

# Situation Report - Industry



Issued 28 September 2011

## 1. Background

- a. Avian paramyxovirus type 1 not previously reported in Australia was been detected in hobby pigeon flocks and one racing pigeon flock on a number of properties in Victoria in early September.
- b. Affected pigeon flocks are experiencing high death rates (80% – 100%). Clinical signs seen include lethargy, vomiting and diarrhea and/or nervous signs.

## 2. Situation to date

- a. Victoria has 35 confirmed infected properties, all of which are pigeon properties, including one racing pigeon flock.
- b. The number of infected properties has not changed significantly in the last week.
- c. The South Australian pigeon flock remains free of this disease
- d. There have been no detections of disease in Australian commercial or backyard poultry flocks, or in wild birds.
- e. Pigeon racing and shows have been cancelled in South Australia until further notice

## 3. Actions taken in South Australia

- a. **It is prohibited for pigeons to be brought into South Australia from interstate without prior approval from the Chief Inspector of Stock. Significant penalties apply.**
- b. **The Livestock Act of 1997 has been amended to list virulent avian paramyxovirus as a notifiable exotic disease.** This means that pigeon and poultry owners and producers, as well as veterinarians are under obligation to report any signs of the disease in their flocks.
- c. Biosecurity SA is working to minimise the likelihood of introducing pigeon paramyxovirus into SA pigeon flocks.
- d. Biosecurity SA met with industry members last night to discuss the current recommendations that exhibitions, shows and races (including tossing) of pigeons be cancelled until further notice in order to limit mixing of birds.
- e. Industry agreed that activities will remain limited and that the shows, races and other events where birds aggregate will continue to be discouraged
- f. Anyone wishing to race or show birds should contact their industry body for advice.
- g. Exercising birds from their own loft is now considered very low risk as the situation in Victoria appears stable.
- h. Agreement was also reached that interstate movements will be allowed under permit from non-infected states but that introductions from infected states i.e. Victoria will not be allowed except in exceptional circumstances.
- i. Information has been provided to veterinarians, industry and the public about the incident, to increase awareness and provide information about what to look out for, who to contact and measures that can be undertaken to limit the risk to their birds.
- j. BSA has investigated options for vaccinating pigeons. Information is available at [http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/animalhealth/animal\\_health/pigeon\\_paramyxovirus/vaccination\\_of\\_birds\\_against\\_avian\\_paramyxovirus\\_pmv-1](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/animalhealth/animal_health/pigeon_paramyxovirus/vaccination_of_birds_against_avian_paramyxovirus_pmv-1)

- k. **Movement restrictions and biosecurity measures remain the primary means for controlling this disease**
- l. To assist pigeon owners mitigate the risks, Biosecurity SA is promoting good biosecurity practices and movement limitation. A biosecurity factsheet for bird owners has been distributed and is available on the PIRSA website –see [Biosecurity for Bird Owners](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/animalhealth/animal_health/pigeon_paramyxovirus) ([http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/animalhealth/animal\\_health/pigeon\\_paramyxovirus](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/animalhealth/animal_health/pigeon_paramyxovirus))
- m. Suspected cases of paramyxovirus infection should be reported to Biosecurity SA by phoning **1800 675 888**.