

BOOK REVIEWS

"Veterinary Entomology" by Richard Wall and David Shearer. Chapman & Hall, London. 1997. ISBN 0-412-61510X, 439 pages. £29-99.

This soft-covered volume is described on the jacket as "the first textbook to deal specifically with the insects and other arthropod ectoparasites of veterinary importance". Whether or not this claim is true - it is difficult to believe that something comparable has not already been produced in French or Russian - Wall and Shearer's book would certainly appear to be a "first" in the English language and the statement certainly provides a useful guide to its contents and purpose. The publishers go on to say that the work "concentrates on the organisms the reviewer will return later.

The introductory chapter is entitled "The importance and diversity of arthropod ectoparasites" and provides a clear description, with key words in bold print, of ectoparasite-host relationships, ectoparasite damage, the structure and development of arthropods and other basic biology. The

other seven chapters cover the main groups of arthropods that are relevant to veterinary entomology (Mites, Ticks, Adult flies, Fleas and Lice) plus over 50 pages on myiasis (Chapter 5), and in excess of 80 on the control and treatment of ectoparasites (Chapter 8).

The text is clearly written and is illustrated with excellent line drawings. Each chapter is complemented with a list of Further Reading and although the references provided are entirely in English, they are often far-ranging in their scope. This very much reflects the authorship of the book - Richard Wall is an entomologist, David Shearer a veterinary surgeon with particular experience of skin diseases - and reinforces the argument that nowadays books on specialized subjects should have at least an interdisciplinary team of authors and, preferably, include contributors from different countries.

The reviewer's main disappointment when reading this book was to discover just how strongly orientated it is towards Western Europe and North America. True, it mentions parasites that are found in the tropics - and in some cases uses them as examples - but the text and references relating to these are generally woefully inadequate and thus limit its value overseas in the field or laboratory. How much more welcome and valuable this publication would have been if it could have included tropical veterinary entomology, either in the one text or as a second companion volume, as well as those aspects of the subject that are particularly important in the "developed" parts of the world!

To conclude, the reviewer welcomes this book and congratulates the authors on their achievement but links his commendation with the plea that they consider a second work, presumably with other appropriately experienced contributors, that will do justice to the myriad of arthropods that exact such a toll of domestic and wild animals in the tropics. Notwithstanding this comment, "Veterinary Entomology" is a well written and eminently practical book which will serve as a useful guide to both students and graduates from different disciplines, in many parts of the world.

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