

Book review — Boekresensie

OIE Scientific and Technical Review: Avian influenza

Coordinated by T C Mettenleiter

2009. Vol. 28(1), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Paris. 419 pp., paperback. Price €55. ISBN 978-92-9044-760-3

The *Scientific and Technical Review* of the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) is published every 4 months for the use of the veterinary and medical professions, and especially for veterinary services. A vast body of literature appeared as a result of intensified interest in avian influenza since the emergence and subsequent spread of highly pathogenic notifiable (HPNAI) H5N1, boosted by massive increases in funding for research. This publication is a compilation of recent findings and represents a comprehensive overview of the present understanding of avian influenza, with contributions from the foremost experts in the field. The reader is led through the history of the disease into aspects of epidemiology, pathogenesis and host specificity, diagnosis, vaccination and concludes with outbreak prevention and management. Generally the coverage of the topic is excellent, but what is perhaps lacking is a review of basic influenza A virus biology, detailing the mechanisms of replication and infection.

Readers should also note that in contrast to what is presented in the first paper on the history of the disease, there have in fact been 2 recent outbreaks of HPNAI in South Africa: the 2004 Eastern Cape HPNAI H5N2 outbreak in ostriches and a second outbreak of HPNAI H5N2 in ostriches in the Western Cape in 2006. Although sound molecular evidence has been published to support the notion that the 2 outbreaks were completely unrelated, it remains a long-standing point of contention between the author of this review and the authors of the paper on the history of highly pathogenic avian influenza. Nevertheless, this book would be a valuable resource to veterinary practitioners, scientists and students either as an introduction or to those wishing to deepen their knowledge in particular aspects of the disease and its agent.

C Abolnik

ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute, Pretoria
E-mail: abolnikc@arc.agric.za