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## Book review — Boekresensie

### Animal mycoplasmoses and control

Coordinator: J Nicolet

1996. *Office International des Épizooties, Scientific and Technical Review* 15 (4). 472 pp. Price: FrF 270, US\$ 54. ISBN 92 9044 433 9.

The world's foremost authorities have collaborated to produce an informative review of current knowledge of *Mycoplasma* infections. The recent outbreak of lungsickness (contagious bovine pleuropneumonia) in Botswana has alerted us to the economic devastation that a disease like this can cause, drastically affecting both small-scale and commercial farmers. This review should be of interest to veterinarians and researchers who work with farm animals, including poultry, and should be required reading for those in charge of animal health control.

The book contains 15 review articles, covering contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP), contagious caprine pleuropneumonia (CCPP), contagious agalactiae, and *Mycoplasma bovis*, with general chapters on avian and porcine mycoplasmas. The articles are in English and French. For the multilinguist this poses no problem, but those less fortunate will be unable to understand three of the review articles, those concerned with the latest diagnostic methods and control of lungsickness, and the chapter on contagious agalactiae. The English summaries are unfortunately very short. The other articles are all in English, and written in an easily comprehensible style.

The first section is on lungsickness, starting with the history of the disease. It was known to Aristotle, who described it in 40 AD. Early treatments recommended by Columella included pear juice, olive oil and wine in equal quantities! The early methods of vaccination and their relationship to modern immunisation are discussed.

It appears that European strains of CBPP may differ from those in Africa and Australia, and further investigations are needed to confirm this. CBPP was confined to a relatively small area in Africa during the 1960s but following the relaxation of control policies it spread insidiously as well as explosively to attain the

present situation, where the greater part of West and East Africa is infected, as well as Angola and northern Namibia. This epidemiological spread illustrates the need for control measures to be in place for both infected and free countries, and various control methods are exhaustively discussed. These would serve as an excellent reference for the authorities in charge of animal health.

Contagious caprine pleuropneumonia, which causes a disease like CBPP in goats, occurs in almost the whole of North Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia. It may extend as far south as Angola, posing a threat to Namibia and Botswana. CCPP should be kept under the same strict epidemiological surveillance as CBPP. The first step would be to establish precisely which countries are infected, and the economic and social effects, particularly on small-scale farming.

The latest literature on the more important *Mycoplasma* infections in ruminants, pigs and poultry is covered by well-known authors such as Pfützner, Stipkovits, Whithear, Sato and Kobisch.

Review articles like these are invaluable to the busy veterinarian, as the literature has been comprehensively studied, resulting in an excellent, well-referenced summary. This book would be of value to researchers and those working in the fields of epidemiology, vaccine production and disease surveillance. It would also be useful to anyone wishing to update their knowledge of *Mycoplasma* infections, since there has been an explosion of information about them in the last two decades.

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