



Book review

Animal mycoplasmoses and control. *Scientific and Technical Review*, 15(4), December 1996. ISSN 0253-1933. ISBN 92-9044-433-9. 472 pp. FRF270/US\$54

Infections caused by mycoplasmas have been recognized for a long time. When Nocard and Roux first described the infectious agent of contagious bovine pleuropneumonia in 1898, it was a discovery which may be regarded as one of the first scientific successes of modern bacteriology. Nearly a century later, mycoplasmas have still not yielded all of their secrets, while the infections they cause remain of great concern to animal health services.

The OIE first dedicated an issue of the OIE *Scientific and Technical Review* to the subject of mycoplasmoses in ruminants in 1987, which provided an excellent overview of the subject. This issue is devoted to animal mycoplasmoses and their control and does not purport to update those papers. The aim of this book is to provide additional information on the other mycoplasmoses, and on the epidemiological evolution of these diseases. More particularly, as the liberalization of world trade continues, the recent expansion of contagious bovine pleuropneumonia in southern and East Africa is cause for serious concern.

The first section of this issue discusses ancient methods for contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, the epidemiology of this disease in Africa and Europe and the need to improve current vaccines. The second section is devoted to contagious caprine pleuropneumonia, its diagnosis and control, and other pulmonary mycoplasmoses of sheep and goats.

Contagious agalactia of small ruminants features in the third section, whereas the fourth examines the agent *Mycoplasma bovis*. Comprehensive reviews of mycoplasmoses in poultry and those of swine are provided in the fifth and sixth sections of the book, respectively.

This issue offers an exceptional source of information on mycoplasmoses, highlighting the recent scientific developments which have brought about new approaches in the areas of diagnosis and prevention. It should make a significant contribution to the understanding of these particularly complex infectious agents.



Book review

Contamination of animal products: prevention and risks for animal health. *Scientific and Technical Review*, 16(1), April 1997. ISSN 0253-1933. ISBN 92-9044-428-2. 296 pp. FRF270/US\$54

The principal rules governing the international trade of animal products are provided in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). Non-discrimination, harmonization, equivalence and transparency in the drafting of animal health legislation for importation and exportation are the fundamental principles of the SPS Agreement. The implementation of these rules may require risk assessment and regionalization, to ensure that fair and scientifically sound decisions are taken on products from exporting countries. The role of the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) in these developments is to establish up-to-date and internationally acceptable standards which respond to the above-mentioned concepts and which can then be used as a reference for the WTO.

Since the publication in 1993 of the special issue of OIE *Scientific and Technical Review* devoted to *Risk analysis, animal health and trade*, progress in the practical application of risk assessment methodologies has been made in various countries. This progress is reflected in the present special issue of the *Review*, which deals with animal health hazards posed by the importation of a wide variety of contaminated animal products. The presentation of a series of articles by

specialists of world renown, aids the reader in making informed decisions on animal health requirements in order to prevent the introduction of exotic animal diseases through the importation of animal products.

The contents of this issue are organized by commodity, as the same disease agent may pose quite different hazards or may require different measures to reduce or prevent risks for each type of product. Owing to limitations of space, not all commodities could be covered, but it is hoped that those articles included here will provide useful models for products not described. In general, all articles include an overview of the origin and possible survival of the contaminating pathogen in each commodity during product preparation and processing. Where possible, the authors have attempted to identify risk-related events or risk-reduction measures and to characterize such risks with qualitative or quantitative methods.

Since the *Scientific and Technical Review* is primarily intended for non-specialists, the very specialized aspects concerning the biology and characteristics of the pathogens have been limited where possible. The emphasis is on practical applications to guide regulatory officials and animal-health professionals in solving problems related to hazards linked to the importation of products of animal origin.



Book review

OIE Veterinary Biotechnology Database

In 1989, the Office International des Epizooties (OIE), the world organization for animal health, set up a Working Group on Biotechnology. The Group established a list of laboratory diagnostic methods and products based on biotechnology, that are used, or show promise for future use, for the control of animal diseases. To initiate this list, a questionnaire was sent annually to all OIE Member Countries and Reference Laboratories and to other laboratories known to be involved in research on or control of transmissible animal diseases. A total of 192 laboratories have responded to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire has three main sections. The first concerns the use for *diagnosis* by at least one of the following: monoclonal antibodies, gene amplification (polymerase chain reaction [PCR], nucleic acid hybridization or antigens produced by genetic engineering. The second part of the questionnaire regards *prophylaxis* of infectious animal diseases with recombinant vaccines (subunit vaccine, synthesized peptides, genetically altered vectors or pathogens). The third focuses on *resistance* to infectious diseases; transgenic animals fall under this category.

Beginning with a hard-copy paper version in 1991, data on over 25 000 biotechnology methods and products have been collected and organized into a database that can now be accessed on the World Wide Web under 'OIE Veterinary Biotechnology Da-

tabase' (<http://www.ie.int>, open 'File downloads' and then open 'Biotec') or on diskette.

The OIE database is designed to allow the user to search by keyword, either by name of the pathogen, by technique used (nucleic acid probe, PCR, etc.) or by biological reactive (antibody, peptide, antigen, etc.). Analysis by country or region can be done as each method or product is linked to the address of an institute that provides it. Interlaboratory information exchange and cooperation are also promoted by some laboratories providing highlights of their most recent work and available training courses. Not only animal health but other biomedical scientists may find the database to be of use.

In order to facilitate trouble-free introduction of information to the database, a complete questionnaire is available on the OIE website or on diskette from the OIE.

This information is provided not only to stimulate use of the database but also to encourage a more widespread contribution to it, in order to make it more valuable to workers in the field. All laboratory or scientific workers in animal disease biotechnology are cordially invited to provide information on their work to the OIE.

The Director General of the OIE