



# The University of Georgia

College of Veterinary Medicine

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Dear Supporters of Avian Health Network:

On behalf of the Emerging Diseases Research Group at the University of Georgia, College of Veterinary Medicine, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you and your organization for your continued support of our research efforts to develop methods to control PDD.

To date we have been able to confirm that PDD can be experimentally transmitted and we have documented a list of etiologies that can cause gross lesions that are frequently mistaken for PDD. We have also recovered 4 viruses, 3 of which were previously undocumented in association with gastrointestinal disease in companion birds, which can cause lymphoplasmacytic inflammatory responses in mucosa and serosa of the gastrointestinal tract, as well as in the liver and kidney. These viruses can cause gross lesions that resemble PDD and one must carefully differentiate the lymphoplasmacytic lesions associated with these viruses from the lymphoplasmacytic neural lesions that are the current criteria for a diagnosis of PDD.

We have continued to develop and test experimental reagents that will be necessary to move forward with the next phase of PDD research. A recent reagent that has taken us several years to develop provided us with new information that allowed us to demonstrate virus-like particles in the tissues of diseased birds. Our work with validating the sensitivity and specificity of this reagent for differentiating diseased, subclinically infected and normal birds is ongoing.

We also continue to work with a group of breeding birds in which one of the parents is PDD positive. We recently had several offspring that were approximately 1-year old die with histologically confirmed PDD. This data is providing us with important information on the natural transmission and incubation period associated with the suspected PDD virus.

It has been through the concern and support of dedicated aviculturists that we have been able to make progress in preventing infectious diseases that cut short the lives of our companion birds. Our group remains committed to developing effective control measures for PDD and we are appreciative of the support that you have provided to help us help birds.

Sincerely,

Branson W. Ritchie DVM, PhD  
Distinguished Research Professor  
Departments of Small Animal Medicine and Medical Microbiology