**Coccidiosis in Backyard Chickens**

**Chickens**

Coccidiosis is one of the most common debilitating diseases that effects backyard chickens. It is mainly seen in younger juvenile birds but can be seen in older birds that have poor immune systems with little or no resistance.

**What is coccidiosis?**

Coccidiosis is an intestinal parasitic disease caused by coccidian protozoa that attack the birds gut wall, causing ulceration & bleeding. Therefore the infected birds become anaemic and unable to absorb nutrients.

**How chickens contract coccidiosis.**

Coccidiosis needs moist, warm and humid conditions to survive making the Queensland environment an ideal breeding ground. Brooder boxes are also a perfect environment for coccidiosis to thrive. Most chickens/chicks contract coccidiosis from faecal matter and contaminated drinking water. Other reasons chickens may also contract coccidiosis are unclean environment, overcrowding, poor hygiene, poor nutrition, stress and buying infected birds.

**Symptoms of Coccidiosis.**

Loss of appetite, pale comb & wattles, weight loss, droopy/down chickens, blood in stool, droppings stuck to bottoms (chicks), huddling together, diarrhoea and eventually death

**Prevention & treatment of coccidiosis**

Nutrition and hygiene are paramount. Chicks should be fed a high quality medicated chick starter ration or pullet grower depending on the age. Older birds should be fed a high quality laying ration such a Showbird MP. Regularly clean cages ensuring there is not a build-up of faecal matter or damp bedding. Do not overcrowd birds and ensure all new stock are quarantined prior to introduction into your existing flock. Try adding products like Anitone, apple cider vinegar and/or livamol to your chicken’s diet to help boost their immune system. Ensure that you maintain a regular worming program throughout the year. Suitable treatments are available to be added to drinking water such as Amprolium and Keystat. Poly Aid plus may help to give sick chicks/chickens a pick me up.

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