

STERNE, MAX (June 1, 1905 Trieste, Italy - February 26, 1997, Hampshire, UK) Veterinary bacteriologist, Immunologist. Born of Austrian parents who emigrated to South Africa in 1909. Married Tikvah Alper 1932, two sons.

EDUCATION : University of Pretoria, 1928 : BVSc ; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 1947: Diploma in Bacteriology.

CAREER : 1929-1930, manager cattle ranch in Belgian Congo; 1931-1933, state veterinarian at the Allerton veterinary laboratory, Pietermaritzburg; 1934-1951, researcher in the Section Bacteriology of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute, Pretoria; 1951-retirement, researcher at the Wellcome Research Laboratory, Kent, UK.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Sterne's main contribution to science was the discovery of an apathogenic, non-encapsulated anthrax bacillus which elicited 100% protection against infection with the virulent organism. His spore-based vaccine replaced the Pasteur vaccine world-wide and is still being used today to effectively control anthrax, an economically important disease affecting both animals and man. He also developed new bacterial culture methods and a new technique for the production of bacterial toxins which led to the first successful vaccine against botulism (lamsiekte) in cattle. At Wellcome he continued this research and was responsible for the development of a number of highly successful Wellcome vaccines, both veterinary and human.

HOMAGES AND DISTINCTIONS : In 1985, at the age of 80, he was awarded the Karl F. Meyer Gold Cane award of the American Epidemiology Society for his contributions to animal medicine.

WRITINGS : Author or co-author of more than 45 scientific publications, half of which are referenced in the Author and Subject Index to the Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry (1933-1950). A few representative publications are the following: Variation in *Bacillus anthracis*. Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry (OJVSAI) (1937), 271-350; The preparation of anthrax spore vaccine for cattle and sheep in South Africa. OJVSAI (1939), 9-21; The use of anthrax vaccines prepared from avirulent (uncapsulated) variants of *Bacillus anthracis*. OJVSAI (1939), 307-312; Avirulent anthrax vaccines. OJVSAI (1946), 41-43.

REFERENCES/ OBITUARIES : Gilfoyle, D. Anthrax in South Africa: Economics, Experiment and the mass Vaccination of Animals, c. 1910-1945. Medical History (2006), 50, 465-490. Obituary: Max Sterne. Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research (1997) 64, (June). Obituary: Max Sterne. The Independent (Newspaper UK) (1997), March 4.

DW Verwoerd