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ASPERGILLOSIS IN WILD GEESE: A NEW TECHNIQUE FOR ITS DETECTION

A three-year study of the disease is going forward at the New Grounds. Mr J. V. Beer contributes the following note :

At the end of 1954 a new swabbing technique was used to detect *Aspergillus fumigatus* in Pink-footed Geese caught in rocket-nets in Britain. The technique aims at taking a fuller sample from the throat of the goose than the stick and cotton-wool method.

Briefly the methods of isolation are as follows. A rubber-tube swab is used to obtain material from the throat of the goose and is then washed in a sterile malt extract solution contained in a small screw cap bottle. This solution contains an antibiotic to keep down the growth of bacteria. The sample bottles are returned to the laboratory and kept in a refrigerator until the end of the expedition when a start is made to isolate the moulds. In isolating the mould the methods used were such that bacteria were completely inhibited from growing and large numbers of other moulds were inhibited by the relatively high incubation temperature. The moulds are grown out on a solid medium, of similar composition to that above, in a petri dish. Incubation is carried out at 40°C for one week. Suspected *A. fumigatus* colonies are purified by several successive transfers onto Czapek-Dox agar in petri dishes. Incubation is again carried out at 40°C and for 3-4 days. The purified culture is grown on a Czapek-Dox agar slope in a test-tube and kept at a low temperature. This culture is used to produce more growth for diagnostic studies and for experimental work.

A. fumigatus was found on 7 of 235 swabs. Just over 350 geese were swabbed and the remaining material is being worked up.

The full significance of these isolations is difficult to assess as the mould is a fairly common soil inhabitant.