Vaccinations, immune system, young bird sickness, young bird racing

We have again experienced a year in which many fanciers, who handle vaccinations carelessly, have fallen flat on their faces. Salmonella and paramyxovirus illness in breeding pigeons, youngsters and racing pigeons appear again and again. If all fanciers, whose pigeons become ill with Salmonella and paramyxovirus, were to openly talk about this, the warning rates would be abundant here. However, as a general rule a cloak of silence is unfortunately placed over these incidents, which is why many fanciers stumble over the paramyxovirus and Salmonella obstacle again and again, year after year.

Vaccination demonstrably stimulates the immune system in the process. These vaccinations will be indispensable in the future for many fanciers in connection with young bird sickness. I don't only mean the paramyxovirus vaccination with this but rather a systematic vaccination of pigeons with coli vaccine, paramyxovirus or paramyxovirus/herpes vaccine and in the end pox and Salmonella vaccine. Of course there are fanciers in whose population young bird sickness still appears even after these vaccinations, however, those fanciers who are already performing these vaccinations will confirm that if it does occur, then young bird sickness no longer breaks out as severely as earlier. It becomes manageable and the youngsters recover and are back in full health much faster or in other words, they are much better prepared for the next disaster due to the coli vaccination and also due to other vaccinations. I have been working with the coli vaccine for quite some time and can therefore write from my own experience.

The earlier pairing of breeding pigeons can also be a precaution against young bird sickness. It is a fact that the youngsters bred in December/January are at the beginning of the young bird programme in the UK are already six, seven and eight months old. I always label these youngsters as ‚pseudo-yearlings". They are not properly matured yet (rather pseudo-yearlings) however, due to their age they are in the growth phase in which they develop the adult pigeon immune system.

A youngster, which comes into the world, has an immune system that is mainly controlled by the immune organ Bursa Fabrici. However, this immune organ is precisely the main point open to attack by the circo virus in racing pigeons. It would therefore be more correct if we were not to speak of the „adeno virus" in the case young bird sickness, but rather of the „circo virus". Almost every pigeon fancier (approx. 90%) has circo virus in their loft population. This is only a logical consequence of the selling, buying and exchanging of racing pigeons in the last twenty years.

If the immune organ Bursa Fabrici is affected by the circo virus it will no longer be able to fulfil it main task of warding off diseases, bacteria and germs. The youngster is particularly vulnerable, unprotected, without immunity and will now acquire that which we recognize as young bird sickness: coli germs, trichomonads, hexamita, fungi etc.!