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"Falcons" - Export Health Checks on Hand Reared Birds



Saker Falcon



Peregrine Falcon

Most people will have no doubt heard or read about the current concerns regarding avian influenza. This is a highly infectious disease affecting many species of birds, including commercial, wild and pet birds.

It may also affect people and other animals in certain circumstances and it is caused by a Type A influenza virus.

It is one of the most important diseases of commercial poultry and serious outbreaks have been reported in many countries. In the UK it was last confirmed in a flock of 8000 turkeys in Norfolk back in January 1992.

The highly pathogenic H5N1 AI strain involved in most of the outbreaks during the last 18 months has shown the ability to jump the species barrier occasionally and cause severe disease, with high mortality, in humans. It has not shown the ability to move easily between humans.

In an effort to limit the opportunity for "bird flu" to reach the UK the government, in line with other members of the European Union, has banned the import of live birds.

Whilst importation of birds has been banned, it is still possible to export birds from the UK. Interestingly, in Hinckley itself, there is a business involved in the "export" of premium birds to the Middle East..... though not poultry!

Hand reared Peregrine and Saker falcons of the utmost quality are currently being bought by purchasers from the Middle East - where they are held in extremely high esteem.

Special export licenses are required to ensure the optimum health and welfare of these prize specimens prior to their privileged new lifestyles in warmer climates.

I had the opportunity to examine 3 of these beautiful creatures this week prior to their departure. Once installed in their new homes their natural instincts and acrobatic flying skills will be harnessed by their new owners to hunt prey as nature intended.

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care