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Book review — Boekresensie

Tierzucht in den Tropen und Subtropen [Animal breeding in the tropics and subtropics]

Edited by Peter Horst and Ingeborg Reh

1999. Eugen Ulmer, Stuttgart, 452 pp., hard cover, in German. Price DM 248. ISBN 3 8001 3204 4.

This is a completely new edition that has been expanded to include production techniques for animals species that are less well known to students, veterinarians, extension officers in community services and agrarian specialists who would like to understand the problems of animal production in the tropics and subtropics.

Twenty-three authors from 6 different parts of the world have contributed. They have with tremendous diligence compiled information on problems of animal production mainly in Africa, but also in Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, India, and South and Central America.

It is estimated that 55 % of sheep, 69 % of cattle, 95 % of goats, and almost all buffaloes and camels are kept in tropical and subtropical regions. There are almost insurmountable problems relating to animal breeding, nutrition and health that face practitioners and scientists when planning systematic animal improvement.

Only by listing the chapters can the amount of work covered by the authors be appreciated: Animal production world-wide; Problems of animal production in the tropics and subtropics; Nutrients and the provision of feed; Animal diseases and control measures; Breeding and production improvement; Production techniques in utility animals (cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats,

equines including donkeys and mules, poultry, rabbits, guinea-pigs, bees and silk-worms). An important chapter deals with the use of wild-life (antelope, rodents, kangaroos, ostriches and crocodiles). Aquaculture is of great importance in tropical and subtropical areas, and the most important fish species are listed with their production potential. The final chapter is a discussion of the improvement of natural pastures, where the human factor, problems of ownership, climatic and soil conditions are the overriding difficulties facing technology transfer.

The book represents a major contribution to the knowledge of animal production in the tropics and subtropics. The authors and especially the editors went to great lengths to pursue all possible pathways to improvement of production animals for the better nutrition of people in these regions.

It is exceptionally well produced, with good clear illustrations, and is a pleasure to read. It is therefore highly recommended to students, veterinarians and agrarian specialists who would like to gain a better insight into animal production problems in developing countries.

D R Osterhoff
Professor Emeritus
Faculty of Veterinary Science
University of Pretoria