

## **ECHIDNOPHAGA GALLINACEA (STICKT TIGHT FLEAS) INFESTATION IN BACKYARD POULTRY: A CASE REPORT**

**M.J.N. Jamaldeen<sup>1\*</sup>, S. Mawuniga<sup>2</sup>, and H. Dahana<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Veterinary Investigation Centre, Department of Animal Production and Health, Ampara, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka.*

<sup>2</sup>*Government Veterinary Surgeon's Office, Department of Animal Production and Health, Kaaraithivu, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka.*

<sup>3</sup>*Government Veterinary Surgeon's Office, Department of Animal Production and Health, Addalaichenai, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka.*

\* *haaneenow@yahoo.co.nz*

Five 24-months-old backyard chickens in a flock of 30 birds from Pottuvil were brought to the Veterinary Investigation Centre in Ampara with a history of restlessness and anorexia. Clinical examination revealed the gregarious aggregation of fleas around the eyes, comb and wattle, which resulted in partially closed eyes as well as ulcerations around the eyes. The fleas were collected from the wattle and around the eyes. The samples were sent to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences, University of Peradeniya for the detailed examination. The fleas were identified as *Echidnophaga gallinacea* depends on the morphological characters. The birds were treated with manual removal of fleas combined with topical Malathion dusting. To avoid infestation, the entire flock of backyard chickens were sprayed with Amitraz 12.5% solution (12.5%, 2 ml in 1 liters of water). The farmer was advised to burn the infested organic material in the farm premises and also recommended to use wire cages at least 3 feet above the ground to minimize chances of flea infestation. Subsequent recheck examinations did not reveal any fleas on the affected birds or on any of the other birds housed in the same farm.

**Keywords:** *Echidnophaga gallinacea, Infestation, Stick Tight Flea, Backyard poultry, Prevalence, Management.*