



Book review

Contamination of animal products: prevention and risks for public health. *Scientific and Technical Review*, 16(2), August 1997. ISSN 0253-1933. ISBN 92-9044-429-0. 424 pp. FRF270/US\$54

The first two issues of Volume 16 form a set entitled *Contamination of animal products*. Issue 16(1) addresses the risks to animal health of contaminated animal products, while the second issue, Volume 16(2), is devoted to the examination of hazards to human health from the consumption and use of animal products. As the premier international organization for animal health, it is not only fitting that the OIE has conducted this study of food safety issues in relation to livestock products, but it is also timely.

The safety of food of animal origin for human consumption has become an essential part of the public health debate both within countries and among them. As international trade increases, the issue of equivalence of food safety systems becomes more significant and risk assessment methods to evaluate this become more critical.

The reasons for the enhanced recognition of the importance of food safety relates to changes across the globe. The traditional concern for food safety has been focused on residues from environmental chemicals, drugs and other toxic agents which can accumulate in animal tissue. Recently, however, the discovery of microbial pathogens that do not affect animals but which cause human illness has changed the equation of concern. Organisms such as *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 or *Salmonella* Enteritidis are examples of these newly emerged pathogens. In addition

to causing acute digestive distress in affected people, some of the microbial pathogens have chronic consequences which can last a lifetime.

Food preferences have changed so that the meat of wild animals, either farm bred or naturally harvested, is increasingly common on the menus of restaurants and in the homes of consumers. Fish, whether caught in the wild or farmed, is also increasing in popularity with consumers world-wide.

This volume concentrates on the microbial foodborne pathogens associated with the major categories of animals that provide food for people around the world. For each category, there are reports from a variety of countries and regions. In addition, contaminants of non-biological origin are discussed. Finally, mention is made of micro-organisms associated with animal manure which can also cause human illness when inappropriately applied as fertilizer, resulting in contamination of fruit and vegetables. The role of animal manure and pathogenic micro-organisms in food safety has indeed become an important issue for ranchers and farmers throughout the world.

The study of hazards to human health from the consumption and use of animal products by 105 authors in 42 papers should attract a wide audience: from animal and public health authorities, food hygienists and risk analysts to the consumer.