

**07/07/2017**

The instruction sheet below was sent out to participating lofts in the Brisbane Rota trial

Instructions for the use of Rota droppings

You have been supplied with a clip lock bag containing some pigeon droppings containing what is thought to be a less pathogenic variant of Rota virus

1/Place the contents of the clip lock bag into 5 L of water and provide as the source of drinking water for 100 pigeons for 48 hours. Top up the drinker as required.

2/Place Probac (a brand of probiotic ) on the grain when the droppings are placed in the drinker. Pre- moisten the grain with a seed oil and add the Probac at a rate of ½ teaspoon / Kg of grain.

3/Ensure the birds have free access to grit, bentonite clay based mineral blocks and pink minerals.

4/After approximately 6 days some birds will develop vomiting and diarrhoea. At this time add Electrolyte P180 to the drinking water at the rate of one teaspoon to 4 L.

5/The vomiting and diarrhoea will persist in the loft for about 5 days. On any one day between 10 -20 % of the birds will be unwell

6/ Birds should be fed a nutritious diet that they are familiar with such as a grain mix containing protein levels between 14 -20 % or pellets. Less vomiting will be observed in birds fed pellets. Only feed pellets however if the birds are familiar with them

7/ The loft should be kept clean.

8/Birds can be kept in their loft routine and let out but should not be forced to fly.

9/ About 5 days after the onset of symptoms the vomiting and diarrhoea will stop and the birds will regain their health. The severity of symptoms and the length of time the birds are unwell may be affected by other health issues in the loft

If any birds become severely unwell or you have any questions please call 0412481239

Please note:

1/ Veterinary testing has been done on this sample. No other disease agents were

identified . It is not possible however to guarantee that no other infectious agent is present. The risk of disease exposure through the use of these droppings is regarded as similar to that encountered when entering a bird into a race.

2/ The severity of symptoms and the length of time the birds are unwell may be modified by other loft based factors including any pre- existent diseases in your loft. If in doubt get you birds checked prior to exposing them to these droppings

Re-infection of Rota virus, the need for ongoing research and funding

As time goes by and we learn more about Rota virus we are realising just how difficult this disease is going to be to control. Initially fanciers were advised by various people that pigeons could not catch the disease a second time, that recovered birds were cured and would only spread the disease for a short time, that a vaccine was not needed and that the PMV vaccine was miraculously making the birds vulnerable to all diseases including Rota. In hindsight we now all realise that this “advice” was premature and wrong .

Yesterday I was reliably informed that 40 of the 110 lofts in the PRF in WA either have or have had Rota since the start of their racing season several weeks ago. Birds have also developed symptoms consistent with Rota virus in a second loft in South Australia only several months after a previous infection. There are also reports of several lofts in Sydney having the same thing happen. Dr Christina McCowan at AgriBio explains that “This business of reinfection vs long term shedding and the point at which lofts are again susceptible is going to be important, I think. It will drive vaccination protocols, quarantine and management procedures...things that your pigeon owning colleagues will need to know”. On- going investigations into not only the persistence of immunity but also the persistence of viral shedding as well as comparing the immunity formed from exposure to the severely pathogenic ( disease causing) strains of Rota and the Brisbane variant and also sequencing of the Brisbane variant are all activities for the future. These will be essential to developing a protocol so that all pigeons can start the race season immune and safe from the disease. It will not be possible for normal racing to resume and prevent birds from becoming infected in transporters without this information. We will not know how often to give the vaccine or when to give it. For example will it be necessary to give 2 shots to birds initially and perhaps then another just before racing. We just don't know what protocol will be effective. Only testing will give the answers we need. These investigations however will cost money and so my feeling is that clubs, federations and veterinarians connected to the sport as well as other related business' should start to give consideration to the funding that these will require.