Rob Marshall Update 1 April 2017

Dear George and members of the WA Federation,
The recent analysis of pigeons showing similar symptoms as last year (confirms) that Rotavirus will infect some lofts again this year. This may occur after entering race or toss baskets and mixing with birds from other lofts . The disease will not be as severe as the initial outbreak. I believe the disease may not be seen at all in lofts that are otherwise healthy.
The emphasis of care now prior to the race season is to ensure the birds are fit and in good health before they are mixed with other birds. The signs of good health and fitness at this time of year are strong loft flying activity, healthy droppings and a fast body moult. I suggest there is a health problem if the moult is delayed or birds are not loft flying well. In this case seek veterinary help. It is advisable not to start heavy training until the birds are flying strongly and ranging as this will help decrease stress, which is more likely to trigger the Rotavirus infection. Please contact me directly with any health issues. It is recommended to follow the health advice detailed in the new Orange Pigeon Book for April and May.
In regards to the first federation toss; WPF are running a similar toss in the last week of April. However, your toss is a pivotal moment for all fanciers across Australia as it tells us what is going to happen 6 months down the track. I do not expect major problems to be associated with this toss as long as no recently infected (within 4 weeks of the toss) birds enter the transporter. In preparation for this toss Quik Gel is recommended in the drinking water the day of basketing and on their return. KD Powder should be given in the drinking water the day after the toss. The birds should then be very carefully monitored during the 3 days following the toss for signs of watery droppings, fluffed up look and vomiting. These are the first signs of the disease. Crop feeding treatments should be initiated at the first sign of illness. This plan should save 95-100% of sick birds should the disease enter the loft. Antibiotics in the drinking water will limit the extent of the disease for the rest of the flock. Please refer to my Rotavirus instruction sheet for exact details. Birds that show no sign of the disease should not be treated with antibiotics other than those used for routine prevention programmes against resident diseases.
My prediction is that there will be little problems with this toss but it is important that we have exact feedback from all fanciers so that the Eastern states can benefit from your experience.
Please let me know if you need further help.

Rob Marshall

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