

# HBD's AVIAN E x a m i n e r



Number 17

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## ERRATA



## Pigeon Medicine

Dr. Jan Hooimeijer wanted to clarify some points in his comments on pigeon medicine in Avian Examiner #16:

*Candida* sp. and *E. coli* are not primary pathogens in racing pigeons. If these organisms have been diagnosed in the pigeon population, the owner has ignored the underlying issue that is really causing the problem, which is often adenovirus, herpesvirus or hexamitiasis. The clinical signs are often similar to those associated with *E. coli*. *Candida* should not be considered a contagious disease. It is very rare for an individual racing pigeon to suffer from a contagious disease.

## Educate for Diet Conversion

Tanya Harrison Coffinberry  
Vice-president, HBD International

We are stunned when we occasionally hear that a veterinarian has told his clients to convert their birds to a formulated diet "cold turkey." We at HBD think this is extremely dangerous and do not recommend such a practice.

The birds that are most at risk are small species (budgies, cockatiels, lovebirds) that have been maintained on seeds their entire life. Those birds would truly rather starve than try any new food. But we are also amazed that some people would actually let their birds go a week or more with the bird not touching the new food in their bowl — the bird



doesn't recognize it as food, refuses to eat it, and eventually dies. The "new food" gets blamed.

The veterinarian who is selling a formulated diet should be responsible for the bird's conversion — either by educating the client fully or in providing a diet conversion service in the clinic.

## As I See It

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The simplest way for HBD veterinarians to educate their bird clients is to just hand them "The Organic Difference" brochure, and point to the Conversion Tips listed in the back. It's OK with us here at the HBD office if you tell your client, "If you have any problems, give the company a call."

**See Page 6 for Conversion Tips**



## Potential Toxicity of Grape Pedialyte®

Dennis Hawkins  
Loxahatchee, Florida

Two severely dehydrated chickens were each given 35 cc of grape-flavored Pedialyte® by mouth, and both died within 24 hours. Apparently grape-flavored Pedialyte® has been suspected in cockatiel deaths as well, although the unflavored Pedialyte® appears to be harmless.

The primary difference between the two is the addition to the grape flavor of two controversial artificial sweeteners — aspartame and acesulfame potassium. Aspartame breaks down into formaldehyde, phenylalanine, and aspartic acid. Formaldehyde is known to further break down into formic acid (wasp sting poison). Acesulfame potassium has also been linked to negative side effects, but is generally believed to be much safer than aspartame. These substances appear to be too toxic for birds.

FDA's archives show over 10,000 complaints filed against aspartame. Furthermore, the safety tests were primarily conducted using small lab mammals such as rats, mice and occasionally primates. Very little, if any, testing of this product has

# Practice TIPS

been done with birds. However, there is enough circumstantial evidence to warrant the use of the unflavored Pedialyte® instead of the flavored Pedialyte® in cases of avian dehydration.



## More on Glyburide for Cockatiel PU/PD

Gwen Flinchum, DVM  
Lake Worth, Florida

In Avian Examiner #15, Dr. Tim Harris suggested using glyburide at a dose of one 5 mg tab per gallon of drinking water for cockatiel PU/PD. I have found that some cockatiels need a larger dose (up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  tab per quart). If a bird becomes hypoglycemic, I administer dexamethasone, lactated Ringer's solution with hyaluronidase

and 50% dextrose q2-4h until they respond.

Some glucose-positive females with PU/PD are candidates for impending egg-related peritonitis. We use HCG and dexamethasone, especially if the bird has a history of egg-laying that ceased more than 3 months prior. One female that seems well controlled with glyburide alone had been a persistent layer until the male was moved to a new location out of her hearing range.



## It's a Zinc Abundant World

(from 1999 HBD Chat, New Orleans)  
Fern Van Sant, DVM  
Los Gatos, California

We have continued our investigation into environmental items that if

The best we can do is to educate our clients about eliminating non-food items from the environment.

chewed, especially by African greys or umbrella or Moluccan cockatoos, may increase their blood zinc levels (and possibly lead to feather picking). In addition to the more well known galvanized wire cages and galvanized toy links, additional suspected items that have been tested and found to have high zinc content are:

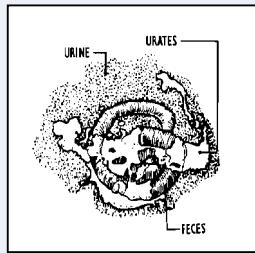
- cage "chrome" that is actually polished galvanized metal
- some leg bands that were believed to be stainless steel.
- some adhesives such as duck tape, masking tape or even those found in paper towel rolls
- some formulated diets that contain a lot of bright, artificially colored pieces
- Cheerios® and other supposedly "total" nutritionally sound breakfast cereals.
- Kong® toys (the zinc here may not be absorbed but may serve as a local irritant)

The best we can do is to try to educate our clients about eliminating non-food items from the environment, and providing "safe" chew toys such as wood and rough

## Check out the Droppings

Tanya Harrison Coffinberry  
Vice-president, HBD International

If your client is doing the diet conversion at home, it is well worth your time to teach them to evaluate their bird's stool. If the bird is eating *something*, a normal-looking dropping will be produced. If the bird is not eating, the feces portion will be small and dark green (almost black) in color. As you know, signs of a potential problem will show up in the droppings way before the bird shows any clinical signs of fluffing up, sitting on the bottom of the cage or lethargy. And "looking skinny" is way too late. I tell people to change the cage liner paper every couple of hours to monitor the droppings.



## Itraconazole Use in Amazons, Pigeons and Hawks

S.E. Orosz, PhD, DVM, Dipl ABVP-Avian, Dipl ECAMS and D.L. Frazier  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
(from 1999 EAAV Conference, Pisa, Italy)

Itraconazole was dissolved in 0.1 N HCl (50 mg/ml) and then diluted with orange juice (1:10) to a concentration of 5 mg/ml. Work in our laboratory shows that the concentrations of itraconazole and hydroxyitra-

conazole in the plasma and tissues were similar in pigeons and red-tailed hawks. Amazon parrots, on the other hand, had much greater plasma concentrations compared to either pigeons or hawks.

These results are surprising because it was predicted that the lower stomach pH of carnivorous hawks would favor drug absorption and result in greater plasma and tissue concentrations compared to either the pigeons or the Amazon parrots. These results suggest that the clinical use of itraconazole must be closely monitored for signs of toxicity as well as tailored for the type of bird treated to determine its clinical efficacy.

.....  
**All cases as severe as  
this have always  
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chance of recovery.**  
.....

hemp. There is a huge behavioral component to this disorder: a lot of the chewers are not quite happy, well adjusted birds.

## Use of Magnetic Therapy with Birds

Greg J. Harrison, DVM  
Dipl ABVP-Avian, Dipl ECAMS

I have not had extensive experience with magnetic therapy in birds, but a few cases have responded to the use of a magnetized Gem Stem® necklace.

A quaker was presented in a dehydrated, convulsive and comatose state. All cases as severe as this have always died in my hands in the past, and we gave this bird zero chance of recovery. The owner did not want any heroics, but his young daughter insisted on trying *something*. So we gave the bird SC fluids, lactulose, milk thistle, phenobarbital elixir and the magnetic "collar." I thought

this was end-stage liver and kidney disease because the bird had had malnutrition diagnosed in the past and the diet had not been changed. But the bird did respond, even overnight, and four days later, the phenobarbital was stopped and bird began vocalizing and became ambulatory.

Another bird was a trauma case with CNS disturbance. It had received traditional trauma therapy, but by the third day it was not walking correctly (it was using its beak for stability), and it staggered and fell. So we added the collar, and the bird showed improvement in ambulation immediately.

## In the Words of John Stoodley

The inspiration for the HBD formulas originally came from John Stoodley of England, considered by many to be the father of modern aviculture, incubation and hand-rearing of parrots.

Although he was accustomed to daily preparing elaborate fresh food mixtures for his parrot collection, in the *1998 Chester Aviculture Proceedings* he wrote: "This breeding season we put 23 pairs of South American parrots on Harrison's Bird Diets. The cubed diet surely is a time saver and, of course, there is no spoiling if it is kept dry ... We are also giving Fine Grind to parents feeding young along with some fruit and vegetables. The young so reared are tremendous, having good bodies and bone. It has been an interesting time for us evaluating our friend's brand. We have been pleased with our efforts and suggest the progressive-minded give it a trial. This year's youngsters are taking it in their stride, not having known anything else. I have confidence in this well-researched product knowing the nutrition has been professionally balanced and I feel it's time to use organically produced ingredients. We have for some time followed this line, as only the best is good enough for our psittacines."

On October 21, 1999 John Stoodley died at his home, The Broad Halfpenny Down Conservation Sanctuary.



## Rachel Carson Lives On

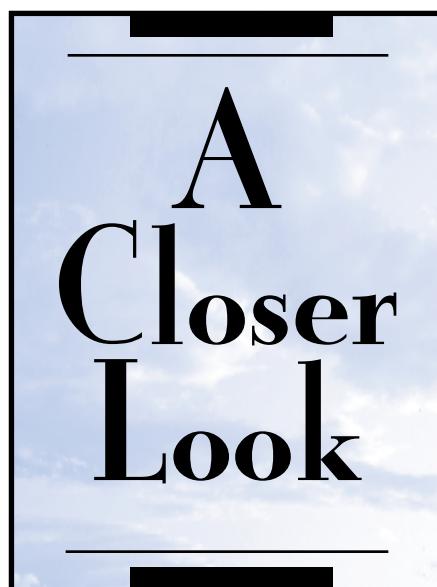
**A**s a teenager on my grandfather's farm, it was my job to stand at the edge of a corn field with a red flag to help identify the next row for the crop duster plane to spray. Everyone was oblivious to the potential dangers of those toxins that did such a good job of eliminating corn borers.

Then in 1962, Rachel Carson published "Silent Spring," the famous wake-up call to environmentalists about the effects of pesticides, particularly on birds. It was this report on the dangers of DDT as it affected the thinning of egg shells and the potential demise of the Bald Eagle that prompted the US government to place a ban on DDT in the early '70s and begin the endangered species programs.

Rachel Carson is no longer alive. But had "Silent Spring" alone done its job, there would be no need for a Rachel Carson Council (RCC) today. Yet at the RCC's wildlife conference last September, it was clear that American companies continue to produce banned chemicals in the US and ship them to the rest of the unsuspecting world. We actually get much of this recycled back to us in the form of cheap flowers, coffee, nuts, fruits, vegetables and meats that we so readily import.

Headed by Diana Post, VMD, former FDA adverse drug investigator, the Rachel Carson Council provides public education on the continuing effect of chemicals in our environment. One significant case deals with declining waterfowl populations due to agricultural chemicals. The Prairie Pothole Wetlands encompass northwestern Iowa, the Dakotas, Minnesota and a small mid-

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section of south-central Canada. This area, known as the "Duck Factory," is responsible for 50-60% of the duck production in North America: pintail, widgeon, canvasback, redhead, mallard and blue-winged teal are bred in this area. The young ducklings need crustacea to survive the first days of life. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service studies show that pesticides applied to cropland adjacent to wetlands decrease the aquatic invertebrate population and increase the mortality in waterfowl and other birds in these wetlands.<sup>1</sup>

The Rachel Carson Council has also documented the effects of pesticides on the incidence of breast cancer.

The Rachel Carson Council serves as a clearinghouse for pesticide-related information and publishes guides to pesticide dangers and alternative pest controls.

- The Rachel Carson Council  
8940 Jones Mill Road  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
- 301-652-1877
- [rccouncil@aol.com](mailto:rccouncil@aol.com)

To join the Rachel Carson Council or to find out more information on all of the projects related to the vision, contact Diana Post, VMD, Executive Director, RCC, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20813 or you may go to the web site [www.rachelcarson.org](http://www.rachelcarson.org). There is also a link from the HBD web site [www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com](http://www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com).

### Reference

1. Tome MW, Grue CE, Henry MG: Case studies: Effects of agriculture pesticides on waterfowl and prairie pothole wetlands. In Hoffman DJ, Rattner BA, Burton GA and Cains J: *Handbook of Ecotoxicology*. Boca Raton, FL, Lewis Publishers, CRC Press, 1995, pp 565-576.



## From the HOME OFFICE

**TANYA HARRISON  
COFFINBERRY**  
Vice-president  
*HBD, International, Inc.*

### New Improved Web Site

Check out our new web site:  
<www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com>



### Drop Shipping: The Perfect Solution to Limited Clinic Space

How would you like to earn \$3 on every 1-pound bag and \$12 on every 5-pound bag of Harrison's Bird Foods sold without even stocking it in your clinic?

Drop shipping is the answer! Drop shipping is such a valuable service to your clients — they get fresh HBD delivered right to their door — and you get the profits from the sale by just making a phone call.



### New Packaging is Here!

The new packaging and labels speak for themselves:

- bright, colorful graphics
- color-coordinated with familiar product
- easy to stack
- oxygen-impenetrable
- resealable zip top for storage
- extended shelf life
- no refrigeration needed
- still NO preservatives



How to stack new bags

### Here is how a "Drop Ship" relationship works:

- 1) As Mrs. Smith leaves Dr. Jones' office with her bird, she requests a delivery of Harrison's Bird Foods to her house.
- 2) Dr. Jones' receptionist checks the retail price list and adds the cost (plus shipping) to Mrs. Smith's bill.

Or

- 1) Mrs. Smith, who is a regular client with a credit card number on file, calls Dr. Jones' office to order Harrison's Bird Food.
- 2) Mrs. Smith's credit card is billed at the retail price plus shipping.

Either way

- 3) Dr. Jones calls the HBD office to place the order on behalf of Mrs. Smith.

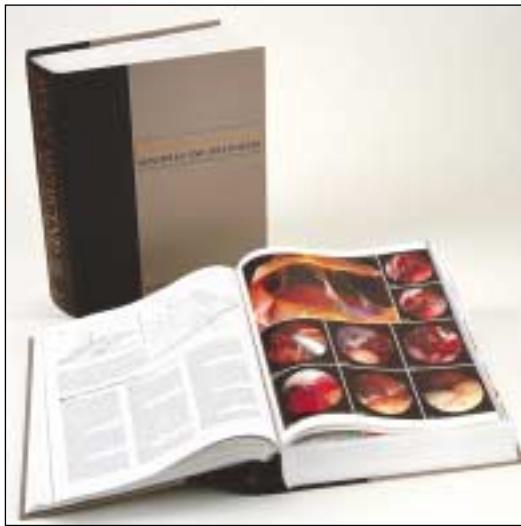
- 4) The food is shipped directly to Mrs. Smith (with only a packing order, not an invoice, enclosed).
- 5) The HBD invoice for the wholesale price is paid by Dr. Jones' office.
- 6) Transaction complete!

**Everyone is happy because:**

- Mrs. Smith gets fresh Harrison's Bird Food delivered right to her door.
- Mrs. Smith pays the same price for the food as if she had driven to the clinic to pick it up.
- Dr. Jones does not have to maintain a high inventory of all the types of food available or worry about rotating the stock.
- Dr. Jones is able to make the normal profit on each sale.
- Mrs. Smith thinks Dr. Jones is a hero for taking such good care of her.

## New Printing of Avian Medicine Book

A limited third printing of the hardcover edition of *AVIAN MEDICINE: Principles and Application* (edited by Ritchie, Harrison & Harrison and originally published by Wingers Publishing) has been sponsored by HBD International. Initially priced at \$175, the book is now available for \$99 plus \$9 (shipping and handling). The acetate overlays of the anatomy illustrations are available separately for \$15. Contact the HBD office at 800-346-0269, email to



BirdFoods@aol.com or order through the new web site: <[www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com](http://www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com)>.

## Suggested Retail Prices for Harrison's Bird Foods

	1 lb	5 lb	25 lb
Adult Lifetime Coarse	6.30	24.90	106.80
Adult Lifetime Coarse Low Iron	6.30	24.90	106.80
Adult Lifetime Fine	6.30	24.90	106.80
Adult Lifetime Fine Low Iron	6.30	24.90	106.80
Adult Lifetime Mash	9.50	30.90	N/A
High Potency Coarse	7.70	30.40	131.90
High Potency Coarse Low Iron	7.70	30.40	131.90
High Potency Fine	7.70	30.40	131.90
High Potency Fine Low Iron	7.70	30.40	131.90
High Potency Mash	10.80	36.40	N/A
Juvenile Hand Feeding	9.10	33.58	149.50
Power Treats	7.70	N/A	N/A
Passerine Formula I (183 g)	3.95	N/A	N/A
Passerine Formula II (248 g)	3.95	N/A	N/A

### Shipping:

Call the HBD office at 800-346-0269 for exact shipping costs. The average shipping price for a single 1 pound package of food is \$3.20 (Priority Mail). For a single 5 pound package, add \$5.98 for UPS delivery. A 25 pound bag of food is delivered for \$12.78. You need to add appropriate state tax.



## Wild Wings for Backyard Birds

Wild Wings, a division of HBD International, is committed to reducing the need for pesticide usage in seed production and thus reducing the exposure to pesticides of all life forms, including man. Wild Wings is the first company to offer only certified organic seeds and mixes for the feeding of free-ranging birds.

For the backyard birder committed to environmental issues, and for the parrot breeder who wants to add a few seeds to the diet during breeding season, Wild Wings is the choice. Contact Wild Wings at 800-745-7329 or [WildWingsOrganic@aol.com](mailto:WildWingsOrganic@aol.com) or visit the web site <[www.WildWingsOrganic.com](http://www.WildWingsOrganic.com)> for further information.

## Avian Caregiver

Just to remind you that copies of the *Avian Caregiver* are available for you to distribute to your bird clients as a clinic newsletter. You can print or stamp your own clinic name and address on the back. The content includes general bird information and tips about using Harrison's Bird Foods. Call the HBD office to order in quantities of 25 (800-346-0269).



# Using Harrison's

## Low Iron Variability

### Open Letter to Users of Low Iron Formulas

Greg J. Harrison, DVM  
Dipl ABVP-Avian, Dipl ECAMS  
President, HBD International

HB<sup>D</sup> International has recently learned that levels of iron in our HBD Low Iron Diets (Adult Maintenance and High Potency) have been ranging from 60 ppm to slightly over 120 ppm. These are in excess of our target level of 50-60 ppm. Please be assured that we have not received any reports of birds having problems with the current

products. We continue to believe our products are very effective in preventing and treating hemachromatosis. However, we are taking immediate steps to reduce the iron content to appropriate levels. We will continue to sell our products until we can satisfactorily address this situation. We appreciate your patience and continued trust, and welcome any comments or concerns you may have about our Low Iron Diets.

## WE GET MAIL

### HBD for Kakarikis

Frank De Nys

Thank you for making such an excellent product. I have two kakarikis that took a liking to your food immediately. Even disregarded the old formulated diet I was

purchasing from the pet store. Within days my two birds seemed happier and more playful than they have been in a long time. Thank you again.

## Using Web Page

Elaine Curran  
Orlando, Florida

I love your web page, and I especially like being able to look up distributors by zip code! I recently needed to find another distributor for your "Adult Lifetime" for my African grey. I was delighted to find so many vets up here that carry your products. Corona is still doing great ... one eye and all!

## New Attitude

Roger C. Yost  
Pacific Grove, California

Thank you for producing a wonderful product for my best buddy, "Mago" (a

2-year-old Senegal). He absolutely loves the Adult Lifetime Formula (Coarse) and he is so playful and happy since beginning this diet, unlike I have ever seen before. His new attitude and behavior have actually improved my own. There is also a lot less clean up.

## Great Packaging

Lenny Porges  
Columbia, Maryland

Our Timneh grey and lesser sulfur-crested cockatoo have both enjoyed your Coarse Grind for a number of years. I just wanted you to know that both your product and service are appreciated for their high quality and consistency. I also really like the new packaging; a great addition to an already outstanding product.

Thank you.



## Quick Diet Conversion Tips

(Adapted from "The Organic Difference")

■ **It's Dinner Time!** Feed your bird at family mealtime. Go ahead and taste the food in front of your bird. This works best for larger species unless the bird is strongly bonded to the family and eats with them anyway.

### Try Mash or Power Treats

Adult Lifetime Mash is a tasty, finely

ground formula that cockatiels and budgies love. It contains a special gray millet ingredient — once the bird tastes it, the conversion is complete. Power Treats is an attractive toasted treat to get larger parrots to try something new.

■ **Birdie See, Birdie Do!** House your bird near another bird who's already eating Harrison's Bird Foods or use a "trainer bird" as a model.

■ **Change the Enclosure** Try moving your bird to a new environment like a box or aquarium; remove all the toys, perches and bowls and offer the food on the floor. Some birds are so accustomed to the same food in the same colored bowl in the same part of

the cage every day that if you change something in addition to the food, the bird becomes more concerned about its new environment and will actually eat a new food. Something as simple as letting a friend take the bird for awhile may safely speed the conversion process.

■ **Heat it Up!** Moisten it with a little fruit juice, and then try heating the food slightly.

■ **A Doctor's Care** Leave the bird with your veterinarian for a supervised diet change. This may not be necessary, but the extra stubborn bird may need to be placed in a clinic where monitoring can be done. The bird would be weighed daily and if it refuses to eat, supplementary feedings would be given.

## Monitor the Bird

Greg J. Harrison, DVM  
Dipl ABVP-Avian, Dipl ECAMS

It would be great if we knew everything there is to know about feeding all pet bird species. Not a single bird food company can make that claim. But HBD works hand-in-hand with the clinician who actually sees the individual bird. In this way the veterinarian can monitor how the diet is being used in that bird and how the bird is responding to it.

I know our diets work exactly the way they are made to work. But some **birds** may not "work" the way we think.

If a regular patient that has been on Harrison's comes in looking a little less than perfect, you might go over step-by-step the common reasons birds don't quickly respond to a healthy diet. Primary problems are usually over-feeding and too much supplementation of high-fat and high-fructose items.

# Let Your Practice SOAR



### Some Veterinary Recommendations

- High Potency works for most birds that are sick or stressed in some way.
- Juvenile Formula works well as a hospital gavage formula; Carbofuel® may be added for particularly weak birds.
- Avoid supplements in a single pet bird that would stimulate nesting and breeding activity, including high-fat seeds and nuts or high-sugar produce such as fresh sweet corn, apples, or grapes.

### Client Tips for Best Results

- Buy food fresh every 1-2 months and store in the original bag with new zip top closures.
- Place only "fresh" food in the food bowl daily. Do not top off the food remaining in the bowl.
- Feed what the bird will consume but avoid over-feeding. Follow portion recommendations for the bird. Discard leftovers or food dust at the end of the day.
- Restrict supplements to less than 10% of the diet. Use only organically grown, nutritious fresh produce such as green leafy or orange meaty vegetables and fruits.
- Do not allow bird to dunk food; it removes top-dressed vitamins and spirulina.
- Do not cook food.

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*HBD's Avian Examiner is brought to you as a service of HBD International, Inc., manufacturer and distributor of Harrison's Bird Foods. This publication is part of HBD's commitment to building avian practice through education and nutritionally sound diets. Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented herein (particularly drug doses), it is the responsibility of the clinician to critically evaluate the contents, to stay informed of pharmacokinetic information and to observe recommendations provided in the manufacturers' inserts. Reader responses, comments and suggestions are encouraged. Please mail to Avian Examiner Publications, 5700 Lake Worth Road, Suite 107, Lake Worth, FL 33463 or fax to 561-641-0234.*

**HARRISON'S**



**BIRD FOODS**

**HBD International, Inc.**

220 Congress Park Drive, Suite 232  
Delray Beach, FL 33445  
800-346-0269 Fax 800-279-5984  
birdfoods@aol.com  
<www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com>

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