

Stalosan F for pigeons.

Stalosan F is one of the best-kept secrets from the pigeon fancier. I first started working with it in the intensive poultry world and quickly realised it also had an application for my pigeons. It is a unique powder disinfectant that is ideal for use as a loft powder being able to dry up damp patches, reduce smells and kill infectious organisms. Laboratory studies have shown that it will kill paramyxovirus, E.coli, salmonella, coccidia and worm eggs.

In this article I would like to review the background to disease problems and detail the trial work that has been completed with Stalosan F.

The Problem - sudden rapid build ups of infection

Young birds and old birds are more susceptible to infections. The mixed age groups that is the normal way for keeping the racing pigeon ensures that infection is present at low and inapparent levels throughout the year.

However, at specific times of the year this may change, most notably in the spring. The dampness, warmer days and the stress of breeding and rearing youngsters can be associated with a rapid build up of infection that results in disease.

The most familiar will be the respiratory (the "snots"), intestinal (coccidiosis) and mortality ("young bird sickness") problems that beset the youngster.

Survival of infection

The ability of infectious organisms to survive and develop in the environment varies with the particular organism.

The majority (viruses, bacteria, mycoplasma and Chlamydia) merely survive in droppings and respiratory exudates until they enter another susceptible pigeon.

Coccidial oocysts and worm eggs must undergo further development before they are able to successfully infect another bird.

The huge numbers of infectious organisms that may be present in one dropping - in excess of 20,000 coccidial oocysts to 100's of millions of bacteria and viruses, is the reason for their success.

Spread of infection from bird to bird

Infection is spread from bird to bird by many routes.

- 1.Through the air - mycoplasma
- 2.Through the water - E.coli
- 3.Through the droppings - coccidia, worms.
- 4.Through crop feeding - canker
- 5.Through fighting - pigeon pox
- 6.Through handling

If you can find a way to reduce that cross-infection then you have a good chance of preventing disease problems. Stalosan's safety factor allows the fancier to achieve that control.

Why does disease occur

Disease is the outward sign associated with uncontrolled infection. Your birds may become infected and affected without showing signs of disease. There are many factors involved that determine whether or not disease occurs. Some of these are listed below:

- 1.How infectious is the organism i.e. does it take one or many thousands of organisms to initiate disease.
- 2.The level of environmental contamination.
- 3.The humidity and temperature in the loft.
- 4.The number of birds in each section.

The impact of disease

Disease can have varying effects from the annoying to the disastrous. Breeding performance can suffer, viability and growth of the young can be affected, feed and water intake is often reduced and performance, almost inevitably, will suffer. It goes without saying that there is also a cost implication to disease either in the form of replacement costs, treatment costs or additional rearing costs.

How Stalosan F works

Stalosan works as a disinfectant, killing many types of virus including paramyxoviruses, bacteria such as E.coli and Salmonella spp., mycoplasmas, coccidia and worm eggs. It also acts as a powerful drying agent and

works to reduce the levels of ammonia and sulphur gases in the loft. All the key areas in loft management. We have trialled the product in our own lofts for nearly a year (my partner Fred will not be without it now). Over this period I have regularly tested the dropping and the loft area for bacterial levels , coccidial oocysts and carried out regular worm egg counts. There is no doubt that regular use of Stalosan has maintained uniformly low levels (less than 1000 oocysts/g faeces and no worm eggs). As a result we have had fewer problems and had to spend less on medication. Our lofts are drier and smell much better and my colleague Fred is on the blower if we look like running out.

The benefits of using Stalosan F

1. Dries up damp patches on the floor from watery droppings and spilt water
2. Leaves a covering of powder over all the surfaces that the pigeons walk and perch on.
3. Helps keep the atmosphere smelling fresher.
4. Persists for several days to a week after it has been used regularly.
5. Keeps the pigeons feet drier and cleaner.
6. Reduces the challenge from infectious organisms particularly coccidia and worms.
7. Reduces the reliance on medication to control coccidial and worm infections (our birds have not been treated for over a year) .
8. Can be used with the birds in the loft.
9. No adverse affects on the birds have been noticed in our loft after regular weekly usage for over a year.
10. No respiratory signs seen as a result of sprinkling Stalosan F in the loft.
11. No adverse affects on the plumage.

The birds can still be fed on the floor without problems.

How to use Stalosan F

Measure the length and breadth of each loft section.

Use Stalosan F at a rate of 50 grammes (or one and three quarter ounces) per square metre (or ten and three quarter square feet) of floor space.

Apply by sprinkling the appropriate amount over the floor and perching area of each section. An applicator is supplied with each bag.

Start up - Give two applications of Stalosan F. Routine - Stalosan F should be applied once or twice a week to the floor and perching areas.

You will see that Stalosan F is a fine pink powder that sticks to the surfaces to which it is applied. Over time it will give a fine pink covering to the surface. The beating of the pigeon's wings will blow some of the powder to the walls and corners. This can simply be swept back over the floor as and when necessary.

Adjust the application to suit your particular circumstances, do not be afraid to double the application if you have particular problems. The cost of applying Stalosan F, for disease prevention, is very modest when compared to the cost of disease and the cost of disease treatment. In our loft we reckoned it cost us just over 0.5p per bird per week.

Stalosan F has no chemicals in it, it is quite safe for you and the pigeons and extensive testing has shown that it has no negative effects on the environment. I recommend that all fanciers consider the benefits that disease prevention can bring and take a look at Stalosan F.

David Parsons.
MRCVS Poultry Health Centre.
Wincanton.
www.poultryhealthcentre.com