



Field Management of Coccivac®-D: Minimizing “Blackhead”

There have been recent cases of “blackhead” that have been attributed to the administration of Coccivac-D vaccine. Most of these cases have experienced clinical coccidiosis usually attributable to *E. tenella*. In reviewing these cases one common feature is seen, treatment with amprolium at 10 days of age. This relationship appears based on the misconception that following hatchery spray vaccination with Coccivac-D vaccine there needs to be treatment with amprolium.

The problem with this scenario is that with uniform spray application, reactions are lessened so lesions are not observed at 10 days. Administration of amprolium at 10 days is therefore premature and can lead to elimination of sensitive coccidia and lack of immunity development in a percentage of birds. This can ultimately lead to a reinfection and clinical coccidiosis in the susceptible birds, which is most often seen as an *E. tenella* “break” at 25 – 28 days. At this point there appears to be enough damage to the ceca wall integrity, thus allowing a potential infection by the Histomonads, which results in “blackhead”.

Recommendations:

Schering-Plough Animal Health recommends that amprolium not be used at 10 days of age as a routine treatment following administration of Coccivac-D vaccine. Instead, birds should be monitored for lesions before considering amprolium use. If amprolium use is warranted it should not be given earlier than 15 days and at half level for only 2 days. The purpose of any treatment with amprolium is not to totally eliminate the coccidia, but to minimize the lesions in birds that are experiencing excessive reactions. This allows the birds to build lifetime immunity without a chance for re-infection.

Additionally, improved house and litter management is very important in minimizing coccidial reactions and eliminating the need for amprolium. This is relatively easy during the warmer months, but can pose problems during the cooler months. During the cooler months, minimal ventilation and longer half house brooding can encourage excessive coccidia cycling, resulting in more pronounced coccidia lesions.

[Innovative Solutions in Poultry Health]

