Infectious Anaemia

Cause
Infectious anaemia is caused by a very resistant small virus known as CAV (Chicken Anaemia Virus).

Transmission
The major mode of transmission of infectious anemia is vertical transmission from infected breeder hens. Horizontal transmission from bird to bird or by infected equipment, clothing, etc. is also possible.

Clinical signs and lesions
CAV causes a syndrome in young chicks up to approximately 3 weeks of age. Adult birds may get infected but will not develop clinical signs. The disease is characterized by increased mortality and anaemia associated with atrophy of the haematopoietic tissues in the bone marrow. Subcutaneous and intramuscular haemorrhages can be found accompanied with atrophy of the lymphoid system. Affected birds may show focal skin lesions (also known as blue wing disease). Mortality rates vary from 20 % to 70 %. Affected flocks will show poor growth reflected in economic losses.

Diagnosis
The diagnosis can be based on the clinical signs and pathological findings in affected birds. Blood serum testing for specific CAV antibodies can be carried out (IFT, VN, ELISA). Virus isolation is also possible but it is time-consuming and expensive.

Treatment and control
No treatment is available for infectious anaemia. Maternally derived antibodies can offer protection. The induction of high maternal immunity in the progency by vaccinating breeders is the best approach to succesful CAV control.