



Inclusion Body Hepatitis

Inclusion Body Hepatitis (IBH) is a disease of young chickens that targets the liver and can cause a sudden increase in mortality. IBH is caused by a virus and therefore does not respond to antibiotic treatment. The mortality pattern generally occurs over a 9 day period with mortality increasing for approximately 3 days, leveling off for approximately 3 days and then decreasing to normal levels over approximately 3 days. Total mortality can be as high as 30% but is usually significantly lower. The flock can be supported with multivitamins/electrolytes in the water.

IBH can be transmitted both vertically (from a virus-shedding breeder flock) and horizontally (from a contaminated barn, person, equipment, pest, etc). Just because the virus is present in the chicks or in the barn does not necessarily mean that disease will occur. Minimizing stressors and keeping the immune system & environment healthy will lower the chances of experiencing mortality due to IBH.

To minimize stressors, think about the acronym T-FLAWSS (temperature, feed, litter, light, air, water, space, sanitation). These management factors must be fine-tuned. This is outlined on the Platinum Brooding checklist.

Feed disruptions, overheating, chilling (cold overnight temperatures can play a role this time of year), drafts, and poor air quality are examples of stressors that can trigger IBH or increase losses due to IBH.

Immunosuppression due to diseases such as Infectious Bursal Disease (IBD) can also significantly increase the likelihood of experiencing flock mortality due to IBH so a suitable vaccination program and excellent biosecurity are important.

Cleaning and disinfection of the barn is essential. Some key points:

- Make sure all organic material is removed from the barn (feces and dirt cannot be disinfected). Remember to clean the fan blades, heaters, louvers, lighting fixtures, walls, other equipment, etc. Remember to clean mortality buckets, service areas/anterooms. Ensure all loose, organic material has been removed.
- Clean with a detergent
- Make sure the barn is dry before using a disinfectant. Thermo-fogging is recommended.
- Ensure adequate on-farm insect and rodent control.

Additional information is available at www.canadianpoultry.ca