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Drug Company and regulatory body meetings

I have spoken today to vaccine supply companies and also the relevant government bodies involved with biosecurity risk assessment and the issuing of vaccine import permits. The time frames that they have suggested make racing a possibility this year (but only just). Over the next 10 days the pigeon Reo sequencing results should be completed. The experts in this area will then assess and compare these results with the available Reo chicken vaccines to see if there is likely to be any cross immunity. If this is the case then permit applications will be prepared. This is a big job and there is a cost involved that the pigeon fraternity will need to cover. The permit applications will then be submitted. If successful, a vaccine will then be able to be imported. I feel that fanciers should continue (at least for the time being) to manage their lofts as if racing was going to proceed. There are however a number of significant hurdles to cross. The most significant of these is that there may be little or no cross immunity. In this case, a vaccine will need to be made here and, after speaking to several vaccine manufacturing companies, this may take up to 18 months. I must say that the biosecurity and APVMA (Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicine) representatives as well as the pharmaceutical people that I have spoken to today have all been most informative and helpful. Australian fanciers can be assured that these people are doing what they can to assist us

Other issues today

The University of Melbourne is working on a Reo virus PCR diagnostic test. This test checks for Reo DNA in samples such as droppings. This will make it quicker, easier and cheaper to diagnose suspect Reo birds.

There has been reference on the internet to a toxic bacteria bowel /liver syndrome. DAFWA (Dept of Agriculture and Forestry WA) has advised that histopathology done on birds that had died of the disease did not show erosive inflammation of the bowel wall or virus present there. Also the bacteria in the bowel, when cultured, were all identified as just normal bacteria. The proposed condition is not supported by the results.

I have had contact with avian vets in South Africa, USA and western Europe . All have advised that strains of Reo virus occur in pigeons there but that these are regarded as an incidental finding and are not thought to be associated with disease. To date, the strain of Reo virus causing disease in Australia seems to be an exclusively Australian problem.

Apparently, clusters of, as yet unconfirmed, cases have occurred in lofts around Kyabram and ([Victor Harbour](#)) Port Augusta. In these lofts, the birds have been confined. This raises the possibility that ,as with PMV, Reo can be carried asymptotically by non-target bird species, i.e. that other species of bird can carry and transmit this strain of Reo virus to pigeons without becoming unwell themselves.

It is still not known whether this strain of Reo virus is capable of infecting chickens

