

Comprehensive reports on technical items presented to the international committee or to regional commissions

1998. Office International des Épidémiologies, Paris, 179 pp, paperback. Price: FrF 150/US\$ 25 (excluding postage). ISBN 92 9044 452 5.

The publication comprises 8 reports covering a wide variety of subjects of veterinary interest. The first 2 reports were presented during the 65th General Session of the OIE International Committee, and the others during conferences of regional commissions.

The 1st report, entitled *Quality control systems (such as the ISO 9000 system) for evaluating veterinary services within the context of international trade*, concerns the evaluation of veterinary services to determine the level of confidence that can be placed in health certification of animals and products for export. Since the response of 63 member countries to a questionnaire revealed considerable diversity of organisational structures and areas of competence within the veterinary services, it was recognised that some system for evaluation is essential. Criteria for evaluation are discussed, and quality assurance systems, in particular the ISO 9000 series reference system and the European standard EN 45004, are briefly compared. The feasibility of constructing quality assurance systems and means of certifying such systems at national and international level are discussed.

The 2nd report, *Blood parasitic diseases and specific immune responses*, recognises the economic importance of livestock diseases caused by protozoal and rickettsial haemoparasites. The state of knowledge of specific immune responses in the different diseases is reviewed, and for each disease there is an indication of how further research based on this knowledge can be directed towards developing new or improved vaccines.

The 3rd and 4th reports are of special interest to Africa. The 3rd report, entitled *Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia diagnosis and prevention*, summarises the situation in 20 African countries and provides a comprehensive update of diagnostic techniques. It is illustrated with excellent colour photographs of clinical signs and macroscopic pathology. As may be expected, the information on the status of CPPP in member countries is dynamic and in certain aspects the report is out of date, since the disease was subsequently eradicated in Botswana but broke out in the Western Province of Zambia.

The 4th report, *Veterinary public health in Africa*, analyses data obtained from 23 of the 43 African member countries on veterinary public health activities. The author concludes that, in developing countries with dwindling financial resources, veterinary services will have an increasing responsibility with regard to animal and human health, and will need to involve other governmental and private structures, and most importantly the livestock producers themselves, in order to carry out

that responsibility successfully. An interesting and positive suggestion is the reversal of the rural-urban population flow by the establishment of rural animal-production projects.

Although the remaining reports were presented at conferences of the regional commissions for the Middle East and Asia, Far East and Oceania respectively, they contain information that is of considerable interest to veterinarians in South Africa. The 1st is particularly important: *Bovine spongiform encephalopathy as an emerging disease: measures, ways and means to protect animals and consequently humans from the possible risk of disease*. This report provides an excellent overview of BSE, although the reader must be aware that the link between BSE and new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans has now been firmly established.

In view of the movements of horses in relation to racing, any report that reflects regional status of equine diseases must be of interest to those concerned in the industry, and the chapter 'Equine health status in the Middle East' provides a useful summary of the situation in several countries where horse-breeding, particularly of Arabian Pure Bred horses, is an industry of national and international importance.

The chapter entitled 'Epidemiological analysis and interpretation of serious poultry diseases' is of far more than regional interest. It reflects the fact that information on poultry diseases has lagged behind that available on other diseases of important livestock, yet poultry incontestably constitutes one of the most important sources of protein in developing countries. In addition, the ease of transport and importation of poultry has far-reaching international implications, as does the potential for transmission of zoonoses, demonstrated by the effects of salmonellosis and, in particular, the outbreak of a form of influenza in poultry that proved to be transmissible and sometimes fatal to humans, in Hong Kong.

The final report, *Biotechnology applied to diagnostic tests and vaccine production*, contains information on recent advances in the fields of veterinary diagnostics and vaccines that will be of considerable interest both to veterinarians in the laboratory and in the field.

In conclusion, the publication represents a compilation of data on a number of subjects that should concern all veterinarians committed to improved disease control and better animal and human health. As is usually the case with OIE publications, it is well written and produced and reasonably priced.

M-L Penrith

ARC - Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute