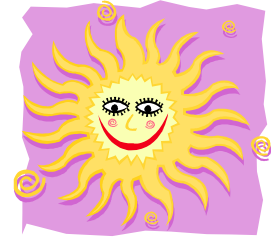




Summer 2006



Newsletter

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What's In This Newsletter?

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1-3 Murray's Message | 3-4 Hay Making | 4 - 25 th Anniversary Celebration |
| 3 - New Staff Introduction | 4 - Customer appreciation day orders | 5 – Summer Calendar Specials |
| 3-4 For Sale/Lost & Found | 4 – Greenwood Wellness update | 6 – Customer Appreciation Day |

Murray's Message

This month I would like to talk more about the small insert we had in the last newsletter about the problems with the H5N1 strain of bird flu, which has sent countries all around the world into panic mode in terms of getting more medications in place such as Tamiflu to battle this so called serious problem.

Just by chance I recently came across a paper published in GRAIN publications. GRAIN is an international, non-government organization that promotes sustainable management. You can view this website at: www.grain.org/go/birdflu. Many of the people believe that the bird flu is essentially a problem of wild birds. However, this paper would suggest that backyard or free-range poultry aren't fueling the current wave of bird flu outbreaks that are prevalent in the Asian Pacific rim. They really maintain that the H5N1 strain of bird flu is essentially a problem of industrial poultry practices. The epicenter, of course, is the factory farms of China and South East Asia and somewhat in the Middle East. While wild birds can carry the disease for a short distance the

main vector is, of course, the highly self-regulated transnational, vertically integrated poultry industry, which sends products and waste off its farms around the world through a multitude of channels. However, many small poultry farmers and poultry biodiversity in local foods security groups that they sustain are suffering badly from the fall out. To make matters worse government and international agencies make falsely mistaken assumptions how the disease spreads. This amplifies the wild bird problem and forces birds indoors even more and further industrializes this poultry sector. This could mean the end of the small-scale poultry farming that provides food and livelihoods to hundreds of millions of families around the world. This report that they have written (Fowl Play: The poultry industry's central role in the bird flu crisis) presents a fresh perspective on the bird flu story that challenges current assumptions and puts the focus where it should be on the transnational vertically integrated poultry industry.

Picture if you will, men in white rubber suits and gas masks chasing down chickens in rural villages, birds being caught, put into bags and gassed; this is the

new reality. Of course, as we know the bird flu is really nothing new. It coexisted peacefully with wild birds, small-scale poultry farming and live markets for centuries. But the wave of highly pathogenic strains of bird flu that have decimated the poultry industry and killed people across the planet over the past 10 years is unprecedented as is today's transnational poultry industry.

We know that production in countries such as Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam the production has jumped 8 fold in just 30 years from approximately 300,000 metric tonnes of chicken meat in 1971 to 2,440,000 metric tonnes in 2001. China's production of chicken tripled during the 90's to over 9 million metric tones per year. Practically all of this new poultry production has happened on factory farms concentrated just outside of major cities and integrated into transnational production systems.

This, of course, has fueled the fire even more for many of the big poultry corporations. As Margaret Say, the South East Asian director for US Poultry and Egg Export Council says, "We cannot control migratory birds, but we can surely work hard to close down as many

backyard farms as possible". One thing that we need to realize is some of the outrageous research that is currently happening. For example, in the UK researchers are pursuing transgenic bird flu resistant chickens "Once we have regulatory approval we believe it will only take between 4 and 5 years to breed enough chickens to replace the entire world population" said Lawrence Tiley, Professor of Molecular Virology at Cambridge University. We know for a fact that the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) vaunted the benefits of backyard poultry for the rural poor and bio-diversity and ran programs encouraging it. Just what we need from the UK is more genetically modified processes getting into our food system. Actually, despite all of the fuss that is made that wild birds and outside poultry are creating this problem, there is still little evidence that migratory birds are carrying and transmitting highly pathogenic H5N1. After testing hundreds of thousands of wild birds with the disease, scientists have only rarely identified live birds carrying bird flu in a highly pathogenic form.

What is very interesting is the organization called "Bird Life" and a Dr. Richard Thomas from Bird Life has said, "No species migrates from Qinghai China west to Eastern Europe." When plotted, the pattern of outbreaks follows major roads and rail routes not flyways, and the absence of outbreak in Africa, South East Asia and Australia is also of note. This past Autumn 2005 is hard to explain if wild birds are the primary carriers. If migratory birds are transmitting the disease why has bird flu not hit the Philipppians or Burma and why has it been confined to a few commercial operations in Laos, when bird flu infected countries surround all three countries? What is interesting is that a country such as Laos has not suffered wide spread bird flu outbreaks like its neighbors. However, the fact is that there is almost no contact between its small-scale poultry farms - which produce nearly all of

the domestic poultry supply and its commercial operations. Many of these farmers that live in small rural villages would average around 350 chickens, ducks, turkeys and quail being raised in small flocks interspersed among village homes totaling about 70 families. The few commercial operations (less than 100 in total, with 89 of these located near Vientiane) in the country, supply nearby metropolitan areas. In other words Laos is rife with free-ranging chickens mixed with ducks, quail, turkeys and wild birds. These are predominantly native chickens that account for over 90% of Laos's total poultry production. If free-range farming and migratory birds were responsible for spreading the bird flu, one would expect to find the disease raging across the country. This hasn't happened; in fact the country's backyard farms have barely been touched.

This GRAIN paper claims that the international poultry trade is essentially out of control and they do give some numbers traded in eastern European countries recently hit by bird flu outbreaks. In the Ukraine alone nearly 12 million live chickens were imported in 2004. The real numbers are almost certainly higher given the well-known underground poultry trade moving through the region. In Turkey, The Hastuvic Company operates Europe's 2nd largest hatchery with a capacity to produce 100 million hatching eggs per year a substantial portion of which is exported to Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Hatching eggs are also well known to spread bird flu. [Source: UN FAO avian influenza disease committee based in Rome].

So as we can see despite the clear risk, there is hardly any regulation for monitoring the poultry and the egg trade in the regions just mentioned. The international Poultry trade shows the same pattern and of course, this is all being blamed on small villagers and outdoor flocks. But once villagers in Turkey began to give their side of the story it emerged

that a large factory farm nearby regularly sends trucks to town to sell off old birds at discounted prices. One such truck was sent a couple weeks before the outbreak was discovered. The FAO even acknowledged that the poultry trade spread H5N1 within Turkey and singled out the common practice of commercial poultry farms sending out huge truckloads of low value birds to poor farmers.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says that the bird flu can survive in bird feces for up to 35 days and that feed is a possible medium for the spread of bird flu between farms. Russian authorities pointed to feed as one of the main suspected sources of an H5N1 outbreak at a large-scale factory farm in Kurgan province where 460,000 birds had to be killed. Yet globally nothing is being done to tighten the regulations or monitor the feed industry, instead it seems that industry tends to call the shots. In Thailand and Indonesia for example, the governments all knew about the outbreaks of bird flu long before the public pressure finally forced the governments to admit to the outbreaks by January 2005. Industry of course used that time to clean out its inventory and look after its profits. Poultry workers at the Centaco poultry plant near Bangkok Thailand told researchers that in the months leading up to the government's official acknowledgment of the outbreak they were asked to work much more overtime than usual.

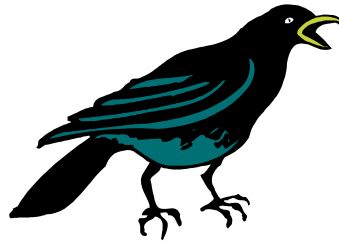
Of course the H5N1 virus is not nearly new. It was first identified and noticed when it took its first human victim in Hong Kong in 1997, nine years ago. A few years later in 2003 similar deaths were reported in Vietnam and then Thailand. Later the following year, it killed people further afield in Indonesia, China and Cambodia. Until mid 2005 it was generally seen as an Asian problem. And of course then the World Health Organization made the huge political decision to tell the world that we are on a verge of a global

human pandemic that could kill 150 million people. As intended, the effect was dramatic. Of course the WHO pronouncement triggered for the first time concern around the world. In no time the spotlight fell on the Swiss drug giant Roche. Roche, of course, is the exclusive licensee to produce Tamiflu. It was developed and patented by Gilead Sciences, a U.S. drug farm that gave Roche the exclusive right to manufacture it. It is however, not at all certain that Tamiflu would help should the human pandemic break out. However, this has not stopped Roche and Gilead from making big money or for Tamiflu to be a big money spinner for the owners of the drug.

In the U.S. the drug industry is ultimately connected with the highest levels of government. So we can see that in December of 2005 the Bush government announced a set of domestic measures to fight the possible pandemic, which included an envelope of \$1.4 billion USD to go shopping for Tamiflu. Of course, beyond the inevitable conspiracy theories, the bigger controversy came from Roche's handling of the licensing issue. The pressure to allow poor countries to produce or buy the generic form of this drug has been great. Some 150 generic manufacturers and governments have requested a sublicense. Roche, caught between a rock, a poor public relations rating, a hard place, and its own shareholders, held back despite pressure that it received. Finally Roche decided to selectively soften up and grant a few limited sublicenses. So we can see one more time that a golden rule applies: he who has the gold makes the rule. I've made several references to the GRAIN paper. For more details see the website www.grain.org/go/birdflu.

The final statement is, if bird flu is as serious as the World Health Organization says it is, and if millions of people could potentially die from the H5N1 pandemic, then how is it that this industry continues to operate with so much oversight and so much impunity

and so much support from governments. What people really need is adequate and enforced protection from the Transnational Poultry industry. This will take a strong and concerted pressure from civil society to cut through the hype and the hysteria. It means we need to stand up for small-scale farmers and backyard poultry and to start building a food system that places people before profit.



Bio-Ag welcomes a new staff member this spring. We'd like to introduce you to our new Controller:

William is from New Liskeard originally and has just graduated from a 4-year Honours Business Degree at WLU. He is also planning to pursue his Certified Management Accountant designation beginning in the fall; that's a 2-year process while he acquires experience. Will has worked in sales & service, tracking & shipping inventory, body shop work and has competed across North America showing Quarter horses- I think he may become our horse expert!!



We welcome William to the Bio-Ag team and hope that you will introduce yourself the next time that you are in.

For Sale
 Certified Organic Roasted Soybeans in small or larger quantities
 Contact: Marlon Martin
 519-887-9043

Found
 A pair of glasses were left behind after our January Seminar. If these might be yours, please contact our office to retrieve them.

Hay Making

Objective: - Reduce the moisture content of the forage sufficiently to store without spoilage (caramelization and molding) and loss of nutrients.

Good quality hay can be achieved by minimizing the field and storage losses.

Even after cutting, forages continue to respire by utilizing the sugar and if the drying condition is faster the losses can be minimized.

If the hay was not dried properly and stored too wet, mold growth can occur. There will be excessive heating due to undesirable mold and bacterial activity. This will reduce the nutritive value of the crop.

If you allow the hay to dry too long before baling, the nutrients will be lost due to leaf loss.

Hay additives can help in reducing the dry matter losses associated with haymaking.

Bio-Ag clients have used the custom mix of our probiotic **Bio-Lac and Kelp meal** with success

in minimizing the losses during haymaking. Bio-Lac may help the growth of a large number of lactic acid producing bacteria, which could out-grow the undesirable bacteria. Kelp may take and replace some of the additional moisture and perhaps reduce mold growth. It also may help the curing process.

Possible Results:
Retains the green colour and aroma.
Reduces heating and retains more nutrients.
Reduces the risk of mold growth and potential ill health effects in livestock.

**CUSTOMER
APPRECIATION DAY
ORDERS**

Please note the following schedule for placing orders to be picked up when you come to our customer appreciation day – July 12, 2006

Custom Mix Orders- please place your order by July 5th

Floor Stock & Other Items- Please place your order by July 7th

This will enable our warehouse staff to have your order picked and ready for you to pickup. *Thank you!*



Greenwood Wellness Clinic believes in a holistic approach to health. Our focus is on prevention and treatment of disease using natural methods. We treat people of all ages and conditions with personalized care.

A holistic approach to health.

Intelligent 21st Century Nutrition has changed the name of the clinic to **Greenwood Wellness Clinic, Inc.** We are still at the same location below the Bio-Ag office, so our address and telephone number will remain the same.

The office is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. The clinic offers Naturopathic care with **Dr. Lindsay Bast, N.D.** (Wednesday and Friday with possible evening appointments available) and **Dr. John Pronk, N.D.** (Monday and Thursday). Chiropractic care is also available with **Dr. Sheldon Gilchrist, D.C.** on the second and last Tuesday of each month. We encourage you to call ahead to schedule an appointment with one of the practitioners.

The clinic continues to offer Biological Terrain Assessment, Live Blood Analysis, and Bioelectric Impedance Analysis with either of our Naturopathic doctors and Active Release therapy and chiropractic adjustments with our Chiropractic doctor. Please visit our new website www.greenwoodclinic.ca for more information.

Drop by the office to say hello or we can be reached by telephone or e-mail.

Telephone (519) 656-2358
Fax (519) 656-2534
E-mail: info@greenwoodclinic.ca

For Sale



Preservative Hay Applicator
Pre-assembled 100L Preservative Hay Applicator comes with a Flojet Model 2100 Industrial Series Bypass Pump, six Nozzle Tips, Calibration 2L Bottle, and Operation & Service Instructions.

\$650.00

Contact Bio-Ag Consultants
1-800-363-5278

*Bio-Ag Celebrates
25th Anniversary
2007*

Mark your calendar for our first celebration event!
Bio-Ag Seminar
January 24, 2007

1 day only
featuring
CBC's Wendy Mesley
&
other keynote speakers

Watch for further details.

**Enjoy Your
Summer**