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BOOK REVIEWS

Veterinary Institutions in the Developing World: Current Status and Future Needs, Scientific and Technical Review, Vol. 23 (1)

C. de Haan (Ed.). Office International des Epizooties, Paris, 2004. 416 pp., paperback, ISBN: 92-9044-605-6, ISSN: 0253-1933, (€50)

This review, bringing together contributors and viewpoints from many countries, deals with the question of how veterinary institutions need to adapt if they are to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. There are seven sections to the publication. The first includes papers on changing public and private sector roles in the provision of animal health services. The second consists of two key papers that explain the international standards and requirements of the World Trade Organization that have dictated changes in thinking by those working in the field of animal health. The next two sections are complementary and discuss the roles of professionals, para-professionals and auxiliaries in service provision and give examples from the field of the (controversial) use of community-based animal health workers. The country case studies section includes six examples from Afghanistan, Asia, Eastern Europe/former USSR, Jamaica, Kenya and Senegal and illustrates the difficulties encountered in developing and offering veterinary services. An interesting analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of current veterinary systems in the developing world is followed by the concluding section on 'Implications for the future'.

No longer can the conventional, well-tryed methods of controlling animal disease withstand the pressures of globalization or changing political and economic linkages. The way we train veterinarians, the way we use them and the extent to which their traditional role might be encroached upon by others, are only a few of the dilemmas that face us in the new millennium. But there are good reasons why those not directly involved with livestock should have access to this book. The health and welfare of domestic animals affects the quality of hu-

man life, especially in countries where cattle and other species are not only a source of food and sustenance but also a bank account and an indication of social status. Many diseases of animals can be transmitted to humans (or vice versa) and the raising of standards of public health in all countries depends upon greater collaboration between those from the medical and veterinary professions and their colleagues in allied disciplines. The interdependence of nations and the breaking-down of trade barriers mean that what happens to livestock in a small African country can affect the livelihood of others thousands of kilometres away. All those concerned with the plight of peoples afflicted by poverty, disease or the sequelae of disasters should be cognisant of the challenges that face veterinarians and others in their quest to promote healthy livestock. This book provides valuable information and much food for thought.

John E. Cooper*

Margaret E. Cooper

School of Veterinary Medicine

The University of the West Indies

St Augustine, Trinidad, West Indies

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ngagi@vetaid.net (J.E. Cooper)

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The Venomous Reptiles of the Western Hemisphere

Jonathan A. Campbell, William W. Lamar. Comstock, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2004. Two volume set, Vol. 1: xviii + 504 pp., Vol. 2: xiv + 422 pp., hardback, ISBN: 0-8014-4141-2, (US\$149.95/£86.95)

Campbell and Lamar's monumental 1989 volume 'The Venomous Reptiles of Latin America' (also published by Comstock) became an instant classic that took pride of place on any herpetologist's

book shelf. The layout of this new work largely follows that of its predecessor. The first volume contains an introduction to the geography and venomous snake fauna of the Americas (including a key to the species of each country), and species accounts for most New World venomous reptiles. Volume 2 contains the species accounts for the rattlesnakes, a remarkable 96-page bibliography, and four separate chapters written by guest authors. Most relevantly for readers of this journal, two of these chapters are about envenomation: one on bites by North American reptiles (Robert Norris: 25 pp.) and the other on snake bite in Central and South America (David A. Warrell: 53 pp.).

The centrepiece of the book consists of the species accounts, each covering between half a page and seven and a half pages. Each species account contains a synonymy, English and local names, an account of distribution and habitat, a detailed physical description of the species, differentiation from similar species, and remarks on taxonomy and other information. This wealth of information is complemented by distribution maps and no less than 1365 colour photographs, most of excellent quality, as well as some black-and-white photographs. An additional 134 colour figures depict in graphic detail the potential consequences of venomous reptile bites and their (mis-)management.

The two chapters on snake bite and its treatment use a primarily species-based approach, discussing the available literature on venom and bite symptoms, and giving recommended treatment procedures for snake bite. Together, they represent the most comprehensive and up-to-date summary of snake bite and its treatment in the Americas, and David Warrell's chapter in particular should be compulsory reading, especially for any medical worker likely to be working in the rural tropics of the New World.

Overall, the book is clearly aimed at the herpetological market, for which its indispensable nature is beyond dispute: the bulk of the book describes and discusses aspects of the biology, taxonomy and natural history. However, given the importance of accurate species identification of venomous reptiles for medical purposes, it should be read by anyone likely to encounter these animals or the victims of their bites.

Wolfgang Wüster
School of Biological Sciences
University of Wales
Bangor LL57 2UW, UK
E-mail address: w.wuster@bangor.ac.uk

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