

*Commercial premises.* Active weekly surveillance of commercial poultry premises in the surveillance zone began in January 2003. All commercial premises with chickens were under weekly active surveillance beginning April 10, 2003, or earlier. All commercial premises have a documented biosecurity protocol in place. Also, these premises must report any significant increase in death losses or the occurrences of clinical signs consistent with END.

A total of 29 commercial poultry premises were located in the surveillance zone in California, of which 17 premises had birds present. The total estimated number of commercial birds on the 17 premises was over 1 million. The other commercial premises were either egg processors, manure haulers, or were void of birds and therefore did not participate in active surveillance. A representative sampling of either live or dead birds from each poultry house was done weekly. Sample collection was done by either an accredited veterinarian or authorized company personnel. No END positive premises were found.

As noted previously, the regulations in § 82.3(a) provide that any area where birds or poultry infected with END are located will be designated as a quarantined area, and that a quarantined area is any geographical area, which may be a premises or all or part of a State, deemed by epidemiological evaluation to be sufficient to contain all birds or poultry known to be infected with or exposed to END.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) epidemiologists have evaluated the results of the investigations conducted in California and have determined that we may now reduce the size of the quarantined area in that State. This determination is based on, among other things, the demonstrated absence of birds or poultry infected with or exposed to END in specific areas. The regulations in § 82.14 provide requirements that must be met before an area may be removed from quarantine, but those requirements relate to measures taken with respect to END-infected or -exposed birds and poultry, their eggs and manure, and articles and premises with which such birds or their manure or litter have come in contact. As there were no END-infected or -exposed birds or poultry in Imperial, Orange,<sup>1</sup> and Santa Barbara

Counties, CA, or in portions of Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties, CA, there are no requirements under § 82.14 that need to be met before those areas can be removed from quarantine.

#### *Areas That Contained Infected Premises*

An area where END positive premises have been detected is known as an "infected area." The infected area in Arizona and in Texas each had one END positive premises. The infected area in Nevada had 10 positive premises detected. None of the infected premises in those three States were commercial poultry premises. The infected area of San Diego County, CA, had 20 infected premises, 7 of which were commercial poultry premises. All birds on all infected premises, and any premises exposed to those infected premises, were depopulated. The date of depopulation on the final END positive premises in each infected area was:

- Clark County, NV: January 29, 2003;
- La Paz County, AZ: February 7, 2003;
- El Paso County, TX: April 7, 2003; and
- San Diego County, CA: April 21, 2003.

Intensive surveillance and testing of both noncommercial and commercial poultry premises was carried out in the infected areas and resulted in no additional END positive premises being detected.

*Noncommercial premises.* An inventory of at-risk noncommercial premises was developed for the infected areas. Surveillance efforts were then concentrated in portions of the infected areas that had at-risk premises. An at-risk premises was defined as a premises inhabited by poultry, ratites, or an aviary. Within this population, premises considered highest risk were targeted for sampling.

Results of the surveillance conducted in the infected areas in Arizona, Nevada, and Texas were reported in our interim rules of May 19, 2003 (for Arizona and Nevada), and June 11, 2003 (for Texas), cited previously. None of the samples collected was positive for END virus.

In the infected area of San Diego County, CA, all of the sampling was conducted during the 6-week period from June 1 through July 12, 2003. The majority of the sampling of premises was conducted during a 2-week period from June 22 to July 5, 2003. At least 1,126 premises with birds were identified in the area. The true total number of premises with birds in the area is not known, but efforts were made

to identify the areas most likely to have at-risk premises.

Overall, a total of 539 at-risk premises were sampled from a population of 701 at-risk premises in the infected area of San Diego County, CA. Over 5,100 birds were sampled and tested for END virus. None of the samples yielded a positive result.

*Commercial premises.* Active weekly surveillance of commercial poultry premises in the infected area of San Diego County, CA, began in February 2003. All commercial premises with birds have been under weekly active surveillance for at least 6 weeks and have a documented biosecurity protocol in place. Also, these premises must report any significant increase in death losses or the occurrences of clinical signs consistent with END.

A total of 30 commercial poultry premises are located in the infected area, of which 22 premises had birds present. The eight other commercial premises are egg processors and did not participate in active surveillance. Seven of the 22 premises with birds were found to be infected and were depopulated. Two other premises are now void of birds. A representative sampling of either live or dead birds from each poultry house on the remaining 13 premises with birds was performed weekly. Sample collection was done by either an accredited veterinarian or authorized company personnel. No END positive premises were found.

We have determined that all applicable requirements of § 82.14 to remove an area from quarantine have been met with respect to the remaining areas in La Paz County, AZ, San Diego County, CA, Clark County, NV, and El Paso County. Specifically, we have determined the following:

- All birds and poultry exposed to END have been found to be free of END;
- All birds and poultry infected with END have been euthanized;
- All parts of all birds and poultry that were euthanized or that died from any cause other than slaughter, all eggs produced by birds or poultry infected with or exposed to END, and all manure generated by and litter used by birds or poultry infected with or exposed to END have been buried at least 6 feet deep and covered at the time of burial with soil in a location within the quarantined area that meets all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), State, and local requirements for landfills;
- All vehicles with which the birds or poultry infected with or exposed to END or their excrement or litter have had physical contact have been cleaned and

<sup>1</sup> Although there were no infected premises in Orange County, a portion of that county will remain as a quarantined area due to its proximity to areas in adjoining counties where infected premises were found.