. Signs can include:

Diarrhoea, spread by breath and droppings
Swelling of head and discoloured comb and wattle
Lack of appetite and drop in egg production
Respiratory problems

On seeing any of the above symptoms in poultry a vet must be called immediately.

Mr Laing said migratory movement by infected birds has reached Russia and China, Turkey and Romania but not yet here except found in finches imported from Thailand.

Ways to limit risk and control:

Not much risk to poultry in intensive indoor units.
Feed poultry food from a reputable source
Put food and water under cover out of the reach of wild birds
Make sure wild birds and vermin cannot contaminate food in storage
Quarantine new birds and purchase from reputable sources
Maintain high levels of hygiene

In times of high risk:

Control visitors
Avoid markets and shows
Avoid mixing of species
Aim to keep poultry indoors away from wild birds

(Mr Laing will be at the next meeting of the Herefordshire Poultry Society and is happy to receive donations the RSPB Manor Farm appeal if anyone is interested)

There followed a question and answer session.

3. General Discussion

There followed a general discussion in which all present described their own poultry, such as how many and what breeds of bird they owned.

Bill Wiggin described his efforts to create a new breed of chicken – the Herefordshire Black.

Andrew Froud is hoping to arrange a trip to France to visit Maran breeders. Anyone interested should speak to Andrew at the next meeting, and he is interested to hear of any other ideas for similar trips.