



Gross lesions of the lungs

Aspergillosis (Fungal Pneumonia)

Cause

The disease is caused by a fungus, *Aspergillus fumigatus*.

Transmission

Transmission is by inhalation of fungus spores from contaminated litter (e.g. wood shavings) or contaminated feed. Hatcheries may also contribute to infection of chicks.

Species affected

Young chicks are very susceptible, older chickens are more resistant to infection. Turkey poults, pheasant chicks, quail chicks, ducklings, and goslings may also become infected.

Clinical signs

Infected chicks are depressed and thirsty. Gasping and rapid breathing ("pump handle breathing") can be observed. Mortality is variable, from 5 to 50 %. Gross lesions involve the lungs and airsacs primarily. Yellowwhite pinpoint lesions can be found. Sometimes all body cavities are filled with small yellow-green granular fungus growth.

Diagnosis

The presence of *Aspergillus fumigatus* can be identified microscopically or sometimes even with the naked eye in the air passages of the lungs, in the airsacs or in lesions of the abdominal cavity.

Treatment and control

There is no treatment for aspergillosis. Affected chicks should be removed and destroyed. Strict hygiene in breeder and hatchery management is necessary. Choice of litter material is important so that no spore-bearing wood shaving! are used.